

Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners  
and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study

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## **Abstract**

The success of gifted learners and gifted programs in public schools depends upon principals who are well versed in the needs of gifted learners (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994). Principal leadership in setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization influences teaching and student achievement in schools (Leithwood et al., 2004). Research indicated limited knowledge of the unique social-emotional and academic needs of the gifted learner contributing to underachievement and underrepresentation in gifted education (Lewis, et al., 2007; Reis & McCoach, 2000; Rimm, 2008; Siegle & McCoach 2003).

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify principal leadership practices that are effective in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs. Empirical data collection included three Delphi rounds, one open and two-structured principal leadership practices surveys, one included individual and panel ratings. Supervisors of gifted, principals, and university professors represented multiple regions across the Commonwealth of Virginia on the Delphi panel. By consensus, the Delphi panel identified 10 highly effective principal leadership practices, eight to support gifted learners and two for gifted programs. The highly effective principal leadership practices addressed social-emotional, curriculum, teacher differentiation, scheduling for staff collaboration, peer grouping, and selecting gifted cluster teachers. Implications for practice included teacher reluctance to differentiate, targeted professional development for principals and teachers of gifted students, professional learning community for teachers to analyze practices, and district and school opportunities in hiring, acceleration, and compacting curriculum (Urlik, 2017; Weber et al. 2003). Future research recommended studying implementation and impact of the 10 highly effective principal leadership practices in this study, gifted programs, and professional development in gifted education and principal and teacher preparation programs.

Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study

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**General Audience Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to identify principal leadership strategies that experts in the field of education thought were effective in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs. The experts included: school principals, supervisors of gifted programs, and university professors from three regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The experts in the study were from: Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, and the Tidewater Region. All the experts had knowledge and experience working with gifted students and gifted programs. Essentially, it is important for school principals to provide instructional support to all groups of students which should include gifted learners (Gallagher and Gallagher, 1994). The research technique involved the Delphi Method which used three rounds of questionnaires to receive input from the panel of experts. Yousef (2007) determined that the Delphi Method provided an opportunity for a panel of experts to handle a complex problem without being in the same location. By consensus, the expert panel identified 10 highly effective principal leadership practices, eight to support gifted learners and two for gifted programs. The eight highly effective leadership practices included practices such as: principals providing feedback to teachers, principals ensuring gifted students get their social emotional needs met, principals modeling a good attitude toward gifted students and avoiding special treatment remembering that gifted students are very sensitive in nature. Additional highly effective principal leadership practices in support of gifted learners were to have principals ensure that teachers provide something different instructionally in the classroom for gifted learners such as being able to move at a faster pace through the curriculum, work independently and or work in small groups if appropriate. The two highly effective principal leadership practices in support of gifted programs determined that principals select teachers of gifted students with the same care as they would regular education and special education teachers. The second highly effective principal leadership practice meant

principals should ensure gifted learners are receiving a different curriculum and students' strengths and areas of growth are the focus.

## Dedication

*For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11*

I am sincerely grateful to my Heavenly Father for having such great plans for me and allowing me to complete this scholarly work.

This body of work is dedicated to my dad, Mr. William Nicholas Banks, Sr., for his vision, love, kindness, and provision for me to become a successful woman spiritually, personally and professionally. Dad, I'm still a work in progress.

My dad named me after his mother, which made him so proud and upset me for years growing up...my preference was to be called "Dorie... the name my mom affectionately called me.

However, after many years of reflection trying to complete this dissertation, I have decided to honor my dad's memory, and allow my doctoral degree to be embossed with my grandmother's name, Dora Mae Banks. Daddy, this is for all you tried to teach me... until we meet again.  
Your loving daughter.

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*All in All, To God Be the Glory for the Great Things HE has done!*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The last 20 years of gifted research are central to integrating programs for gifted learners into the total fabric of schooling. All of public education is engaged in closing achievement gaps, lifting the needs of low achieving and minority students, while addressing America's competitiveness on the world's stage; so it is essential that experts and leaders in the field of gifted education connect to this endeavor (Van-Tassel- Baska, 2009). Weber, Colarulli-Daniels, and Leinhauser (2003) found research related to principal leadership practices in gifted education is neither extensive nor current. Johnsen (2013) identified "five challenges in providing services to gifted students: assessment and accountability, administrator support, collaboration with other educators, professional development, and family and parent education" (p.221).

The National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 1998) published a special issue introducing gifted education research and theory to its readers and instructional leaders of schools. The administrative journal acknowledged principals have the ability to positively influence and support gifted and talented students' success in schools (Grantham, Collins, & Dickson, 2013). In addition, the federal Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act of 1988 acknowledged the need for special programs for gifted children and proposed advancing knowledge and services through funding research, model programs, and leadership training (Jolly, 2009 p. 50).

Davidson, Davidson, and Vanderkam (2007) reported highly gifted students would most likely experience underachievement in America's classrooms and have the largest gap between their potential and their performance. Jolly (2009) reported gifted and talented students become a priority when excellence in education is sought and a critical need is anticipated. Despite attitudes towards the subject of giftedness, research suggests gifted children are in need of special programming. In many instances, gifted students fail to reach their full potential, experience learning disabilities, and even drop out of school because traditional school curriculum stifles their learning potential (Russo, 2001).

According to Colangelo, Assouline, and Gross (2004), in every school, in every state, city, small and large, urban and rural, there are bright students who are ready for more challenges than the American school system provides. Precocious students impress their parents and

grandparents by reading newspaper editorials as early as three to five years old, and calculate the grocery-shopping list faster than the cashier at the register (Colangelo et al., 2004). However, when they enter America's schools, they become frustrated and bored with how little they learn because of the bureaucracy that forces them to learn in a lock-step manner with their class-age peers rather than their intellectual peers (Colangelo et al., 2004). Since the No Child Left Behind legislation that emphasized a focus on struggling learners and lifting the bottom quartile, school leaders and policy makers have not recognized and addressed the special needs of this gifted and high-ability population (Moon, 2009). "Teachers and principals disrespect students' desires to learn more—much more—than they are being taught" (Colangelo et al., 2004, p.1).

Principals' buy-in is one of the most significant aspects of a successful gifted education program. Gifted programs cannot be successful without the support of the instructional leader, the principal of the school (Grantham, Collins, & Dickson, 2013).

Administrators and teachers are often perplexed by the fact that gifted and high-ability children sit in classrooms with the label of "giftedness" while their label and their performance do not match (Siegle & McCoach, 2009). Gifted and high-ability students placed in classrooms with unchallenging curriculum are likely to experience boredom, frustration, and decreased motivation (Robinson, Reis, Neihart, & Moon, 2002). Morisano and Shore (2009) found that extremely bright children are in need of special services as much as children with learning disabilities are. High-ability children are the only category of exceptional children that certain educators and policy makers seriously question whether or not there is a need for special services (Gallagher, 1991). Gallagher used an analogy to explain the resentment society has for gifted youngsters. He compared special programming and or schooling for gifted students to giving tax breaks to the wealthy. For many people it is a "violation of some rather basic tenet of equity" (Gallagher, 1991, p.14). School superintendents, principals, and teachers believe that gifted and high-ability students do not face academic challenges, and thus will be successful in life no matter their school experience (Moon, 2009).

### **Background of the Study**

The Commonwealth of Virginia regulations were established to ensure the success of gifted learners through a public document called a Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted. (VDOE, 2012). The Local Plan for the Gifted addresses how the school division will serve

gifted learners; supports the operational definition provided by the school division; determines how students are identified, establishes programs of service, curriculum development, professional development, and describes parent and community involvement. (VDOE, 2012) Services provided to gifted students must be a continuum of services. Virginia requires local school divisions to report annually data related to student demographics, teacher preparation, and administrator data as well as program options available to meet the needs of gifted students ([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml)).

“Gifted programming’s purpose is to attend to the unique characteristics and needs of gifted learners while educating them at an appropriate level of challenge” (Pandina, Scot, Callahan, & Urquhart, 2008, p.43). Local school boards are required to approve a comprehensive gifted plan as outlined by the Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students; however, the gifted plan does not address policies to address principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs (VDOE, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In education, it is vital for principals to recognize the diversity among groups of students under their leadership. This diversity is a reflection of our current society; therefore, principals should nurture students’ gifts and talents, acknowledge that the diversity of students’ academic strengths are as diverse as the students themselves (Olenchak, VAG, 2012). Principals have many external pressures to address in schools including the academic and social emotional needs of all students, so, gifted learners are not usually the focus since gifted learners typically have met state proficiency requirements while general education students’ instructional needs are more critical (Johnsen, 2013 p. 221). Principals are responsible for ensuring every student succeeds academically as well as socially and emotionally; this responsibility should extend to gifted learners. As instructional leaders, principals have the power to influence students’ learning outcomes; therefore, the burden lies with school divisions to ensure principals’ leadership practices are effective for students’ success (Lewis, Cruzeiro, & Hall, 2007). While there is a shortage of research addressing principal leaders’ knowledge and skills in gifted education (McHatton, Boyer, & Terry, 2010), Grantham and Ford (1998) found principals’ instructional leadership practices related to reversal of the under-representation of Black students

in gifted education. Grantham and Ford's (1998) findings indicated professional development, supervision of teachers, and monitoring could reverse under-representation of Black students in gifted programs.

When the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) Act was established it created a culture whereby principals had no incentive to focus on the talents of gifted students or developing any students for that matter (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). According to Gentry (2006), NCLB was designed to focus on increasing proficiency for low-achieving students. Principals recognize giftedness in classrooms; however, there is disconnect between the label and student performance (U. S. Department of Education, 1993). Since the literature yields few empirical studies regarding effective leadership practices in gifted education, examining broader areas in educational leadership to define what effective leadership in gifted looks like will be beneficial to scholars and practitioners in gifted education (Callahan & Plucker, 2013).

Therefore, it is essential that advocates for quality education for gifted learners work with school principals to ensure that gifted education is included in the school improvement plan, and given the same attention as the general education program. Indeed, in order for principals to have effective schools, they need to focus on the learning of every student they serve (Lewis, et al., 2007, p. 62).

“Although underachievement is not a prominent area of research in general education, it is a major concern in gifted education” (Siegle, 2013, p.3). Grantham, Collins, and Dickson (2013) found principals' knowledge of gifted education research and theory, positively influenced and supported gifted and talented students' success in school.

### **Significance of the Study**

In an era of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) and No Child Left Behind, (NCLB, 2001) this study will contribute to the body of knowledge linking principal leadership practices to quality instruction for gifted learners and gifted programs. Long, Barnett, and Rogers (2015) determined that schools in Wales with a written policy were more likely to provide specialized instruction and nurture in support of the gifted learners in their care. Moreover, the researchers found that principals with a policy to follow would more than likely provide the professional development to build capacity for teachers serving in schools with gifted programs.

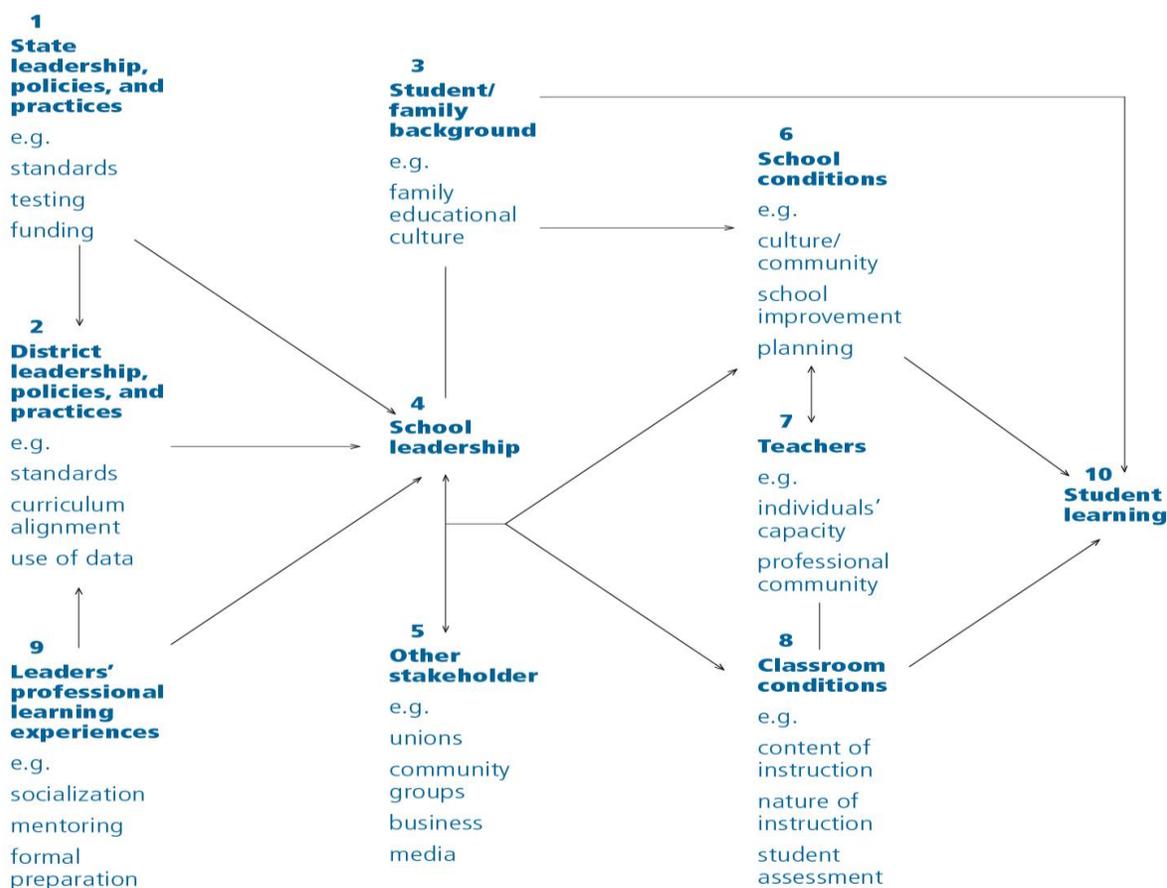
This study will contribute to the body of knowledge, and provide guidance to principals using highly effective leadership practices in support of gifted learners and gifted programs. In addition, school divisions and principals can use the data from the study in the selection and hiring process of administrators, counselors, and teachers in support of gifted learners and gifted programs. Principal may use the data collected from this study to implement the highly effective leadership practices to improve the quality of education in support of gifted learners and gifted programs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify principal leadership practices that are effective in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. To determine principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs, a panel of experts including supervisors of gifted, principals, and university professors with experience and knowledge in the field of gifted education participated the Delphi Study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Wallace Foundation commissioned the Learning from Leadership Project, research report, *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) investigated the role of leadership on improving student learning. The conceptual framework grounded in the belief that effective principals' practices make a significant difference in student achievement and school effectiveness. Moreover, the current study is applicable to the context of gifted learners and gifted programs. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) concluded that successful principals play a critical role in improving and supporting student learning, structuring the social setting, and mediating the external demands across 10 interdependent variables. In Figure 1 *Linking Leadership to Learning*: the research framework features 10 interdependent variables: student learning, teachers, classroom conditions, school conditions, student/family background, other stakeholders, state leadership, policies, and practices; district leadership, policies, and practices; and leaders' professional learning experiences (Leithwood, et al. 2004, p.18) .“The relationships in the figure are illustrative only” (Leithwood, et. al. 2004, p.18).



*Figure 1.* Linking leadership to learning from how leadership influences student learning (2004, p.18) available free at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org)

“In the linking leadership to student outcomes framework, leaders play a critical role in: 1) identifying and supporting learning, 2) structuring the social settings and 3) mediating the school demands” (Leithwood, et al., 2004, p.18). “School leadership helps to shape the nature of the conditions, and forms of pedagogy used by teachers.” (p.18) “Evidence suggests successful leadership can play a highly significant – and frequently underestimated role in student learning” (p.5). Leadership is second only to classroom instruction related to student achievement, and often effective leadership accounts for about 25% (indirectly or directly) of student learning. In 2004 meta-analysis, Leithwood et al. identified organizational sectors as different as schools, and the military, and national cultures; whereby leadership practices of successful leaders call upon that are considered the “basics” of successful leadership.

Leithwood et al. (2004) found three basic core successful leadership practices are setting directions, developing people and redesigning the organizations. Setting a direction or creating a shared vision that encompasses high performance goals and expectations has the largest impact upon student growth related to effective leadership practices. Moreover, teachers are motivated and influenced by their relationship of leadership roles. and motivate teachers based on their Evidence collected in schools and non-educational organizations suggests that employees' (teachers') motivation and influence is substantially related to their direct experiences with those in leadership roles. In the educational realm, principals are in those roles. Some of the leadership practices that influence organizational workers positively are intellectual stimulation and support within the context of the organization. Redesigning organizational structures that contribute to student learning outcomes depends on the capacity and motivation of principals and teachers working collaborative toward an expected goal, however, occasionally organizational conditions i.e. high-stakes testing and accountability may prevent effective practices that match the instructional program (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The School Improvement Resource Center (SIRC) compiled information on Effective Traits of Successful Principals. Effective Traits, Figure 2, identifies 15 common characteristics found in studies of Effective School Leadership and Effective Schools (Marzano, 2003; McEwan, 2003; SIRC, 2006). Establishing and communicating a clear vision allows all stakeholders a common focus. Time management and organization was found to be an effective characteristic or trait of a successful principal as this trait allows the school leader to prioritize student learning thereby become proactive instead of reactive. Fostering collaboration effective characteristic or trait because it creates a climate of trust, open communication that leads to improved student performance. Establishing a high performing learning culture and climate catapults all stakeholders into a cycle of success is a reward within itself (School Improvement Center, 2006).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knows curriculum systems and framework</li> <li>▪ Establishes and communicates a clear vision</li> <li>▪ Manages time and is organized</li> <li>▪ Develops an effective professional development plan</li> <li>▪ Knows quality/effective instruction</li> <li>▪ Monitors and evaluates systems</li> <li>▪ Collects and assesses data to drive interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fosters collaboration</li> <li>▪ Practices effective communication skills</li> <li>▪ Establishes high performing learning culture and climate</li> <li>▪ Identifies effective resources and staff</li> <li>▪ Creates a community of leaders</li> <li>▪ Enhances community and parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Understands accountability requirements</li> <li>▪ Develops an effective school-wide plan</li> </ul>
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*Figure 2.* The effective traits. Information on the Effective Traits of Successful Principals was compiled from Marzano (2003). *What Works in Schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (McEwan, 2003). 10 traits of highly effective principals: *From Good to Great Performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. *Developing Leadership Capacity through Leadership Behaviors*, Principal Planning Guide, SIRC (2016).

## Research Questions

This study identified principal leadership practices effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A panel of experts included supervisors of gifted, principals, and university professors.

Questions in the study include:

1. What does a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners?
2. What does a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted programs?

## Definition of Terms

*Differentiation*: modifying the curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique needs in the classroom. (NAGC, 2019)

*Gifted and Talented Students:* Children whose ability are significantly about the norm of their age. Giftedness can manifest in one or more domains such as leadership, creativity, or in specific academic content areas such as math, language arts, science, etc. (NAGC, 2019)

*Instructional Leadership:* involves success for all students through a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to academic progress and school improvement via communication, implementation, professional development, and evaluation (VDOE, 2012).

*Practices:* the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method as opposed to the theories relating to it. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/practice>

*Principal:* Qualification for principal in Virginia requires accepted endorsement in administration and supervision prek-12. School principals' performance is evaluated in the areas of instructional leadership, school climate, human resources, organizational management, communication and community relations, and professionalism, and student achievement (VDOE, 2012).

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2013) established delimitations in a study describe the populations for which generalizations may safely be made. Limitations provide the factors outside of the researcher's control, while the delimitations define the study within the researcher's control.

Delimitations:

- The sampling for a panel of experts in the Commonwealth of Virginia includes three regions.
- The research focused on public schools in Virginia.

Limitations:

- Previous positions as supervisor of gifted and middle school principal may present researcher bias in the study.
- Response rate may have been limited by voluntary participation
- Initial sampling limited by commitment to three round panel process
- Gifted supervisors limited in formal knowledge of principals' leadership practices

- Limited population
- Principals limited in formal knowledge in gifted education

### **Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

The study was organized into five chapters. A Delphi study was conducted to identify principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the problem, Chapter 2 reviews the current literature to the study including: Models of Giftedness, Principal Leadership in Gifted Education and a Historical Perspective of Giftedness, the needs of gifted learners and gifted programs in Virginia. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 includes data collection procedures and summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research are reported in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* created an environment where administrators have no incentive to focus on the talents of gifted students or developing any students for that matter. Gentry (2006) found NCLB opposed scholarship and focused on increasing proficiency for low-achieving students rather than supporting gifted learners. School administrators and teachers witness the complicated and perplexing phenomenon of gifted children sitting in classrooms with the label of giftedness, yet there is a disconnect between their gifted label and their school performance *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (U. S. Department of Education, 1993).

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* replaced NCLB and empowered states to revise their policies to incorporate non-academic indicators and broaden the nation's educational purposes. ESSA still encourages testing and accountability (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). Principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs will be explored in this literature review.

#### Historical Perspective of Gifted Education

According to the Office of Civil Rights, within the United States Department of Education, in 2011-2012, there were approximately 3.2 million gifted and talented programs. In *A Nation at Risk*, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) reported more than 50% of our gifted and talented students do not achieve at levels commensurate with their ability in school. Clarenbach (2007) maintains these findings are alarming because gifted children are not reaching their achievement potential; in addition, the loss to society is tragic (Hoover-Shultz, 2005). "The tragedy is that, for many gifted students, much of the time spent in school is squandered; marking time until they are allowed to skip a grade or take college courses" (Clarenbach, 2007, p.16).

What advocates for gifted and talented students have discovered over the years is, "extremely bright children have special needs addressed by educators, parents, and psychologists as much as children with developmental delays or other learning disorders" (Morisano & Shore, 2010, p. 249). Although researchers in the field of gifted education believe that gifted learners

need a modified curriculum, still many teachers, administrators, and policy makers believe that gifted and talented students will succeed academically, without the benefit of individualized or differentiated instruction. A common misconception is “these students will succeed anyway” (Clarenbach, 2007, p. 16). The researcher further maintains that allowing gifted learners to spend time with intellectual peers while providing appropriate instructional services will help them flourish (Clarenbach, 2007). Gifted students who are considered underachievers have been described metaphorically as an “untapped well” to society if their social-emotional and academic needs go unmet (Morisano & Shore, 2010).

During the 20th century, gifted education became a natural extension to the new field of educational psychology. The research conducted by educational psychologists intended to inform educational best practices was the intelligence tests in schools; identify gifted students, provide an appropriate different education to build gifted students’ intellectual capacity (Lagemann, 2000).

Lewis Terman and Leta Stetter Hollingworth were notable pioneers in the field of gifted education in the 1920’s; they built their research of gifted children upon the foundational work of Frances Galton and Alfred Binet, researchers whose studies included characteristics of gifted children, heredity, and intelligence of gifted children (Jolly, 2004). During this period, educators were conducting progressive research and advocating for appropriate educational opportunities for gifted students. In the meantime, public and private organizations were supporting these research agendas with funding that allowed for a baseline of research in gifted education to be established (Jolly & Kettler, 2008). VanTassel-Baska (2007) found as the field of gifted education continued to progress, however, the continuity of research that employed funded public policy failed to emerge. Over decades, funding for gifted education research has constantly been an ebb and flow (Plucker & Callahan, 2014). In the early 80’s the U. S. Congress eliminated categorical funding for gifted education; beneficial programs that served the needs of gifted children and existed for years forced to close their doors (Delisle, 1999).

During the Great Depression and World War II, the United States’ priorities faltered away from education and gifted education until the launch of the Soviet Union’s Sputnik in 1957 (Jolly & Kettler, 2008). The perceived intellectual threat from the Soviet Union’s technological advancements caused the United States to mobilized efforts to cultivate the development of our young gifted and talented students on a large-scale. Since the United States was already

enduring scrutiny regarding the decline of our public school system, *the National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) of 1958 became the vehicle for an unheard of amount of funding for education reform at all levels (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Jolly, 2009).

The United States Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 in order to compete with the Soviet Union's superior school system. This American initiative focused on training young scientists and creating a talent pool of workers who were considered gifted in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Passow, 1957). The NDEA catapulted gifted education into an unprecedented productive research period with the expansion of gifted programs and a restored research agenda (Jolly, 2009). The interest in gifted education continued for a cycle of 10 years after Sputnik; the national priority shifted to underserved populations such as minorities and students receiving special education services (Delisle, 1999; Jolly & Kettler, 2008).

In the early 70's, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney Marland, gathered a blue-ribbon group of experts in the field of gifted education to testify to Congress on behalf of America's gifted and talented children. Household names in gifted education were among the group of experts: Passow, Ward, Gallagher, Renzulli, and Bruch testified to Congress regarding the needs of gifted education and the children it serves (Delisle, 1999). Marland's (1971) report as cited in Delisle, (1999) revealed some shocking statistics:

- 4% of Americas' gifted children enrolled in gifted programs;
- A majority of school administrators--57% of those polled--stated that no gifted children existed in their schools; and
- Identification of giftedness hampered by three main factors: cost, apathy, and hostility on the part of some school personnel (p.29).

Marland's (1971) report resulted in the establishment of the nation's first Office of Gifted Education in Washington, D.C. and the allocation of \$290,000 federal dollars for teacher training (Delisle, 1999). The National Commission on Excellence (1983) found that the American school system was failing in math and science; in addition, 50% of gifted and talented students were not testing to their potential (Delisle, 1999, p. 29).

In the decade that followed, more emphasis was given to the needs of gifted children, culminating in the 1993 publication of *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent*, a political document that served to usher in yet-another new era in the search for

giftedness, which was now changed to the term "talented" among our nation's youth (Delisle, 1999, p.27).

### **Theoretical Models in Gifted Education**

The definition of giftedness is still perplexing the field of gifted education today. (Jolly, 2005). Plucker and Callahan (2014) found in Marland (1971) the initial definition the federal government proposed indicated giftedness in six distinct areas: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability (p.391).

Shortly after the federal government revealed its initial definition of giftedness, broader theories began to surface. For instance, Joseph Renzulli, developed perhaps the most well-known model of gifted education, the three-ring conception of giftedness, which focuses on above average ability, creativity, and task commitment. The three-ring model was one of the first to make creative productivity a component of giftedness (Plucker & Callahan, 2014, p.391). Just as Renzulli's influence on the field of gifted education was strong during this period, Gardner's release of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) and Triarchic's *Theory of Successful Intelligence* appealed to educators who were interested in expanding the notion of giftedness in children (p.391). These three theorists definitely enlarged the concept of giftedness (p.392).

"Gagne's development of the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) was significant in the field; the model defined giftedness as innate abilities in at least one domain area (i.e. intellectual, creativity, socio-affective, and sensorimotor) placed the individual in the top 10% of their age peers and are considered "mildly" gifted" (Plucker & Callahan, 2014, p.392). "Gagne believed environments and intrapersonal catalysts could either support or hinder talent development. Gagne distinguished between real world outcomes and potential, if the two did not develop into talents, he considered this underachievement" (p.392).

"Around the turn of the 21st century, new philosophical views began to influence the thought of scholarship and talent" (p.392). Barab and Plucker's thought was that giftedness combined the environment, cultural, along with the individual. The significance of this perspective is advanced learners will never reach their full potential and develop their talent unless they experience challenging opportunities within the K-12 setting that lead to becoming real-world problem solvers (Plucker & Callahan, 2014, p.392).

## Principal Leadership Practices in Gifted Education

The Gaines (2018) exploratory study examined elementary school principals' a) Perceptions (b) Importance of Practices and (c) Practices Used in gifted education. To relate to leadership and instructional practices used in schools, Gaines used an online survey completed by 94 elementary school principals, with 87% response rate; 54% Title-I; and 6.4% EGATE Award Schools. At the elementary school level, there are three service delivery models for Talented and Gifted (TAG): Pull-Out Model (per district specialist), Regular Classroom, and TAG Center with full-day and lottery selection. The curriculum includes enrichment units and recently added the Makerspace program. A prior district evaluation study of TAG in 2004 reported by Cook used parents and teachers, with recommendations still not implemented. This prior study revealed inconsistent and non-existent TAG program implementation across county schools and half of the teachers of the gifted had not received any training. "One administrator stated, "It is hard to do the pull-out program consistently because the TAG coordinator is also the Reading Specialist and Testing Coordinator, and another , "We will try TAG next year"(P.39). Then the state education department established successful incentive, Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE) Award to recognize exemplary TAG programs and schools, currently 44.

Three research questions guided this study:

1. What are elementary school principals' perceptions of gifted education? The highest rated statement was "Students who are gifted need special attention to fully develop their talents," and the lowest rated item measured perceptions on acceleration, "Gifted students should be allowed to skip one or more grades based on academic performance."
2. What is elementary principals' level of knowledge about leadership practices that represent excellence in gifted education programs? Principals' highest rated statement was, "Providing staff members differentiated professional development opportunities, which includes a background of general knowledge about the characteristics of giftedness and implications for curriculum. The lowest rated statement was, "Offering a variety of acceleration opportunities (Whole grade

skipping, early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, subject acceleration) instruction, and assessment

3. What is the relationship between elementary school principals' perceptions of gifted education, leadership practices in gifted education, and the instructional practices used in their schools? The researcher indicated lack of significance in analysis. Responses were conflictive as principals indicated they were very aware of the importance of leadership practices in gifted education; yet, in contrast, they rated "Offering a variety of acceleration opportunities" as the least important practice." Using pre-assessments for student learning is rated the highest for the Practices Used scale.

The main recommendation includes District-level administrators of gifted education should provide 1) professional development opportunities for principals on leadership and instructional practices like acceleration, and 2) ways to help teachers incorporate instructional strategies, and gifted professional learning community with collaboration time. The research noted, acceleration is validated by empirical research as low-cost, low-risk effective practice that can easily be implemented in any elementary program with some training and ongoing support. Over half of the principals reported their educational background and on-the-job training in gifted education only somewhat prepared them or did not prepare them to work with gifted students. Post-hoc analysis indicated principals who felt if they were more prepared would more likely implement practices to support gifted education.

The purpose of the Urlik (2017) study was to explore the impact of elementary principals' knowledge base and advocacy on gifted and talented (GT) programming within their school in a site-based district. This study sought to understand principals' knowledge base, acquisition of knowledge, and advocacy behaviors in an effort to support principals in the future better understand and support gifted learners. The theoretical framework of this study was based on adaptive leadership. Most participants indicated external solutions such as funding versus technical solutions using current expertise and opportunities such as integrating gifted education priority in school climate and culture, consideration with new hires, or visiting schools with current-research model for gifted programs.

Urlik (2017) conducted mixed method research to study of the impact of elementary principals' knowledge and advocacy on gifted and talented (GT) programming within their school and site-based district in Colorado. In 2015, Colorado enacted mandates through the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) that included gifted education programming and services in all schools. Six principal interviews and 14 survey responses revealed conflicting data between survey responses and interviews. Overall, data suggested participants' lack of knowledge in gifted education, beliefs in myths about gifted learners, and large inconsistencies found in how the school's GT program addressed the NAGC-CEC standards for gifted student outcomes in their schools. Participants' knowledge around enrichment rather than gifted programming models, curriculum compacting, acceleration, current research or best practices. While participants indicated they had strong knowledge of social-emotional needs of the gifted learners, there was great disconnect between limited knowledge that cannot be translated into practice, resulting in inconsistent gifted programs and often "incredibly" limited. The majority of principals did not indicate ever advocating for a GT program in their school. Most participants did not receive knowledge through formal education, university preparation programs, rather professional development as needed in teaching gifted students. Teacher and principal preparation programs, and targeted, school-specific, current research-based professional development, and highly qualified district staff support needed to support for gifted learners and programs in schools.

McDonald (2014) conducted a study and found principals considered advocates for gifted students. Principals facilitated opportunities for the betterment or advancement of gifted students' education. Moreover, principals' decisions regarding whether intentional or unintentional affects the education of the gifted learner regardless of the level of gifted services available in school districts (McDonald, 2014). The phenomenological study involved interviews with eight school principals in Ohio. The researcher indicated lack of literature about principal's role in gifted education (p.6), and excellence gap in Ohio with underachievement by minorities based on AP exam performance. The study found lack of in-depth knowledge about giftedness and gifted education as principals expressed finding needed knowledge as individual student needs came up. This approach limits support for gifted learners and gifted programs and fit into school climate and culture. A strong recommendation for high quality, credible

professional development for principals and teachers of gifted students and in preparation programs respectively.

Lewis, Cruzeiro, and Hall (2007) conducted a study to determine the practices and skills of principals who seemed to be supportive of successful gifted learners' experiences. The researchers used purposeful sampling in an effort to learn as much as possible about the leadership styles of elementary school principals and the impact their styles had on the education of gifted children in their school buildings. From the sampling, two female administrators selected because of their reputation for being strong principals and advocates for gifted learners (Lewis, et al., 2007). While both principals known for being strong administrators, on the other hand their education backgrounds especially in gifted education were contrary to each other's. One principal earned a master's degree in gifted education. In addition, the principal was endorsed in administration, and previously served as the director of the enrichment for gifted learners and responsible for an elementary school for the last 4 years.

The second principal's education consisted of a bachelor in elementary education with a Masters and doctorate in administration. She was a 20-year veteran with 6 years as a principal. She was responsible for two rural schools, a K-5 elementary and a 6-8 middle school 30 minutes away from each other. (Lewis, et al., 2007).

While Lewis, et al. (2007) found that the two schools placed on the list of the best elementary schools in the state according to the state gifted director, there was a gap between what the principals knew to do as best practices and what they actually implemented related to quality-gifted programming in their schools. During the interview, both principals reported following practices were research based and effective, however, both principals agreed that the quality of instruction did not apply to their schools' gifted programs (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). Research best practices implemented by both principals:

- Disaggregating the data of the general education program, and seeking the input from various stakeholders by year's end, but this practice did not apply to the gifted programming in the schools.
- The school improvement plans did not address how gifted learners would grow and improve in their schools.

- Both principals embedded gifted services within heterogeneous classrooms and avoided homogeneous classroom settings for their gifted learners. (Lewis, et. al, 2007).

Some important themes emerged from the study of the two elementary leaders: both seemed to be advocates for children, both principals established collegial relationships with teachers and staff members that spread throughout their buildings; both were open to student differences and had teachers that were willing to differentiate to meet those needs. (Lewis, et. al, 2007). The idea of effective leadership in education improving learning is not debatable or new. Moreover, what is unclear is how successful educational leadership matters and what ingredients are required to provide growth outcomes for all children. (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Researchers found that leadership not only matters, but also is second only to teaching when it comes to school related factors that influence student achievement for all children (Leithwood, et al. 2004).

Aligned with the study by Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) experts at the Institute of Education in London came up with a list of eight practices shared by school leaders:

- Consistent high expectations for students they serve
- Clear and consistent vision
- Effective professional development for teachers
- Good at monitoring student growth and assessment
- Highly inclusive in regard to pupils' personal development
- Promoting rich opportunities within and out of the classroom
- Cultivate business partnerships to support student progress
- Robust and rigorous with regard to self-evaluation, data analysis

Balancing strategic and operational roles are without question important qualities successful school leaders should possess in addition to spotting talent among staff and getting people in the right roles to be effective. Principals need a high level of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. The power to influence or coach is more powerful than to direct (Woods, Husbands & Brown, 2013, p.26).

In the compilation of leadership practices common to several studies on effective schools and effective leadership, the principal is problem solver, vision-keeper, communicator in a crisis,

the strength or capacity of the leader reflected in the strength or capacity of the school. Principals are required to run meetings, keep a safe and secure campus, guide and monitor curriculum, create schedules, build budgets, and build relationships between all stakeholders: school, community, district, state government (The School Improvement Resource Center, 2016).

Jack Welch said, “Being a leader changes everything. Before you are a leader, success is all about you. It is about performance, your contributions. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others. Your success as a leader comes not from what you do but from the reflected glory of the people you lead”. Successful leadership is all about growing others (SIRC, 2006, para. 3).

Johnsen (2013) outlines strategies from gifted educators and advocates that principals may adopt in their schools such as: (a) show how certain strategies used with gifted learners are implemented with all learners, (b) describe how the models related to gifted are implemented without additional funding, and (c) debunk some of the myths about gifted education. Examples of strategies used in gifted education that would benefit all learners are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and innovation (Johnsen, 2013, p.221).

Weber, Colarulli-Daniels and Leinhauser (2003) found principal leadership practices such as good communicator, strong people skills, creative in gifted programming, and risk taker regarding instructional strategies that stimulate academic growth are effective. The social emotional well-being of gifted students is equally important; therefore, providing professional development to strengthen teachers’ capacity considered an effective practice in support of gifted learners in gifted programs (Weber, Colarulli-Daniels & Leinhauser, 2003).

### **Needs of Gifted Learners**

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2009) suggests there is a misconception that gifted learners are able to succeed on their own; the truth is these students should be challenged through the curriculum delivered and learn something new each day. The needs of all gifted learners to reach their full potential is throughout gifted learner research. Davis and Rimm (1994) noted “children are not born underachievers; researchers contend this behavior is learned, and, it can be unlearned” (p. 291). Rimm (2008) determined that

“underachieving children have not learned the process of achievement; in fact they have learned to underachieve” (p. 5). Research indicates gifted learners need:

- National funding and recognized gifted learner priority (NAGC, 2015; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; Siegle & McCoach, 2009);
- Challenge and intellectual stimulation through curriculum and teacher differentiated instruction (McCoach & Siegle, 2003; NAGC, 2009; Reis et. al, 1993; Siegle & McCoach, 2009; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007);
- Cluster grouping and interact with their intellectual peers (Berndt, 1999; Clasen & Clasen, 1995; Reis & McCoach, 2000; Reis et al 1995);
- Parent involvement and family support (Berube & Siegle, 1995; Clarenbach 2007, Hébert, 2001; McCoach & Siegle, 2003; Rimm, 2007; Rimm & Lowe, 1988);
- Social-emotional support in school, student and teacher connectedness, motivation, self-regulation, and goal valuation (McCoach & Siegle, 2003);
- Support for diversity, peer and social influences (Clasen, 1993; Clasen & Clasen, 1995; Hébert, 2001; Hébert & Olenchak, 2000; Moore, Ford & Milner, 2005; Reis & McCoach, 2000);
- Interventions to address underachievement (Emerick, 1992; Hoover-Shultz, 2005; Rimm, 2008; Rimm, 1997);
- Effective school counselors using student records data (Baker & Shaw, 1987; Peterson & Colangelo, 1996).

Achievement among our brightest students has not been an educational priority in our country. In the U.S. Department of Education’s report, *Turning a Blind Eye; Neglecting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Through Limited Accountability, Oversight, and Reporting: 2014-15 State of the Nation in Gifted Education* (NAGC, 2015), since the era of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2001), and the funded grant. The Race to the Top, which focused on closing the achievement gap among our lowest performing students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). While improving student achievement among our lowest performing students is a very important goal, there is no evidence that focusing on minimal competency for our lower performing students will increase academic growth for our high-achieving students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). They found gifted students are underachieving because there is a national focus on low-performing schools and no federal mandate requiring the

education of gifted children. As a result, gifted education services are at risk for budget cuts. Declines in federal, state, and local funds are barriers to excellence among our high-achieving students. “Underachievement can occur when gifted students do not receive the support and educational services they require to develop their talent” (Siegle & McCoach, 2009, p. 197).

Parents play an important role in the success of gifted children’s academic performance. Berube and Siegle (1995) recognized if parents do not place a priority on their children’s academic achievements, it could translate to school is not important. In addition, studies suggest gifted children are underachieving because they do not value the benefits of school and are not motivated to work hard at the tasks associated with successful outcomes of school (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Clarenbach (2007) found many gifted learners do not possess the study skills and persistence required to achieve in rigorous coursework beyond their K–12 years as everything comes so easily at first. When a gifted student fails to reach his or her highest potential, it creates damage to the individual as well as damage to the society deprived of their contribution (Butler-Por, 1993).

In *Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child*, Sylvia Rimm (2007) found common characteristics among gifted learners that impede success in school. For example, characteristics include being unorganized, forgetful, disinterested in academic subjects and full of excuses regarding homework and other tasks attached to the school learning environment. Parents and teachers are frustrated with these gifted learners because “they are obviously capable of satisfactory achievement” but fail to meet their academic potential (Rimm, 2007, p. 161). Hébert (2001) indicated that family environments where parents do not model the achievement ideology influence underachievement among their children. According to Rimm and Lowe (1988), inconsistent parent skills occur more often in homes of underachieving gifted students than of their high achieving counterparts. Rimm and Lowe (1988) emphasized the importance of parents maintaining consistent parenting skills with gifted students. In addition to school variables, family and home environments can have an impact on gifted learners. While parents and educators may believe that poor performance among gifted learners is an indication of poor motivation, this is more complex than motivation (Siegle, 2013). Rimm and Lowe (1988) studied family environments, comparing 22 underachieving gifted students to students in case studies considered being eminent and gifted achievers. There were similarities between the two groups in the family structure, climate, and value system; the main differences were in the

parenting styles. Researchers of the study indicated: (a) parents conferred adult status on gifted children too early which resulted in underachievement, (b) independent homework completion was characteristic of an achiever, (c) parents communicating interests in personal careers and satisfaction with careers, and (d) reasonable standards of family organization appear important to achievers. Rimm and Lowe (1988) determined that parents are often tempted to empower gifted children too soon because of their adult-like vocabulary (p. 353). Rim and Lowe found (1988) that if power is given to children too soon, parents may have a difficult time regaining the control and therefore, underachievement may be the outcome.

Gifted learners need social-emotional support. McCoach and Siegle (2003) conducted a study exploring factors that differentiate gifted learners from high-achieving gifted students in their general academic self-perceptions, attitudes toward school, attitudes toward their teachers, motivation and self-regulation, and goal valuation. McCoach and Siegle (2003) noted that this study represents a stride toward quantifying factors related to underachievement of gifted adolescents. The sample included 178 gifted high school students in grades 9–12 from 28 school districts across the nation. The sample was a convenience sample of school district volunteers and not necessarily indicative of high schools nationwide. A school district contact person from the 28 high schools coordinated and collected the surveys and student data. Gifted achievers were those in the top 10% of their class or had a least a 3.75 grade point average; gifted underachievers were students in the bottom half of their high school class or had a grade point average at or below 2.5. Although grades may be less reliable than standard measures of academic achievement, grades can be a rubric for student motivation and achievement in a classroom environment (Siegle & McCoach, 2009). Both groups had an IQ or achievement score at or above the 92nd percentile. Although these are not the universally accepted definitions, they allowed the researchers to distinguish two groups of students: those who were succeeding in school by traditional standards and those who were not succeeding based on their “expected” abilities or potential. This criterion gleaned 56 gifted underachievers and 122 gifted achievers. The sample was composed of 101 males, 72 females, and five students who did not indicate their gender. The researchers used the School Attitude Assessment Survey-R (SAAS-R; McCoach, 2000), which contains 43 items designed to measure five factors of interest. The instrument utilized seven-point Likert agreement scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (McCoach & Siegle, 2003).

Results of the study indicated that gifted achievers and gifted underachievers differed in their attitudes toward school and teachers, motivation/self-regulation, and goal valuation, but not in their academic self-perception. “Both gifted achievers and gifted underachievers exhibited high academic self-perceptions” (McCoach & Siegle, 2003, p. 148). Although gifted achievers exhibited more positive attitudes toward teachers and toward school than did the gifted underachievers, there are still several unanswered questions that exist because of this study: (a) Do achievers and underachievers share common behavioral or personality characteristics? (b) How do gifted achievers differ from gifted underachievers? (c) What causes some gifted students to underachieve in school? (d) Can we predict which gifted students are at the greatest risk for underachievement (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Gifted learners need challenge and intellectual stimulation through curriculum and teacher differentiated instruction. According to the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2009), gifted students underachieve because of boredom with unchallenging curriculum in the classroom or to fit in socially with their same age peer group. Siegle and McCoach (2009) agreed that gifted students often are not able to thrive in regular classrooms due to the lack of intellectually stimulating learning environments.

According to Reis, Westberg, Kulikowich, Caillard, Hebert, Plucker, and Smits, (1993), most gifted learners in elementary school already know 40% to 50% of the content before the start of the school year (p. 199). Many gifted learners underperform by default because they are not provided the differentiated instruction they so desperately need (Siegle & McCoach, 2000). Gifted students thrive in academic environments because of thoughtful, respectful, and rigorous instructional practices. McCoach and Siegle (2003) suggested the relationship between classroom practices and academic underachievement be explored further. Reis (1998) found “a relationship between unchallenging or inappropriate curriculum in elementary school and underachievement in middle and high school” (p. 729). Moreover, Reis suggests that gifted students may be exhibiting integrity and courage by refusing to work on assignments below their intellectual level. Many classroom teachers do not provide the intellectual stimulation talented and gifted students need to thrive (Siegle & McCoach, 2009, p. 199). Moreover, a considerable amount of teachers’ time and attention has been given to struggling students in the classroom, which negatively influences our top-achieving students’ academic growth (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2007) suggested using William & Mary curriculum units with underachieving students, as they may provide the intellectual stimulation

needed to help reverse underachievement behaviors. Research suggests that highly qualified teachers are the variable that makes the difference for gifted learners in a thriving classroom environment. According to Westberg, et al., (1993), more than 61% of classroom teachers are not trained to provide such necessary instruction for gifted learners (p. 199).

Gifted learners need interventions to address academic success; Hoover-Shultz (2005) suggested that gifted “underachievers have been either underserved or neglected by gifted programs” (p. 46). There are two underlying excuses that become a concern for the epidemic of underachievement among gifted students: (a) gifted underachievers are not willing to put in hard work to achieve the outcomes or goals they are so capable of, and (b) they shy away from competition because gifted underachievers run the risk of losing and therefore feel like losers (Rimm, 1997). Gifted underachievers often blame their teachers, parents, or even the dog for their inability to achieve (Rimm, 1997). Rimm (2008) suggested that a common thread all underachievers possess is manipulation. Underachieving gifted students blame their poor school performance on low-quality teachers, boredom, and irrelevant assignments, acceleration is a cost effective intervention (Assouline, 2015; Rimm, 2008). Underachieving gifted learners may isolate themselves by getting lost in their reading, and others may never pick up a book to read at all.

A few empirical studies with interventions have manifested limited success. Emerick’s (1992) investigation indicated six factors influencing the reversal patterns of underachievement among gifted students: (a) recognizing and validating a gifted underachievers interests and strengths, (b) integrating student’s interest into the school learning experiences will motivate the gifted underachiever to perform well in school, (c) allowing gifted underachievers to participate in a modified curriculum and special programs that will motivate them to learn, and (d) providing a partnership with parents during the reversal process will be invaluable and benefit the underachieving gifted students. Teachers of the gifted underachievers should be encouraged to advocate for their underachieving gifted learners. According to Emerick’s (1992) study, teachers played a major role in reversing underachievement behaviors. Teachers’ advocacy of underachieving gifted students is perceived as the most effective in learning situations exhibit many of the same characteristics as the subjects—love of learning.

Emerick (1992) conducted a study with gifted students to determine their perspective regarding contributing factors to their underachieving patterns. Emerick determined outside

interest, parental support, autonomy, caring teachers, and challenging curriculum are the factors that support reversing underachievement behaviors among gifted learners. Administrators serving in gifted education across the state were asked to provide nominations of students with the following criteria: an aptitude score of 125 and above and academic underachievement for a period of two years or more, then sustained a reversal period of one year or more. Ten students were selected from those nominated. Emerick (1992) collected data in two phases. The first phase included biographical, academic performance, and intellectual ability data through questionnaires. The second phase of data collection involved collecting data directly from the 10 participants through questionnaires and interviews.

The findings of the study gleaned several themes with regard to the gifted students' perceptions of contributing factors to the reversal of academic underachievement. Contributing factors/themes were interests outside of school day, parent involvement, academic performance, a rigorous classroom environment, teacher-student relationship, and improved self-efficacy (Emerick, 1992). Self-perceptions and positive attitudes toward school success were impactful factors in this study. Although the students did not select self-concept as an impactful factor as they did the specific teacher influence, students realized their personal responsibility was a factor in the reversing underachievement in their school achievement (Emerick, 1992). All 10 students had outside interests provided: (a) an opportunity to escape, (b) self-worth, (c) an opportunity to maintain their love for learning, and (d) a connection to their personal interests and meaningful tasks within the curriculum while supporting their academic success (Emerick, 1992). Participants in this study believed that a specific teacher was the most influential factor in the underachievement pattern (Emerick, 1992).

Gifted learners need support in diversity, peer and social influences. According to Reis and McCoach (2000), the influence of peers may contribute to the underachievement of young gifted students. Moore, Ford, and Milner (2005) maintained that "social influences are closely linked with underachievement" (p. 172). Although there are many threads connected to social influences, peer pressure seems to have the most prevalent impact on educational outcomes among students in general and students of color (Moore et al., 2005). Hébert (2001) found that five out of six of the young men in his study experienced negative attitudes toward academic achievement because of peer group influence. One of the participants in the study, Skip, noted that athletic achievement was awarded more than academic achievement in his experience.

Baum et al. (1995) found positive gains in students who had the opportunity to interact with their appropriate peer group. Clasen (1993) noted that the literature contains very few studies on the use of mentorship relationships to reverse the patterns underachieving gifted young males. Historically, mentoring has been the pathway to provide knowledge and acquisition of skill to young gifted children. (Hébert & Olenchak, 2000). Although the literature on this topic is almost nonexistent, researchers explored mentorship experiences of three young males who were characterized as gifted and underachieving males (Hébert & Olenchak, 2000). The purpose of the research was to examine the three male students who were considered to be underachievers, and determine how involved adults with each subject could reverse the patterns of underachievement in these gifted young males (Hébert & Olenchak, 2000). The three young men selected for this study ranged in age from elementary to young adolescence. This qualitative case study consisted of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions designed to learn the perceptions of young men's school experiences (Hébert & Olenchak, 2000). The findings of this study determined that an engaged adult mentor was a dominant factor in the subjects' lives. The study found important characteristics of the mentor were consistency, non-judgmental attitude, open-mindedness, strong advocacy, and social emotional support for the mentee (Hebert & Olenchak, 2000).

Gifted learners need to cluster with their gifted peers. Reis, Hébert, Diaz, Maxfield, Gifted learners need to cluster with their gifted peers. Reis, Hébert, Diaz, Maxfield, and Ratley (1995) found that interaction among high-achieving peers might contribute to the reversal of underachievement in gifted high school students who start to under-achieve. According to Clasen and Clasen (1995), 66% of students report that peer pressure is the dominant factor causing them to get poor grades and thus underachieve. In 1999, Berndt compared students' grades and behaviors over the course of one academic school year. After looking at grades and behavior in the fall and again in spring, Berndt determined students' grades and behavior closely mirrored their friends' grades and behavior. "This finding does not imply causality, since students often choose friends whose characteristics are already similar to theirs" (Berndt, 1999, p. 18). The idea that gifted students may replicate the behaviors of their close friends suggests that there is a relationship between a student's success and the success of his or her closest peer group (Reis & McCoach, 2000).

Gifted learners need effective school counselors using student data. While considering patterns of underachievement among gifted students, Baker and Shaw (1987) indicated that student records could be used to identify patterns of underachievement and inspire prevention rather than remediation. Peterson and Colangelo (1996) maintained that researchers have not used the wealth of critical information found in student records. They noted that all schools have files with study data readily available and accessible to teachers and counselors. Peterson and Colangelo conducted a study examining gifted achievers and gifted underachievers in grades 7–12 using school files from graduating classes in 1990, 1991, and 1992. The purpose of the study was to raise awareness among school counselors that data could be accessed to gain insightfulness into existing and emerging patterns of underachievement (Peterson & Colangelo, 1996). The sample consisted of 153 students (68 males, 85 females) in a Midwestern urban high school from predominately middle-class White families. Students were identified according to school district standards, which included two standardized measures: (a) Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (Wechsler, 1974), with 130 being at 98th percentile; (b) a composite score on the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (Otis & Lennon, 1989) score at or above 132, with 132 being at the 95th percentile; (c) a composite score on the Stanford Achievement Test (Psychological Corporation, 1988) at or above the 95th percentile; or (d) at least one subtest score on the Stanford Achievement Test at or above the 98th percentile in the areas of vocabulary, reading, concepts of numbers, science, social studies, or language. The researchers reviewed school records based on gender, attendance, tardiness, course selection required and elected, semester grades in grades 7–12, grade point average (GPA) at graduation, achievers were those students identified for the gifted program and graduated with a GPA of greater or equal to 3.35 on a 4-point scale.

Gifted achievers were subdivided into two categories based on GPA at graduation: high achievers (HA) with GPA greater than 3.75 and moderate achievers (MA) with a GPA equal to 3.35 to 3.74. The selections of the gifted underachievers were those who graduated with a GPA of equal or less than 3.35. The gifted underachievers in this school district were not necessarily selected for alternative services or special gifted programming, although many had met the criteria for gifted services selected for the gifted program (Peterson & Colangelo, 1996). The gifted underachievers divided into two categories: moderate underachievers (MU) and extreme underachievers (EU). The moderate underachievers identified had a GPA of 2.75 to 3.34.

Extreme underachievers had a grade point average of less than 2.75 (Peterson & Colangelo, 1996). The results of the study indicated 68% graduated as gifted achievers (36 males, 68 females) and 32% graduated as gifted underachievers (32 males, 17 females). The results of the study indicated males were almost equal between the two categories of gifted achievers and gifted underachievers with 53% versus 47% respectively (Peterson & Colangelo, 1996).

### **Gifted Programs in Virginia**

The Virginia Association for Gifted (VAG) supports through advocacy and excellence; comprised of educators, parents, community members, and guided by current research to improve the quality of instruction for the gifted population in the Commonwealth of Virginia. VAG provides opportunities for stakeholders in gifted education to include university professors, gifted supervisors, teachers of gifted learners, parents, and others to collaborate, build their capacity around the needs of gifted students in a professional setting <http://www.vagifted.org/>. The Virginia Association for Gifted's (VAG) website provides an extensive list of enrichment resources available across the Commonwealth of Virginia that are available to our gifted students in Virginia. <https://vagifted.site-ym.com/?page=ResTeachers>

In addition, gifted programming in Virginia encourages twenty-first century skills that provide critical and creative thinking skills are important to the needs of middle school gifted learners. Competitions whereby students have to work collaboratively on real world problems are essential to the development of a middle school gifted learner.

- Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem solving
- Destination Imagination encourages teams of learners to have fun, take risks, focus and frame challenges while incorporating STEM, the arts, and service learning.
- Future Problem Solving of Virginia is a yearlong educational program that combines the rigorous intellectual challenge of creative problem solving with an interdisciplinary study of the future.
- Virginia Mathematics League builds student interest and confidence in mathematics through solving worthwhile problems

- MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of fun and engaging “bee” style contests.
- William & Mary Middle School Model United Nations is an educational program that engages middle school students in an exploration of current world issues through interactive simulations and curricular materials.  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\\_ed/opportunities\\_for\\_gifted\\_middle\\_school\\_students.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/opportunities_for_gifted_middle_school_students.pdf)

In July 2013, the Virginia Board of Education charged the Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted (VACEG) were tasked with researching quality programming options for high-ability learners at the middle school level. Recognizing that there is not one way to best serve all gifted learners, research-based best practices suggest that schools and school divisions must offer a continuum of services. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) defines this continuum as “a menu of educational options that are respectful of individual student differences and mindful of classroom and community resources.” Gifted programs in Virginia vary along the continuum of services gifted is a local decision. Each school board approves the local plan (VDOE, 2012).

In the Commonwealth of Virginia each county, city, or town is required by VDOE to develop a local gifted plan approved by their school board to meet the needs of their gifted population. VDOE conducts a technical review of the local plan. For example, Accomack County Public Schools serves approximately 5,000 students in 11 schools. The county has three island schools: elementary, a middle-high school, as well as the only K-12 combined school in Virginia, located on Tangier Island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay. The school district has mainland schools to include four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two comprehensive high schools, each with on-site career and technical centers (CTE). The high schools use a 4x4-block schedule and offer a variety of college level courses. Each school division is required to post their local gifted plan on the website.

Accomack County provides an opportunity for students to learn with their intellectual peers on a part-time basis, most of the time students are learning with their age –level peers. Gifted resource teachers and classroom teachers collaborate to provide acceleration and enrichment opportunities for students who are identified as gifted. The program emphasis:

mathematics acceleration, scientific inquiry and investigation, research in history using primary sources, writing for various purposes, and oral presentations of projects. The program in Accomack County's Gifted Program lends itself to higher order thinking and problem solving, individual interest and ability of their gifted population. Students at the secondary level are encouraged to enroll in honors courses, advanced placement, dual-enrollment courses are available through a local college for gifted and high-ability students. (Retrieved from [http://www.accomack.k12.va.us/pdf/local\\_plan.pdf](http://www.accomack.k12.va.us/pdf/local_plan.pdf)).

In the suburban division of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) located along mid-Atlantic coast, gifted services are available at all levels through both school-based and citywide program are available. At all levels, gifted students in the VBCPS are provided instruction via a differentiated curriculum that is responsive to the academic and social and emotional needs of the student. Program options are available to gifted students at the elementary, middle and high school levels ([https://www.vbschools.com/academic\\_programs/gifted](https://www.vbschools.com/academic_programs/gifted)).

VBCPS identifies students in the areas of:

- General Intellectual Aptitude (advanced aptitudes demonstrated by skills and creative expression in general intellectual ability); and
- Visual and Performing Arts Aptitude (specific aptitudes in selected visual or performing arts demonstrated by skills and creative expression and excelling consistently in the development of a product or performance in any of the visual and/or performing arts).

All first-grade and fifth-grade students enrolled in VBCPS are screened for possible gifted intellectual program identification. Assessment specialists from the division's Gifted Education Testing Office administer screening for first-graders in October or November and for fifth-graders in September or October. Students who are identified for gifted services retain their identification from the point of identification until graduation. It is the philosophy of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools that students need learning experiences based on their readiness level, their interest and their learning profile.

In contrast, Norfolk Public Schools (NPS), represents a large, urban city district with 32,000 students and 50 schools. The district clusters gifted students at the elementary level, and gifted resource teachers collaborate to differentiate lessons for students. NPS provides several

ways to accelerate learning at the class/course, program, and school levels, including honors courses, Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate classes and school Academy for Discovery grades 3-8, Academy for International Studies, specialized programs at each high school, i.e. engineering, leadership, medical, arts, and military science. Dual Enrollment and Young Scholars Program at the secondary level. Students have access to summer enrichment programs such as STEAMS @Camp Einstein where students get to choose sessions based on their interest.

### **Summary**

The literature review is the research foundation for this study, it outlines the needs of gifted learners, such as funding for programs, challenging curriculum, social emotional support, interventions to address underachievement, parent and family involvement, diversity and social influences, and the opportunity to matriculate with their intellectual peers. Effective principal leadership practices are needed to support gifted learners and gifted programs.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and procedures that implemented were study to identify principal practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs. This chapter includes the following sections: purpose of the study, research design and methodology, research design justification, research questions, site selection, data collection gathering procedures, instrument design, validation, and a summary.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify principal leadership practices that are effective in supporting gifted learners and supporting gifted programs. With the Delphi Survey Technique the researcher solicited input from a panel of experts in the field of gifted education including supervisors of gifted programs, principals, and university professors within the Virginia Commonwealth. The opinions of the panel of experts were collected, analyzed and reported with a goal to gain consensus of leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and in support of gifted programs.

**Delphi round I.** Two open-ended questions, were emailed to the panel of experts to obtain a list of principal leadership practices believed to be effective in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs.

Research Questions:

1. What do a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices as effective in support of gifted learners?
2. What do a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices as effective in support of gifted programs?

**Delphi round II.** The researcher compiled and categorized the principal leadership practices considered effective in support of gifted learners and effective in support of gifted programs from the Round I questions. After reviewing and collapsing recurring responses, she compiled a list to create the Round II Questionnaire. The panel of 15 experts reviewed and rated the list of Principal Leadership Practices in Delphi Round II. The researcher used data results

from Delphi Round II to create the Delphi Round III questionnaire for review by the panel of experts.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

The Delphi Methodology was chosen to conduct this study. Yousuf (2007) contends that the Delphi Method is a group process that provides essential components to the researcher such as the communication process, a panel of experts, and critical feedback that is different from what a researcher would receive if a survey were conducted. The technique is characterized as a process whereby a panel of experts are able to handle a complex problem as a whole without being in the same physical location.

### **Site Selection and Selection Procedures**

The site selection is the Virginia Commonwealth, which is located in the Southeast region of the United States and has 132 school divisions. The researcher used purposeful sampling to recruit panel experts to participate in the Delphi Study. She used the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website, to recruit supervisors in gifted education to recommend principals and university professors considered supportive of gifted learners and supportive of gifted programs based on effective Principal Leadership practices. Supervisors of gifted learners understand current best practices that influence gifted education i.e. differentiation, flexible grouping, compacting the curriculum.

The researcher made initial contact to: supervisors of gifted, principals, and university professors in the Commonwealth of Virginia by phone and/or email to ask and encourage participation in the study. The panel represented three regions in Virginia which included: Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, and the Tidewater Region. The Virginia Department of Education School Division is divided into eight regions: Region I- Central Virginia, Region 2- Tidewater, Region 3, Northern Neck, Region 4, Northern Virginia, Region 5, Valley, and Region 6, Western Virginia, Region 7, Southwest, and Region 8- Southside.

The researcher asked each panel expert initially contacted to refer other qualified panel experts in Virginia Commonwealth. In this study, the snowball chain-referral reflects purposeful, nonprobability sampling seeking qualified, panel experts: supervisors of gifted, principals, university professors with gifted education expertise or experience. Snowball sampling may be defined as a technique for obtaining research subjects through identification

of initial subjects who are then asked to provide the names of other potential participants (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004).

### **Permission to Conduct Research**

The researcher submitted an application to Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) and approval (see Appendix B) which was granted January 29, 2018 to conduct the research. The researcher received training and certificate in Human Subjects Protections (see Appendix A).

### **Selection of Panel of Experts**

The Delphi panel of experts was recruited using the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) 2017-18 list of Gifted Education Coordinators from the 132 school divisions in the state of Virginia. Potential and some expert panel members known to the researcher throughout her gifted education career were contacted to participate.

Upon approval from IRB, the researcher recruited supervisors of gifted with the goal of representation from the eight regions listed on the Virginia Department of Education's website. In Virginia, the local school board and supervisors of gifted are responsible for writing and implementing the local plan for gifted and supervisors of gifted usually have had formal training in best practices in gifted education. Supervisors of gifted were contacted by phone or email to gain their consent and willingness to participate in the study, and were asked to recommend principals and/or university professors to participate in the study. The researcher contacted multiple university professors knowledgeable in gifted education; however, there was limited participation among university professors. The panel experts included five supervisors of gifted, eight principals, and two university professors from three different regions across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Panel experts were selected based on their knowledge of gifted learners, professional experience, and or education and training in the field of gifted education.

### **Data Collection and Gathering Procedures**

The researcher followed up with a detailed email describing the study, Full Consent Form (see Appendix C) and contained Delphi Round I Questions, outlined the timeline with expectations of the commitment, and the panel experts were assigned a code to protect their identity to ensure their responses remained confidential throughout the process.

**Delphi round I.** The researcher emailed a questionnaire to the selected panel members and asked them to list as many Principal Leadership practices they could recall.

The Delphi Questions Round I:

1. What do you believe are the principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners?
2. What do you believe are the principal leadership practices that are effective in support Gifted programs?

**Delphi round II.** The researcher compiled responses from Round I questionnaire. After review and collapsing recurring responses, the researcher compiled a list to create the Round II questionnaire. The panel of experts reviewed and ranked the list of Principal Leadership Practices in Delphi Round II. The researcher used data results from Delphi Round II to create the Delphi Round III questionnaire.

**Delphi round III.** The researcher emailed the Round III Delphi questionnaire to the panel of experts, which included responses from the Delphi Round II questionnaire. The panel of experts reviewed their ratings, confirmed or revised their responses toward panel consensus (Yousef, 2007). Panel consensus was determined with 80% agreement and a 3.5 mean. Worthen and Sanders (1987) found that the payoff usually begins to diminish after the third round.

### **Instrument Design and Validation**

Helmer (1983) determined the Delphi technique and its basic characteristics supported the validity and reliability as an evidenced based method of data collection. The Delphi technique is described as a communication process that is used to allow a group of experts to solve a complex problem when time, distance, and physical location make it nearly impossible for panel of experts to convene in the same physical location (Yousef, 2007). A panel of experts with knowledge, expertise, and or education or training in the field of gifted education was selected participate in this study. The panel of experts represented multiple school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Researchers in the field found the use of the Delphi technique provided a consensus that represents an opinion via a panel of experts. The Delphi questions in the study were validated using a group of administrator experts in the Virginia Tech Cohort.

### **Data Treatment/Management**

The data collected were treated with respect and anonymity as each panel expert was given a code to identify their questionnaire; i.e. P1= Principal; U1= University 1; S1 = Supervisor of Gifted. Information containing identifying information such as phone numbers, email addresses, and other information that would identify an expert were kept under lock and key (Dalkey, 1967). The data remained under lock and key at the researcher's home until the final defense, and at successful dissertation defense, data will be destroyed.

### **Time Line**

The researcher completed IRB training and the certificate is in Appendix A. In November 2017, upon approval of prospectus, the researcher completed and submitted the IRB application. In January 2018, with IRB approval from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the researcher began recruiting participants for Delphi Round I. The researcher requested responses from panel of experts. The selected panel of experts participated in Delphi Rounds I, II, and II completed the entire process by January 2019 (Yousef, 2007).

### **Methodology Summary**

Chapter 3 provides an outline for the research design, sample selection and procedures for data collection for this study aimed at identifying what experts believe to be the principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners and gifted programs. The Delphi technique pertains to using a group of experts to a gain consensus of opinion on a specific topic, with essential feedback as part of the components of the research design (Yousef, 2007).

## Chapter 4 Analysis of Data

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to identify principal leadership practices that effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs. The methodology used was a three-round Delphi technique to study effective principal leadership practices in gifted education. The Delphi technique provided mixed methods research and empirical data collection and analysis. Three rounds included a qualitative, open-ended survey and two structured questionnaires to collect and analyze expert judgments of a panel to identify principal leadership practices that effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs.

The recruited panel of experts represented three categories: principals, supervisors of gifted, and university professors from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Meriam (2009) found *“snowball sampling is the most common form of purposeful sampling which involves selecting a few participants that meet certain criteria for the study who then refer additional possible participants”* (p.79). The researcher recruited participants from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) 2017-2018 Gifted Education Coordinators list and the Virginia Gifted Advisory Committee on the VDOE website, and participants known to the researcher throughout her career in gifted education. Supervisors of gifted education were asked to recommend a principal or university professor that they believed was supportive of gifted learners and gifted programs.

### **Delphi Round I: Recruiting Process.**

The researcher used the snowball technique to select panel members, asking supervisors of gifted to recommend principals from their school divisions to participate in the Delphi Study. The researcher recruited expert panel members from across the eight regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia using the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website. Panel members represented urban, suburban, and rural schools divisions in Virginia. Geographically, the panel members were from Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, and Tidewater (mid-Atlantic, coastal) regions. The researcher reached out to VDOE Gifted Advisory Committee and the supervisor at the state level to participate. E-mails were sent to Gifted and Talented (GT) supervisors, university professors, and school principals for agreement to participate in the

Delphi study. Reminders were sent through phone calls, emails, texts, and personal visits. This process resulted in 15 confirmed panel members (see Table 1) to participate in the three-round Delphi study.

### **Background of Panel Description**

The panel of experts reflected education, expertise in gifted education, diversity, and geographically represented three regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The university professors hold doctoral degrees in gifted education. Two principal participants and one supervisor of gifted hold a doctoral degree in education. A third principal participant completed his dissertation in gifted education. A fourth principal participant holds an endorsement gifted education. A total of eight principals participated in the study. All panel members or participants in the group representing supervisors of the gifted are endorsement in gifted education. The panel of experts or participants include five males and ten females, five White, nine Black, and one Hispanic. Panel members represented urban, suburban, and rural schools and districts in Virginia. Geographically, the panel members were from Region -4 Northern Virginia, Region -1; Central Virginia, and Region-2 Tidewater (mid-Atlantic, coastal) regions.

Table 1

#### *Delphi Round I Panel Participants*

Groups	Number	Percent	Regions
Principals	8	53.3%	R2 (7); R4 (1)
Supervisors of Gifted	5	33.3%	R2 (3); R1(1); R4 (1)
University	2	13.3%	R1(1); R2(1)
Total	15	100%	3(15)

**Delphi round I.** Two open-ended questions, validated by university graduate students and principals were emailed (see Appendix C) to the panel of experts to obtain a list of principal leadership practices they believed were effective in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs. Panel members were asked to list as many responses they could generate. The researcher received 15 participant surveys that included over 300 responses between the effective

principal practices for gifted learners and effective practices to support gifted programs. The open-ended survey questions emailed in Round I:

1. What do you believe are principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners?
2. What do you believe are principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted programs?

The researcher conducted thematic analysis for over 300 responses for recurring themes, patterns and keywords using a color-coded table to collapse the number of items where items were recurring in meaning (see Appendix D). Responses were collapsed to 74 practices for gifted learners, and 66 practices for gifted programs. The 140 practices the panel members provided were unique to one another (Keeney, 2011).

The researcher invited a critical friend, who asked provocative questions, and provided data and feedback to examine the study through another lens (Costa & Kallick, 1993). The *critical friend* holds a doctorate in education, and K-12 career experience in secondary and gifted education, research, and program evaluation.

**Delphi round II.** The researcher collapsed Round I survey responses to create Round II questionnaire, a 74-item questionnaire to identify principal leadership practices to effectively support *gifted learners* and a 66-item survey to identify principal leadership practices to effectively support *gifted programs*. The two questionnaires were emailed (see Appendix E) to the 15 panel member participants. Each survey used a 4-point Likert-rating scale with 1-not effective, 2-slightly effective, 3-effective, and 4-highly effective to distinguish panel expert judgments of the effectiveness level of principal practices to support gifted learners and gifted programs. The researcher sent reminders to participants to complete the survey by email, text, phone call and personal visit. However, one university panelist declined to continue the process in-Round II. Schlomer (2010) indicated importance to report missing data in research.

In the Round II questionnaire for gifted learners, missing data consisted of seven answers or .67%, less than one percent, with one missing answer indicating “NA”, four left blank, and one “1&2”. Five answers or .54%, less than one percent, were missing in Round II gifted programs questionnaire, four missing answers were “NA” and one left blank. According to Schlomer (2010), with less than ten percent missing data, the cases may be included without

bias. To maximize data available with 14 panel members in the study, cases with missing data were included in analysis by the researcher.

Analysis for Round II includes percentage of panel ratings by 4-point Likert-scale by item (principal leadership practices) compiled from the 14 panel expert ratings for gifted learners. Descriptive statistics for each item (principal practices) in rank order by mean and consensus with mean, median, standard deviation, percent panel ratings in either effective or highly effective, and consensus status are shown in Table 2 for gifted learners and Table 3 for gifted programs.

The researcher determined consensus criteria aligned with research questions—to identify principal leadership practices that *effectively* support gifted learners and gifted programs. Similar to prior studies (Eastwood, 2012; Mirra 2004), the researcher established consensus criteria with at least 80% panel ratings in either effective and/or highly-effective ratings on the Likert-scale, and at least a mean at 3.50 to rank importance

### **Percentage of Panel Ratings by Likert-Scale Ratings**

Panel percentage response by item (principal practices) to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. The percentage of response by 14 experts is shown for each rating on the 4-point Likert scale: 1- Not Effective, 2- Slightly Effective, 3-Effective, and 4-Highly Effective.

**Gifted learners.** Table 2 indicates percentage of panel responses for each Likert-scale rating, not-effective (1-point) to highly effective (4-points) for each item—principal leadership practice for gifted learners. In the 4-point Highly Effective rating, panel percent responses ranged from 29% to 93%., Effective ranged from 7% to 64 %, Slightly Effective percent response ranged from 0% to 36%, and Not Effective ranged from 0% to 21%. Eight principal leadership practices that received at least 80% in the *highly effective* rating were differentiation of curriculum, scheduling to ensure gifted and general education teachers were able to collaboratively plan, and meeting the social-emotional needs of gifted learners, monitoring teacher effectiveness; providing teacher feedback, and the principal models the appropriate attitude towards gifted learners that would avoid elitism.

Table 2

*Delphi Round II: Percentage of Panel Ratings on the 4-Point-Likert-Scale for Gifted Learners*

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not Effective</b>	<b>2-Slightly Effective</b>	<b>3- Effective</b>	<b>4-Highly Effective</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>				
1.	The principal is flexible and willing to make instructional decisions in support of gifted learners without fear of providing preferential or special treatment.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
2.	The principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners' needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>93%</b>
3.	The principal ensures scheduling for pull-out and/or push-in services.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
4.	The principal ensures the fidelity of gifted services.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
5.	The principal supports flexible grouping and interventions when gifted learners need specific academic support.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>
6.	The principal supports homogeneous grouping, i.e. ability.	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>43%</b>
7.	The principal will cluster gifted children with others who fall within the same category.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>50%</b>
8.	The principal will allow gifted students to work vertically with their gifted peers who are older and or younger.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>50%</b>
9.	The principal will promote project-based assessments that enable gifted students to think outside the box.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
10.	The principal promotes using pre-assessments that indicate a student's proficiency without re-teaching material/content.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
11.	The principal encourages teachers to give assignments and activities that are conducive to gifted learners' abilities, i.e. tiered assignments.	0%	0%	29%	71%
12.	The principal will support the belief that teachers facilitate learning.	0%	14%	21%	64%
13.	The principal supports the idea of personalized learning.	0%	14%	29%	57%
14.	The principal knows what effective instruction is, and looks like.	0%	0%	7%	93%
15.	The principal communicates to staff the importance in recognizing and meeting the social emotional needs of gifted learners; requires specialized instructions.	0%	0%	14%	86%
16.	The principal promotes appropriate social emotional support via the curriculum.	0%	7%	36%	57%
17.	The principal sets a priority for strong social emotional support via the guidance counselor.	0%	14%	36%	50%
18.	The principal provides meaningful professional development to aid teachers and staff instructing gifted learners.	0%	0%	57%	43%
19.	The principal will assist teachers with protecting student's emotional health through professional development	0%	21%	36%	43%
20.	The principal will provide coaching to new teachers serving in the Cluster Model.	0%	14%	36%	50%
21.	The principal will develop capacity within the building to address the needs of gifted children.	0%	7%	36%	57%

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
22.	The principal provides teachers with proper instructional support to include higher level questioning skills.	0%	7%	50%	43%
23.	The principal will provide professional training of cluster teachers and general education teachers.	0%	21%	36%	43%
24.	The principal provides resources for gifted students.	0%	29%	29%	43%
25.	The principal provides resources for teachers and others working with gifted learners to ensure gifted learners academic needs are being met.	0%	0%	50%	50%
26.	The principal builds positive relationships with students even when their interest level may or may not be the same as the majority.	0%	14%	50%	36%
27.	The principal provides students with choice based on interest.	0%	21%	21%	57%
28.	The principal promotes choice with reading and writing; provide open ended experiences for students to extend their thinking	0%	7%	29%	64%
29.	The principal provides open ended experiences for students to extend their thinking.	0%	14%	29%	57%
30.	The principal provides an opportunity for students to present passion projects, i.e. an exploration of what they want to learn.	0%	7%	43%	50%
31.	The principal incorporates enrichment activities in support of gifted learners, i.e. competitions, clubs, special student interests, student leadership. Mad Science Night, etc.	0%	21%	50%	29%

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
32.	The principal provides leadership opportunities to help them build their social influence and capacity.	0%	29%	43%	29%
33.	The principal selects the right teachers for the gifted cluster classrooms that can serve the students nontraditionally and flexible enough to meet the challenges of gifted.	0%	0%	29%	71%
34.	The principal should understand diverse gifted populations and gifted characteristics.	0%	14%	14%	71%
35.	The principal models the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners, their needs— avoids special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoids joking that trivializes, and realizes that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and perfectionist.	0%	7%	7%	86%
36.	The principal knows the students, personally connect, and understands their needs and interests.	0%	7%	64%	29%
37.	The principal understands and support the needs of gifted to including: twice-exceptional, English Language, and low social economic.	0%	7%	21%	71%
38.	The principal understands quirkiness and that gifted students might have asynchronous or twice-exceptional behaviors.	0%	7%	21%	71%
39.	The principal analyzes data to support planning.	0%	14%	29%	57%
40.	The principal actively incorporates the needs of gifted learners in accountability operating plan (AOP).	0%	29%	36%	36%
41.	The principal promotes a culture whereby data drives instructional decisions to include gifted learners so that all learners have 1 year of academic growth.	0%	0%	29%	71%

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
42.	The principal provides feedback for teacher growth.	0%	0%	14%	86%
43.	The principal monitors teacher effectiveness	0%	0%	14%	86%
44.	The principal monitors student performance of gifted learners.	0%	7%	29%	64%
45.	The principal provide workshop for parents of gifted learners.	21%	7%	43%	29%
46.	The principal provide workshops for gifted students i.e. self-efficacy.	14%	21%	36%	29%
47.	The principal will host regular parent meetings and include parents in conversations about needs of gifted learners.	7%	36%	29%	29%
48.	The principal will ensure full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school programs.	0%	7%	29%	50%
49.	The principal will seek feedback from parents of the gifted to see if their children's needs are met.	7%	14%	36%	43%
50.	The principal will be patient with parents and seek to understand and help with their concerns.	0%	21%	43%	29%
51.	The principal will seek feedback from gifted students themselves to see if needs are being addressed.	0%	21%	36%	43%
52.	The principal will establish a schedule that allows for gifted and general education teacher collaborative planning.	0%	0%	14%	86%
53.	The principal will ensure differentiation by all teachers.	0%	0%	7%	93%

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
54.	The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team.	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>71%</b>
55.	The principal will incorporate professional learning communities within the school with the purpose of developing differentiated lessons.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
56.	The principal will monitor Instruction and learning environment	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>
57.	The principal will ensure that learning environment provide rigorous instruction.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
58.	The principal will support effective Tier 1 Instruction within the school.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>64%</b>
59.	The principal will model and monitor differentiated instruction in all classrooms.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>
60.	The principal will be aware of what's going on in the classrooms, ensure it's a good fit for students, and share with other teachers, gifted staff, and principals.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>64%</b>
61.	The principal will monitor progress to ensure each learner receives the appropriate curricular opportunities in each classroom.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>50%</b>
62.	The principal will support student growth model.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>43%</b>
63.	The principal will discourage teachers from overuse of gifted learners as "helpers" or allowing them to sit without instruction because they are already ahead.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>64%</b>
64.	The principal will foster student growth accountability without rigidity.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
65.	The principal will encourage creativity.	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>79%</b>
66.	The principal will cultivate an atmosphere of innovation.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>57%</b>

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
67.	The principal will hire teachers with gifted education background and a passion for working with gifted learners.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>71%</b>
68.	The principal will create a vision and set high expectation for excellence for all students.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>
69.	The principal understands social emotional needs of gifted learners.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
70.	The principals stays current in best practices in working with gifted learners.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>29%</b>
71.	The principal adopts a facet of personal growth that encompasses learning about gifted education.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>
72.	The principal can frame and show connections between different schools, county-wide and needs of gifted learners.	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>
73.	The principal collaborates with the district gifted office.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>36%</b>
74.	The principal seeks help talking with parents regarding tests, referrals, recommendations, or working with teachers.	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>50%</b>

**Gifted programs.** Table 3 indicates the percentage of panel response ratings in each of the categories in the 4-point Likert-Scale. In the 4-point Highly Effective category, panel percent responses ranged from 29% to 86%, Effective ranged from 7% to 57%, Slightly Effective ranged from 0% to 36%, and Not Effective responses ranged from 0% to 14%. Two program practices received at least 80% in *highly effective* ratings for principal differentiation with attention to student strengths and areas of growth, and selection of gifted cluster teachers with the same care as general education teachers.

Table 3

*Delphi Round II: Percentage of Panel Ratings on 4-Point-Likert-Scale for Gifted Programs*

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
1.	The principal provides opportunities for teachers and parents to gain a full understanding of gifted programs and resources are vitally important.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>
2.	The principal engages all stakeholders into the process.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>
3.	The principal ensures that parents, staff and community members are aware and can access needed resources for referring students for gifted services.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>50%</b>
4.	The principal ensures that parents and students are aware of opportunities for gifted learners during and outside of the school day.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
5.	The principal ensures full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school gifted programs via robo calls, evening events, flyers to homes and school webpage postings.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>57%</b>
6.	The principal seeks funding for the gifted program.	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>50%</b>
7.	The principal actively engages principals typically find monetary resources to support gifted learners.	<b>7%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>
8.	The principal must have some ownership of the program so he/she can espouse its importance to others.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>57%</b>
9.	The principal has the ability to provide structure and organization in support of the gifted program.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
10.	The principal has the responsibility to build their capacity in gifted education to be an advocate for the gifted program.	0%	0%	50%	50%
11.	The principal questions the level of challenge to meet academic needs.	0%	0%	43%	57%
12.	The principal has knowledge of and supports acceleration policies and procedures.	0%	14%	21%	64%
13.	The principal is knowledgeable and implements researched based practices.	0%	7%	36%	57%
14.	The principal is committed to powerful literacy philosophy throughout the curriculum.	7%	14%	21%	57%
15.	The principal engages and communicates with parents.	0%	7%	29%	64%
16.	The principal inspects what is expected—if the division philosophy is to differentiate, expect and reinforce this idea during meetings, walkthroughs, observations, and evaluations with teachers.	7%	0%	29%	64%
17.	Once cluster teachers are selected, the principal will follow up, offer support, and expect to see specific materials and grouping strategies used during observations.	0%	0%	36%	64%
18.	The principal will ensure that gifted education is included in the written plan such as strategic planning and professional development.	0%	0%	29%	71%
19.	The principal will plan professional development sessions for general education and gifted teachers in a timely manner.	0%	0%	29%	71%
20.	The principal will make it a priority to attend the gifted professional development you plan for staff members.	0%	7%	36%	57%

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
21.	The principal will show value for the gifted education program through time, attention, and budget.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>50%</b>
22.	The principal will disaggregate the data for the so that the gifted learner and high ability gifted are part of the student achievement discussion.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
23.	The principal will provide a consistent message relative to qualifying for entrance into gifted program (gifted identification).	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>43%</b>
24.	The principal will ensure that administrative and support staff are aware of procedures for gifted screening and referrals.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>
25.	The principal will ensure the fidelity of screening process to ensure that students are identified without bias.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>71%</b>
26.	The principal will support the universal screening process, i.e. all.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>79%</b>
27.	The principal will work collaboratively with supervisor/coordinator of gifted services to ensure the best practices are implemented, i.e. supports the model of delivery of services.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>79%</b>
28.	The principal will work with supervisors of gifted to help hire teachers of gifted learners.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>
29.	The principal expects that data drives instruction so that all learners have at least one year of academic growth.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
30.	The principal communicates an inclusive definition of giftedness.	0%	7%	36%	57%
31.	The principal cultivates school-community partnerships that may provide enrichment opportunities.	0%	14%	36%	50%
32.	The principal supports the Cluster Model.	7%	14%	21%	57%
33.	The principal supports ability grouping at the elementary level to narrow the range of abilities in the classroom.	7%	21%	29%	43%
34.	The principal supports flexible grouping.	0%	7%	21%	71%
35.	The principals supports ability grouping at the high school level.	14%	7%	14%	50%
36.	The principal selects gifted cluster teachers with the same care and same attention.	0%	7%	7%	86%
37.	The principal allows gifted cluster to teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of gifted program.	0%	21%	21%	57%
38.	The principal make educational decisions based on data, criteria, and the best interest of the student.	0%	0%	21%	79%
39.	The principal will support and respond to the gifted advisory members in support of the gifted program.	7%	7%	36%	50%

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
40.	The principal will communicate and market the gifted programs options and opportunities to all stakeholders.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>71%</b>
41.	The principal will create partnerships with universities, state, and local agencies to advance gifted programs.	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>50%</b>
42.	The .Principals supports the gifted program by talking with parents regarding tests and make recommendations for referrals or not.	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>57%</b>
43.	The principal provides professional development training for teachers aligned to the instructional needs as well as the social emotional needs via the gifted resource teacher and the school counselor.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>
44.	The principal supports a differentiated curriculum with attention to student strengths and areas of growth.	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>86%</b>
45.	The principal communicates options and opportunities for students to explore beyond the school building.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>71%</b>
46.	The principal provides experiences to help students understand the relevance of the work they are completing within the classroom i.e. theater exposure, Lego club, career fair, mad scientist evening.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>
47.	The principal provides leadership opportunities, i.e. SCA , FBLA, etc.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>50%</b>

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
48.	The principal promotes opportunities for gifted learners to perform for an audience, i.e. musical performances.	7%	7%	29%	57%
49.	The principal advocates for curriculum that is rigorous, in-depth and complex.	0%	7%	21%	71%
50.	The principal fosters student choice with regard to assigned tasks, projects, when appropriate.	0%	7%	36%	57%
51.	The principal will encourage highly effective gifted resource teachers to coach and train general education staff.	7%	0%	29%	64%
52.	The principal will communicate with parents through meetings and newsletters based on current topics.	0%	0%	57%	43%
53.	The principal will survey parents to identify needs of the gifted learners to help grow the program.	0%	21%	36%	43%
54.	The principal will ensure guidance counselors are trained in best practices in gifted education.	0%	14%	36%	50%
55.	The principal will encourage and support blended ways to include digital learning.	0%	14%	36%	50%
56.	The principal will allow students learn about topics that they are passionate about through interest surveys.	0%	14%	29%	57%

(continued)

Table 3 (cont.)

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1-Not</b>	<b>2-Slightly</b>	<b>3-</b>	<b>4-Highly</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>
57.	The principal will encourage teachers of gifted learners to use interest surveys to learn their students.	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>
58.	The principal will extend the learning to the community through project based learning.	<b>0%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>57%</b>
59.	The principal will promote professional development for parents of gifted learners.	<b>7%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>29%</b>
60.	The principal will reject functional literacy and rejection of the remediation model.	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>50%</b>
61.	The principal will support the idea that advanced curriculum should be delivered consistently to all students, with the caveat that a differentiated classroom addresses the learning needs of all students.	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>57%</b>
62.	As an instructional leader, the principal supports and takes part in ongoing professional development of gifted pedagogy.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>
63.	The principal actively incorporates gifted education professional development to improve teaching practices.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>64%</b>
64.	The principal facilitates professional learning culture to support gifted programs.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>64%</b>
65.	The principal understands that the gifted resource teacher is the primary expert in facilitating a program that supports content; based on different work and not more work.	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>71%</b>
66.	The principal supports the gifted resource teacher in the effort to develop a culture where teachers believe that students can and should have advanced content.	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>79%</b>

## Analysis Delphi Round II: Descriptive Statistics-Gifted Learners

**Gifted learners.** Descriptive statistics for the 74-item questionnaire for gifted learners, including mean, median, standard deviation, and percent consensus status are shown in Table 4, in *rank order* based on mean and percent consensus for principal practices for gifted learners. Overall, the mean average ranged from 2.79 to 3.93, standard deviation ranged from .26 to 1.11, median ranged from 3 to 4, and percent consensus ranged from 57% to 100%.

Thirty-eight items reached *effective-practice* consensus with at least 80% agreement ratings when combining effective and highly-effective scale categories with a 3.50 mean or higher. Item means for the 38 items ranged from 3.50 to 3.9 with a range in standard deviation from .26 to 1.11. Further, 35 out of 38 consensus statements had a consistent, high median of 4. Items increased percent consensus with lower variation and strong agreement among panel members, reflected in lower standard deviation, and higher rank of importance by panel as reflected in higher mean average ratings.

In addition, eight practices, denoted in Table 4 and highlighted in Figure 3, reached *highly-effective* consensus with at least 80% agreement and 3.5 mean or higher in the single 4-point highly-effective scale rating. Each highly effective practice reached percent consensus with 86% or 93% in the single 4-point rating category. The mean ranged from 3.79 to 3.93, exceeding at least 3.50 mean for consensus for the eight highly-effective consensus practices. The standard deviation ranged from .26 to .56 and all eight statements had a median of 4. Consistent statistics with high mean average, low standard deviation, and constant median of 4 distinguish strong agreement among panel member ratings for these eight practices as highly-effective practices.

Twenty-three items reached 100% agreement in combined panel ratings in effective 3 point, and, highly-effective, 4 point. The mean average ranged from 3.5 to 3.9 with range in standard deviation from .26 to .56. All 100% practices received a median of 4 except three with identical panel ratings of 3.5 mean, 3.5 median, and .50 standard deviation.

In contrast, over half, 36 out of 74 practices did not reach panel consensus. These items included lower mean average range from 2.79 to 3.5, higher variation in panel agreement in standard deviation ranging from 1.11 to .49, lower median range from 3 to 4, and lower percent consensus in range from 79% to 100%. One practice, “*The principal provides meaningful*

*professional development to aid teachers and staff instructing gifted learners*” reached 100% consensus (all 3 and 4-point ratings) with standard deviation of .49—but, did not meet importance rank in ratings from panel with a mean of 3.43, and lower median of 3. The researcher believed interpretation in the wording “provides” as “conducts” rather than “ensures” may have precluded higher panel ratings this practice. This practice rating was one of 18 items, or half of the non-consensus practices, with consensus range from 86% to the one—100%; however, the panel indicated variation in their ratings with less rank of importance with lower mean average range from 3.14 to 3.43, standard deviation range from .88 to .49 and median range from 3 to 4.

Table 4

*Delphi II: Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted Learners in Rank Order Based on Mean with Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective, and Consensus for Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners Consensus*

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
2.	The principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners' needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.	3.93	4	0.26	100% (93% Highly- Effective)	Yes
14.	The principal knows what effective instruction is, and looks like.	3.93	4	0.26	100% (93% Highly- Effective)	Yes
53.	The principal will ensure differentiation by all teachers.	3.93	4	0.26	100% (93% Highly- Effective)	Yes
15.	The principal communicates to staff the importance in recognizing and meeting the social emotional needs of gifted learners; requires specialized instructions.	3.86	4	0.35	100% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
42.	The principal provides feedback for teacher growth,	3.86	4	0.35	100% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes
43.	The principal monitors teacher effectiveness	3.86	4	0.35	100% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes
52.	The principal establish a schedule that allows for gifted and general education teacher collaborative planning.	3.86	4	0.35	100% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes
56.	The principal will monitor instruction and learning environment	3.79	4	0.41	100%	Yes
68.	The principal will create a vision and set high expectation for excellence for all students.	3.79	4	0.41	100%	Yes
35.	The principal models the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners, their needs—avoids special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoids joking that trivializes, and realizes that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and perfectionist.	3.79	4	0.56	93% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
1	The principal is flexible and willing to make instructional decisions in support of gifted learners without fear of providing preferential or special treatment.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
3	The principal ensures scheduling for pullout and/or push-in services.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
4.	The principal ensures the fidelity of gifted services.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
10.	The principal promotes using pre-assessments that indicate a student's proficiency without re-teaching material/content.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
11.	The principal encourages teachers to give assignments and activities that are conducive to gifted learners' abilities, i.e. tiered assignments.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
33.	The principal selects the right teachers for the gifted cluster classrooms that can serve the students nontraditionally and flexible enough to meet the challenges of gifted.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
41.	The principal promotes a culture whereby data drives instructional decisions to include gifted learners so that all learners have 1 year of academic growth.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
55.	The principal will incorporate professional learning communities within the school with the purpose of developing differentiated lessons.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
57.	The principal will ensure that learning environment provide rigorous instruction.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
5.	The principal supports flexible grouping and interventions when gifted learners need specific academic support.	3.64	4	0.48	100%	Yes
37.	The principal understands and support the needs of gifted to including: twice-exceptional, English Language, and low social economic.	3.64	4	0.61	93%	Yes
38.	The principal understands quirkiness and that gifted students might have asynchronous or twice-exceptional behaviors.	3.64	4	0.61	93%	Yes
65.	The principal will encourage creativity.	3.64	4	0.81	93%	Yes
63.	The principal will discourage teachers from overuse of gifted learners as “helpers” or allowing them to sit without instruction because they are already ahead.	3.62	4	0.62	86%	Yes
64.	The principal will foster student growth accountability without rigidity.	3.57	4	0.49	100%	Yes

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
28.	The principal promotes choice with reading and writing; provide open ended experiences for students to extend their thinking	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
44.	The principal monitors student performance of gifted learners.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
58.	The principal will support effective Tier 1 Instruction within the school.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
60.	The principal will be aware of what is going on in the classrooms, ensure it's a good fit for students, and share with other teachers, gifted staff, and principals.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
34.	The principal should understand diverse gifted populations and gifted characteristics.	3.57	4	0.73	86%	Yes
67.	The principal will hire teachers with gifted education background and a passion for working with gifted learners.	3.57	4	0.73	86%	Yes
9.	The principal will promote project-based assessments that enable gifted students to think outside the box.	3.50	3.5	0.50	100%	Yes
25.	The principal provides resources for teachers and others working with gifted learners to ensure gifted learners academic needs are being met.	3.50	3.5	0.50	100%	Yes
69.	The principal understands social emotional needs of gifted learners.	3.50	3.5	0.50	100%	Yes

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
16.	The principal promotes appropriate social emotional support via the curriculum.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
21.	The principal will develop capacity within the building to address the needs of gifted children.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
66.	The principal will cultivate an atmosphere of innovation.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
12.	The principal will support the belief that teachers facilitate learning.	3.50	4	0.73	86%	Yes
48.	The principal will ensure full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school programs.	3.50	4	0.65	79%	No
18.	The principal provides meaningful professional development to aid teachers and staff instructing gifted learners.	3.43	3	0.49	100%	No
7.	The principal will cluster gifted children with others who fall within the same category.	3.43	3.5	0.62	93%	No
30.	The principal provides an opportunity for students to present passion projects, i.e. an exploration of what they want to learn.	3.43	3.5	0.62	93%	No
61.	The principal will monitor progress to ensure each learner receives the appropriate curricular opportunities in each classroom.	3.43	3.5	0.62	93%	No
13.	The principal supports the idea of personalized learning.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
29.	The principal provides open-ended experiences for students to extend their thinking.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
39.	The principal analyzes data to support planning.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
59.	The principal will model and monitor differentiated instruction in all classrooms.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
22.	The principal provides teachers with proper instructional support to include higher level questioning skills.	3.36	3	0.61	93%	No
62.	The principal will support student growth model.	3.36	3	0.61	93%	No
17.	The principal sets a priority for strong social emotional support via the guidance counselor.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
20.	The principal will provide coaching to new teachers serving in the Cluster Model.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
27.	The principal provides students with choice based on interest.	3.36	4	0.81	79%	No
54.	The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team.	3.36	4	1.11	79%	No
8.	The principal will allow gifted students to work vertically with their gifted peers who are older and or younger.	3.29	3.5	0.88	86%	No

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
71.	The principal adopts a facet of personal growth that encompasses learning about gifted education.	3.29	3	0.70	86%	No
70.	The principals stays current in best practices in working with gifted learners.	3.23	3	0.58	86%	No
36.	The principal knows the students, personally connect, and understands their needs and interests.	3.21	3	0.56	93%	No
26.	The principal builds positive relationships with students even when their interest level may or may not be the same as the majority.	3.21	3	0.67	86%	No
19.	The principal will assist teachers with protecting student's emotional health through professional development	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
23.	The principal will provide professional training of cluster teachers and general education teachers.	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
51.	The principal will seek feedback from gifted students themselves to see if needs are being addressed.	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
73.	The principal collaborates with the district-gifted office.	3.14	3	0.83	86%	No
49.	The principal will seek feedback from parents of the gifted to see if their children's needs are met.	3.14	3	0.91	79%	No
6.	The principal supports homogeneous grouping, i.e. ability.	3.14	3	0.83	71%	No

(continued)

Table 4 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for <b>Gifted Learners</b> Descriptor	Mean	Mdn	SD	Rating Percent	Consensus
24.	The principal provides resources for gifted students.	3.14	3	0.83	71%	No
74.	The principal seeks help talking with parents regarding tests, referrals, recommendations, or working with teachers.	3.14	3.5	0.99	71%	No
50.	The principal will be patient with parents and seek to understand and help with their concerns.	3.08	3	0.73	71%	No
31.	The principal incorporates enrichment activities in support of gifted learners, i.e. competitions, clubs, special student interests, student leadership. Mad Science Night, etc.	3.07	3	0.70	79%	No
40.	The principal actively incorporates the needs of gifted learners in accountability operating plan (AOP).	3.07	3	0.80	71%	No
32.	The principal provides leadership opportunities to help them build their social influence and capacity.	3.00	3	0.76	71%	No
72.	The principal can frame and show connections between different schools, countywide and needs of gifted learners.	2.92	3	0.95	57%	No
45.	The principal provide workshop for parents of gifted learners.	2.79	3	1.08	71%	No
46.	The principal provide workshops for gifted students i.e. self-efficacy.	2.79	3	1.01	64%	No
47.	The principal will host regular parent meetings and include parents in conversations about needs of gifted learners.	2.79	3	0.94	57%	No

Note: Rating scale used: 1= Not-effective, 2= Slightly-effective, 3 = Effective, 4 = Highly-effective; Combined Percentage of Responses in Effective and Highly-effective rating. Consensus reached at least 80% panel agreement with mean at least 3.50

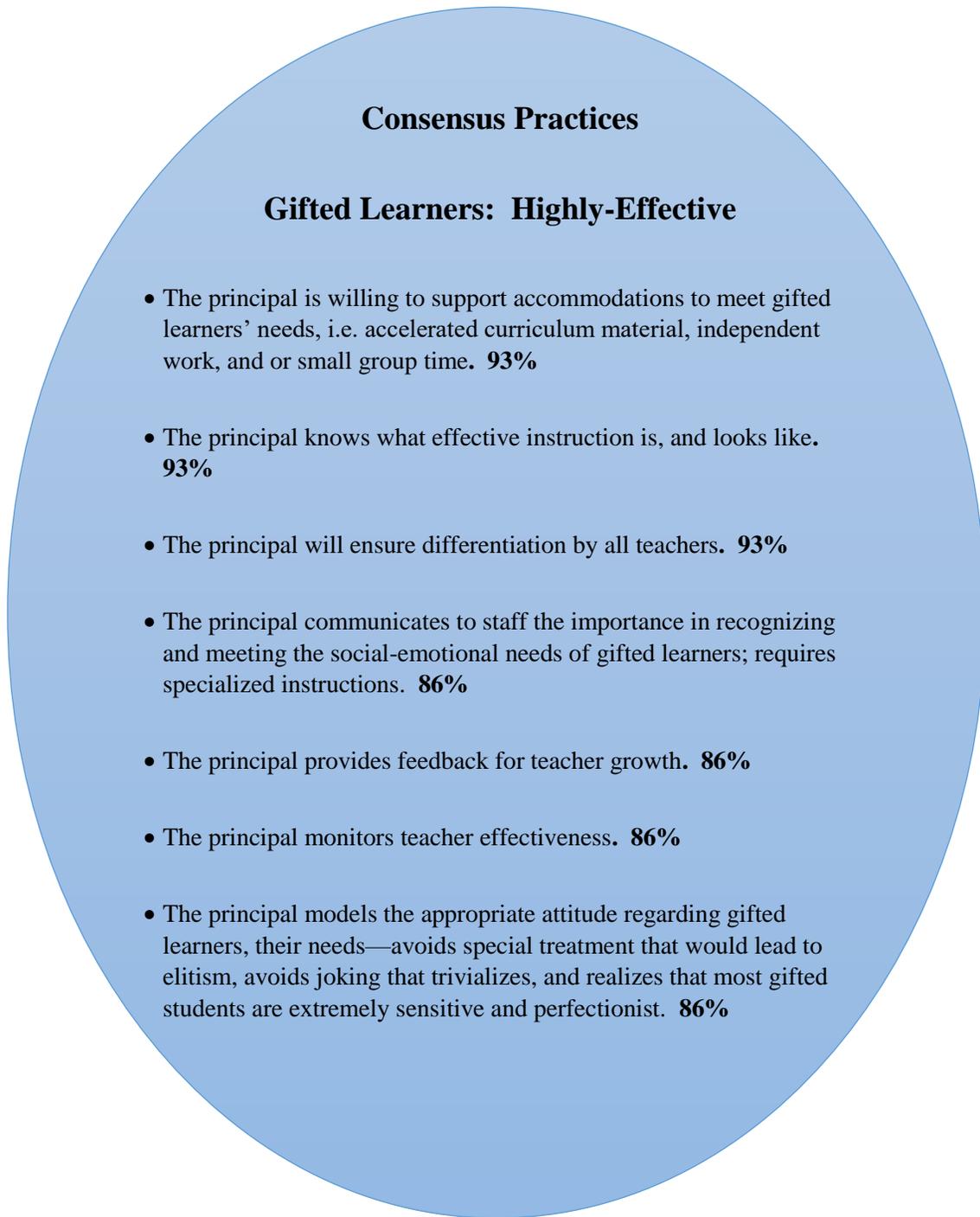


Figure 3. Delphi Round II consensus highlight: *Highly-effective* principal leadership practices to support **gifted learners** with percentages.

## Analysis Delphi II: Descriptive Statistics- Gifted Programs

**Gifted programs.** Descriptive statistics for the 66-item questionnaire for gifted programs, including mean, median, standard deviation, and percent consensus status are shown in Table 5, in *rank order* based on mean and percent consensus for principal practices for gifted programs. Overall, the mean average ranged from 2.79 to 3.86, standard deviation ranged from .35 to 1.14, median ranged from 3 to 4, and percent consensus ranged from 57% to 100%.

Thirty-three (33) items reached consensus with at least 80% agreement in combined effective and highly-effective scale ratings with 3.50 mean or higher. Item means for the 33 items ranged from 3.50 to 3.86 with a range in standard deviation from .35 to .91, and median range from 3.5 to 4. Items increased to percent consensus with lower variation and strong agreement among panel members, reflected in lower standard deviation, and higher rank of importance by panel as reflected in higher mean average ratings.

Two gifted program practices, denoted in Table 5 and highlighted in Figure 4, reached *highly-effective* consensus with at least 80% agreement and 3.50 mean or higher in the single 4-point highly-effective scale rating. Each highly effective practice reached percent consensus with 86% in the single 4-point rating category. The two means were 3.79 and 3.86, exceeding at least 3.50 mean for consensus for the two highly-effective consensus practices. The standard deviations were .35 and .56, both with a median of 4. One practice was related to differentiated curriculum and student growth and the other was related to selecting gifted cluster teachers. High mean average and constant median of 4 reflected agreement among panel member ratings for these two items as highly-effective practices.

Thirteen items reached 100% agreement in combined 3-point, effective and 4-point, highly-effective, scale ratings. The mean average ranged from 3.50 to 3.86 with range in standard deviation from .35 to .50. All 100% practices received a median of 4 except two with 3.5. Two 100% consensus items received identical panel ratings and lowest 3.50 mean average, 3.5 median, and .50 standard deviation.

In contrast, 33 gifted program practices out of 66 did not reach panel consensus. These items included lower mean average in range from 2.79 to 3.43, higher variation in panel agreement in standard deviation ranging from 1.14 to .49, lower median in range from 3 to 4, and lowest percent consensus in range from 57% to 100%.

Two non-consensus gifted program practices received identical ratings—one related to principal ability to provide structure and organization, and the other related to principal communication with parents, both reached 100% consensus, standard deviation of .49 but did not meet importance rank in ratings from panel with mean of 3.43, and low median of 3. This practice rating was one of 19 items, or just over half of the non-consensus practices, in consensus range from 86% to the two 100%; however, the panel indicated increased variation in their ratings and less rank of importance with mean average from 3.21 to 3.43, standard deviation range from .89 to .49 and median range from 3 to 4.

Table 5

*Delphi Round II: Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted Programs in Rank Order Based on Mean with Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective, and Consensus for Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Programs*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
44.	The principal supports a differentiated curriculum with attention to student strengths and areas of growth.	3.86	4	0.35	100% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes
29.	The principal expects that data drives instruction so that all learners have at least one year of academic growth.	3.79	4	0.41	100%	Yes
38.	The principal make educational decisions based on data, criteria, and the best interest of the student.	3.79	4	0.41	100%	Yes
36.	The principal selects gifted cluster teachers with the same care and same attention.	3.79	4	0.56	93% (86% Highly- Effective)	Yes
18.	The principal will ensure that gifted education is included in the written plan such as strategic planning and professional development.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
19.	The principal will plan professional development sessions for general education and gifted teachers in a timely manner.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
40.	The principal will communicate and market the gifted programs options and opportunities to all stakeholders.	3.71	4	0.45	100%	Yes
27.	The principal will work collaboratively with supervisor/coordinator of gifted services to ensure the best practices are implemented, i.e. supports the model of delivery of services.	3.71	4	0.59	93%	Yes
66.	The principal supports the gifted resource teacher in the effort to develop a culture where teachers believe that students can and should have advanced content.	3.71	4	0.59	93%	Yes
1.	The principal provides opportunities for teachers and parents to gain a full understanding of gifted programs and resources are vitally important.	3.64	4	0.48	100%	Yes
2.	The principal engages all stakeholders into the process.	3.64	4	0.48	100%	Yes
17.	Once cluster teachers are selected, the principal will follow up, offer support, and expect to see specific materials and grouping strategies used during observations.	3.64	4	0.48	100%	Yes
34.	The principal supports flexible grouping.	3.64	4	0.61	93%	Yes
45.	The principal communicates options and opportunities for students to explore beyond the school building.	3.64	4	0.61	93%	Yes

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>						
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
49.	The principal advocates for curriculum that is rigorous, in-depth and complex.	3.64	4	0.61	93%	Yes
5.	The principal ensures full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school gifted programs via robo calls, evening events, flyers to homes and school webpage postings.	3.58	4	0.64	79%	No
11.	The principal questions the level of challenge to meet academic needs.	3.57	4	0.49	100%	Yes
22.	The principal will disaggregate the data for the so that the gifted learner and high ability gifted are part of the student achievement discussion.	3.57	4	0.49	100%	Yes
15.	The principal engages and communicates with parents.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
63.	The principal actively incorporates gifted education professional development to improve teaching practices.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
64.	The principal facilitates professional learning culture to support gifted programs.	3.57	4	0.62	93%	Yes
26.	The principal will support the universal screening process, i.e. all.	3.57	4	0.90	86%	Yes
4.	The principal ensures that parents and students are aware of opportunities for gifted learners during and outside of the school day.	3.50	3.5	0.50	100%	Yes

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
10.	The principal has the responsibility to build their capacity in gifted education to be an advocate for the gifted program.	3.50	3.5	0.50	100%	Yes
8.	The principal must have some ownership of the program so he/she can espouse its importance to others.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
13.	The principal is knowledgeable and implements researched based practices.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
16.	The principal inspects what is expected—if the division philosophy is to differentiate, expect and reinforce this idea during meetings, walkthroughs, observations, and evaluations with teachers.	3.50	4	0.82	93%	Yes
20.	The principal will make it a priority to attend the gifted professional development you plan for staff members.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
30.	The principal communicates an inclusive definition of giftedness.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
50.	The principal fosters student choice with regard to assigned tasks, projects, when appropriate.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes
51.	The principal will encourage highly effective gifted resource teachers to coach and train general education staff.	3.50	4	0.82	93%	Yes
12.	The principal has knowledge of and supports acceleration policies and procedures.	3.50	4	0.73	86%	Yes

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
25.	The principal will ensure the fidelity of screening process to ensure that students are identified without bias.	3.50	4	0.91	86%	Yes
65.	The principal understands that the gifted resource teacher is the primary expert in facilitating a program that supports content; based on different work and not more work.	3.50	4	0.91	86%	Yes
9.	The principal has the ability to provide structure and organization in support of the gifted program.	3.43	3	0.49	100%	No
52.	The principal will communicate with parents through meetings and newsletters based on current topics.	3.43	3	0.49	100%	No
3.	The principal ensures that parents, staff and community members are aware and can access needed resources for referring students for gifted services.	3.43	3.5	0.62	93%	No
21.	The principal will show value for the gifted education program through time, attention, and budget.	3.43	3.5	0.62	93%	No
61.	The principal will support the idea that advanced curriculum should be delivered consistently to all students, with the caveat that a differentiated classroom addresses the learning needs of all students.	3.43	4	0.82	93%	No

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
24.	The principal will ensure administrative and support staff are aware of procedures for gifted screening and referrals.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
28.	The principal will work with supervisors of gifted to help hire teachers of gifted learners.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
43.	The principal provides professional development training for teachers aligned to the instructional needs as well as the social emotional needs via the gifted resource teacher and the school counselor.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
56.	The principal will allow students learn about topics that they are passionate about through interest surveys.	3.43	4	0.73	86%	No
31.	The principal cultivates school-community partnerships that may provide enrichment opportunities.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
47.	The principal provides leadership opportunities, i.e. SCA , FBLA, etc.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
48.	The principal promotes opportunities for gifted learners to perform for an audience, i.e. musical performances.	3.36	4	0.89	86%	No
54.	The principal will ensure guidance counselors are trained in best practices in gifted education.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
55.	The principal will encourage and support blended ways to include digital learning.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
62.	As an instructional leader, the principal supports and takes part in ongoing professional development of gifted pedagogy.	3.36	4	0.89	86%	No
37.	The principal allows gifted cluster to teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of gifted program.	3.36	4	0.81	79%	No
58.	The principal will extend the learning to the community through project-based learning.	3.36	4	0.81	79%	No
23.	The principal will provide a consistent message relative to qualifying for entrance into gifted program (gifted identification).	3.29	3	0.80	93%	No
39.	The principal will support and respond to the gifted advisory members in support of the gifted program.	3.29	3.5	0.88	86%	No
57.	The principal will encourage teachers of gifted learners to use interest surveys to learn their students.	3.29	3	0.70	86%	No
14.	The principal is committed to powerful literacy philosophy throughout the curriculum.	3.29	4	0.96	79%	No
32.	The principal supports the Cluster Model.	3.29	4	0.96	79%	No

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

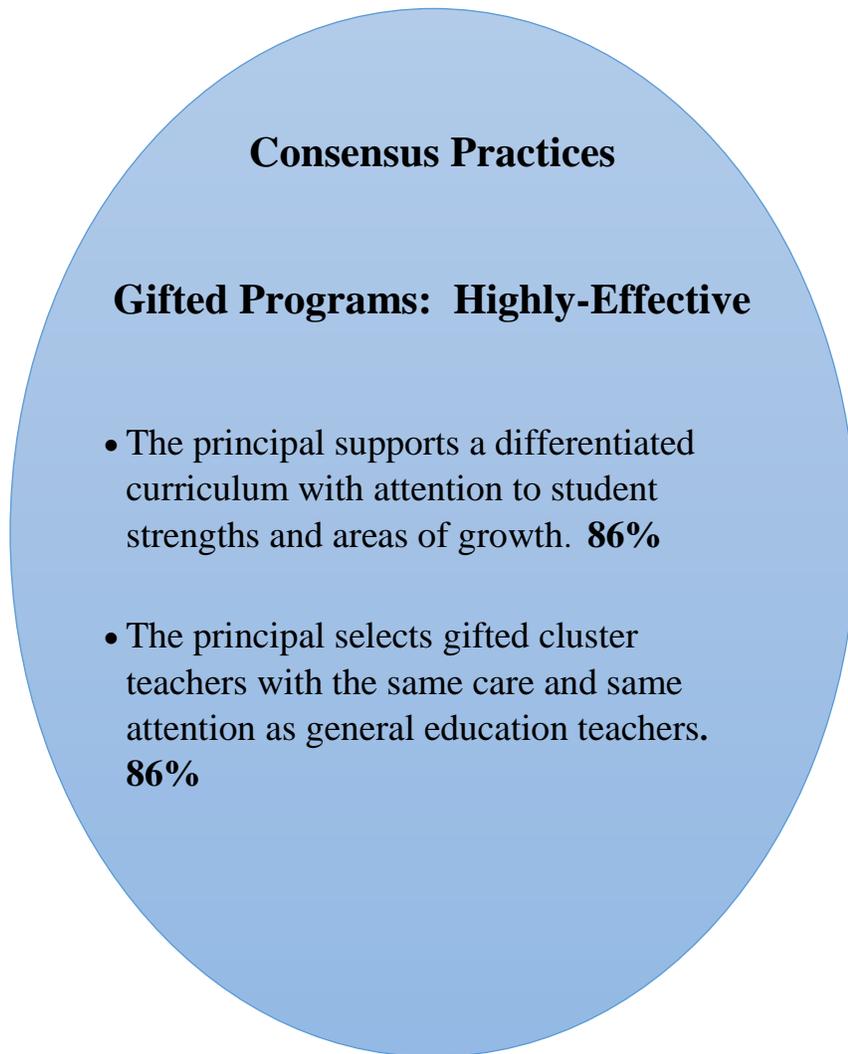
<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
42.	The .Principals supports the gifted program by talking with parents regarding tests and make recommendations for referrals or not.	3.29	4	0.96	79%	No
6.	The principal seeks funding for the gifted program.	3.23	4	0.97	71%	No
46.	The principal provides experiences to help students understand the relevance of the work they are completing within the classroom i.e. theater exposure, Lego club, career fair, mad scientist evening.	3.21	3	0.86	86%	No
53.	The principal will survey parents to identify needs of the gifted learners to help grow the program.	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
35.	The principals supports ability grouping at the high school level.	3.17	4	1.14	64%	No
41.	The principal will create partnerships with universities, state, and local agencies to advance gifted programs.	3.14	3.5	0.91	64%	No
60.	The principal will reject functional literacy and rejection of the remediation model.	3.14	3.5	0.91	64%	No
33.	The principal supports ability grouping at the elementary level to narrow the range of abilities in the classroom.	3.07	3	0.96	71%	No
59.	The principal will promote professional development for parents of gifted learners.	2.93	3	0.88	71%	No

(continued)

Table 5 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
7.	The principal actively engages principals typically find monetary resources to support gifted learners.	2.79	3	0.94	57%	No

Note. Rating scale used 1= Not-effective, 2= Slightly-effective, 3 = Effective, 4 = Highly-effective. Percent of responses combined in the two highest categories in rating scale (Effective and Highly-effective). Consensus at least 80% for agreement level and mean at least 3.5 for ranking importance.



*Figure 4.* Delphi Round II consensus highlight: *Highly-effective* principal leadership practices to support **gifted programs** with percentages.

**Delphi round III.** The researcher compiled and analyzed Round II survey data with 38 practices identified as effectively supporting gifted learners with consensus over 80% responses in two highest rating categories highly-effective (4-point) or effective (3-point). Eight gifted learner and two gifted program practices were identified with over 80% ratings in the single 4-point highly-effective category with at least a mean of 3.50.

To identify principal practices that effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs, and reduce the number of items for review in Round III to promote timely response and survey completion, the researcher omitted items that had already reached 80% agreement level (Keeney, 2011). Eighteen practices for gifted learners and 14 practices for gifted programs from Round II were used to create Round III (see Appendix F) questionnaires emailed to the 14 panel members. In addition, each participant's Round II rating was included for each practice to review in Round III, resulting in 14 individualized surveys. The researcher followed up with reminders to participants by email, text, and personal visit.

Fourteen panelists responded with their indication for changes in Round III. Descriptive statistics for Round III questionnaires indicate mean, median, standard deviation, percentage of ratings in categories of either effective or highly-effective, and consensus status, Table 6 for gifted learners and Table 7 for gifted programs.

**Gifted learners.** Seven or half of the 14 panelists indicated rating changes in practices for gifted learners. Four principals, two supervisors of gifted and one university submitted revisions. Seventeen items and 32 ratings were revised by panelists for gifted learners. Revised items ranged from mean average of 2.79 to 3.71, standard deviation from .59 to 1.01, and consensus percent ranged from 64% to 93%. Three revisions decreased item ratings. The average revision increased by 2.29 points.

One practice reached consensus in the change process, item 54, highlighted in Table 6. "The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team." One principal increased from not effective (1-point) to effective (3-point), and one principal revised from not effective (1-point) to highly-effective (4-point), increasing the mean from 3.36 to 3.71, decreasing the standard deviation from 1.11 to .59, and raising the percent consensus from 71% to 93%. With increased panel agreement by principals, less variation, and a substantial increase in point ratings, the item was noted as reaching consensus.

**Gifted programs.** Six of the panelists made changes in their ratings in practices for gifted programs. Twelve items and 17 revisions were changed for gifted programs, with mean average range 2.79 to 3.58, standard deviation from .99 to .63, and percent consensus 57% to 93%. Three principals, two supervisors of gifted, and one university submitted revisions to their ratings.

One item for gifted programs reached consensus from Round III, item 37, highlighted in Table 7, “The principal allows gifted cluster teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of gifted program.” One principal increased this item from slightly-effective (2-point) to effective (3-point) while one supervisor of gifted increased rating from not effective (1-point) to highly-effective (4-point), increasing the mean average from 3.36 to 3.50, standard deviation from .81 to .63, and percent from 79% to 93% to reach consensus.

Table 6

*Delphi Round III by Descriptor: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective, and Consensus for Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners.*

<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>						
Item	Descriptor	Mean	Median	SD	Percent	Consensus
6.	The principal supports homogeneous grouping, i.e. ability.	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
19.	The principal will assist teachers with protecting student's emotional health through professional development	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
23.	The principal will provide professional training of cluster teachers and general education teachers.	3.36	3	0.61	93%	No
24.	The principal provides resources for gifted students.	3.36	3	0.61	93%	No
27.	The principal provides students with choice based on interest.	3.29	4	0.88	71%	No
31.	The principal incorporates enrichment activities in support of gifted learners, i.e. competitions, clubs, special student interests, student leadership. Mad Science Night, etc.	3.36	3	0.61	93%	No
32.	The principal provides leadership opportunities to help them build their social influence and capacity.	3.07	3	0.70	79%	No
40.	The principal actively incorporates the needs of gifted learners in accountability operating plan (AOP).	3.21	3	0.67	86%	No
45.	The principal provide workshop for parents of gifted learners.	3.00	3	0.85	79%	No

(continued)

Table 6 (cont.)

Item	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS</b>					Consensus
	Descriptor	Mean	Median	SD	Percent	
46.	The principal provide workshops for gifted students i.e. self-efficacy.	2.79	3	0.94	71%	No
47.	The principal will host regular parent meetings and include parents in conversations about needs of gifted learners.	3.07	3	0.80	71%	No
48.	The principal will ensure full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school programs.	3.46	4	0.63	86%	No
49.	The principal will seek feedback from parents of the gifted to see if their children's needs are met.	3.21	3	0.86	86%	No
50.	The principal will be patient with parents and seek to understand and help with their concerns.	3.07	3	0.70	79%	No
51.	The principal will seek feedback from gifted students themselves to see if needs are being addressed.	3.21	3	0.77	79%	No
54.	The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team.	3.71	4	0.59	93%	Yes
72.	The principal can frame and show connections between different schools, countywide and needs of gifted learners.	2.79	3	1.01	64%	No
74.	The principal seeks help talking with parents regarding tests, referrals, recommendations, or working with teachers.	3.21	3.5	0.86	71%	No

Note. Rating scale used 1= Not-effective, 2= Slightly-effective, 3 = Effective, 4 = Highly-effective. Percent of responses combined in two highest categories in rating scale (Effective and Highly-effective). Consensus at least 80% for agreement level and mean at least 3.5 for ranking importance.

Table 7

*Delphi Round III by Descriptor: Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective, and Consensus Status for Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Programs*

<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS</b>						
<b>Item</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
5.	The principal ensures full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school gifted programs via robo calls, evening events, flyers to homes and school webpage postings.	3.58	4	0.64	79%	No
6.	The principal seeks funding for the gifted program.	3.14	3.5	0.99	71%	No
7.	The principal actively engages principals typically find monetary resources to support gifted learners.	2.79	3	0.86	64%	No
14.	The principal is committed to powerful literacy philosophy throughout the curriculum.	3.43	4	0.82	93%	No
32.	The principal supports the Cluster Model.	3.43	4	0.82	79%	No
33.	The principal supports ability grouping at the elementary level to narrow the range of abilities in the classroom.	2.93	3	0.96	64%	No
35.	The principals supports ability grouping at the high school level.	3.25	3.5	0.92	71%	No
37.	The principal allows gifted cluster teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of the gifted program.	3.50	4	0.63	93%	Yes

(continued)

Table 7 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q2 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Consensus</b>
41.	The principal will create partnerships with universities, state, and local agencies to advance gifted programs.	3.21	3.5	0.86	71%	No
42.	The .Principals supports the gifted program by talking with parents regarding tests and make recommendations for referrals or not.	3.36	4	0.81	79%	No
53.	The principal will survey parents to identify needs of the gifted learners to help grow the program.	3.36	3.5	0.72	86%	No
58.	The principal will extend the learning to the community through project-based learning.	3.36	4	0.81	79%	No
59.	The principal will promote professional development for parents of gifted learners.	2.93	3	0.88	71%	No
60.	The principal will reject functional literacy and rejection of the remediation model.	3.07	3.5	0.96	57%	No

Note. Rating scale used: 1= Not-effective, 2= Slightly-effective, 3 = Effective, 4 = Highly-effective. Percent responses combined in the two highest categories in rating scale (Effective and Highly-effective). Consensus at least 80% for agreement and mean at least 3.5 for ranking importance.

## Delphi Panel Sub-Group Consensus

The Delphi study panel of 14 experts consisted of three subgroups: eight principals, five supervisors of gifted, and one university professor. Panel experts participated in three-round Delphi to identify principal leadership practices to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs. Following final Round III completion, the Delphi panel found a total of 39 effective-practices for gifted learners, including eight highly-effective practices, and a total of 34 effective-practices for gifted programs, including two highly-effective practices.

Percent panel consensus by descriptor (principal practices), in rank order by mean, is shown for each subgroup and all panel subgroups for gifted learners (Table 8-39 items) and gifted programs (Table 9-34 items). Consensus was determined by at least 80% percent of ratings combined in Effective (3-point) and Highly-Effective (4-point) categories on the 4-point scale, and at least a mean of 3.50. *Highly-Effective* practices, eight for gifted learners and two for gifted programs are noted in the tables and reached at least 80% ratings with a mean of 3.50 in the single category of Highly-Effective (4-point) on the 4-point scale.

**Gifted learners.** Table 8 indicates the level of consensus reached by the subgroups for each leadership practice for gifted learners. The principal leadership practices indicate that principals supported differentiation for gifted learners to meet academic and social emotional needs. All subgroups reached 100% consensus for the eight highly-effective practices, noted in tables, except item 35, principals agreed at 93% and supervisors of gifted at 86%, about principal attitude in terms of gifted learner needs and characteristics. Principals reached 100% consensus on 21 effective-practices while supervisors of gifted reached on 24 items, and university on all these practices.

The principals' subgroup lowest agreement occurred on items 63 and 34, about gifted learners as helpers and diverse gifted populations and characteristics. Principals and supervisor subgroup agreed similarly at 88% and 80%, respectively on items 67 and 12 about hiring teachers with gifted backgrounds and passion working with gifted learners, and believe teachers facilitate learning. Supervisors' subgroup reached lowest consensus at 80% on seven remaining effective-items.

Table 8

*Gifted Learners: Level of Consensus Reached Within Each Sub-Group by Descriptor in Rank Order by Mean with Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective of 39-Effective Practices for Gifted Learners*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
2. Highly- Effective	The principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners' needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.	100%	100%	100%	100%
14. Highly- Effective	The principal knows what effective instruction is, and looks like.	100%	100%	100%	100%
53. Highly- Effective	The principal will ensure differentiation by all teachers.	100%	100%	100%	100%
15. Highly- Effective	The principal communicates to staff the importance in recognizing and meeting the social emotional needs of gifted learners; requires specialized instructions.	100%	100%	100%	100%
42. Highly- Effective	The principal provides feedback for teacher growth.	100%	100%	100%	100%
43. Highly- Effective	The principal monitors teacher effectiveness.	100%	100%	100%	100%
52. Highly- Effective	The principal establish a schedule that allows for gifted and general education teacher collaborative planning.	100%	100%	100%	100%

(continued)

Table 8 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
35. Highly- Effective	The principal models the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners, their needs—avoids special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoids joking that trivializes, and realizes that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and perfectionist.	93%	88%	100%	100%
56.	The principal will monitor Instruction and learning environment	100%	100%	100%	100%
68.	The principal will create a vision and set high expectation for excellence for all students.	100%	100%	100%	100%
1.	The principal is flexible and willing to make instructional decisions in support of gifted learners without fear of providing preferential or special treatment.	100%	100%	100%	100%
3.	The principal ensures scheduling for pull-out and/or push-in services.	100%	100%	100%	100%
4.	The principal ensures the fidelity of gifted services.	100%	100%	100%	100%
10.	The principal promotes using pre-assessments that indicate a student's proficiency without re-teaching material/content.	100%	100%	100%	100%
11.	The principal encourages teachers to give assignments and activities that are conducive to gifted learners' abilities, i.e. tiered assignments.	100%	100%	100%	100%

(continued)

Table 8 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
33.	The principal selects the right teachers for the gifted cluster classrooms that can serve the students nontraditionally and flexible enough to meet the challenges of gifted.	100%	100%	100%	100%
41.	The principal promotes a culture whereby data drives instructional decisions to include gifted learners so that all learners have 1 year of academic growth.	100%	100%	100%	100%
54.	The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team.	93%	88%	100%	100%
55.	The principal will incorporate professional learning communities within the school with the purpose of developing differentiated lessons.	100%	100%	100%	100%
57.	The principal will ensure that learning environment provide rigorous instruction.	100%	100%	100%	100%
5.	The principal supports flexible grouping and interventions when gifted learners need specific academic support.	100%	100%	100%	100%
37.	The principal understands and support the needs of gifted to including: twice-exceptional, English Language, and low social economic.	93%	88%	100%	100%
38.	The principal understands quirkiness and that gifted students might have asynchronous or twice-exceptional behaviors.	93%	88%	100%	100%

(continued)

Table 8 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
65.	The principal will encourage creativity.	93%	100%	80%	100%
63.	The principal will discourage teachers from overuse of gifted learners as “helpers” or allowing them to sit without instruction because they are already ahead.	86%	75%	100%	100%
28.	The principal promotes choice with reading and writing; provide open ended experiences for students to extend their thinking	93%	100%	80%	100%
34.	The principal should understand diverse gifted populations and gifted characteristics.	86%	75%	100%	100%
44.	The principal monitors student performance of gifted learners.	93%	100%	80%	100%
58.	The principal will support effective Tier 1 Instruction within the school.	93%	88%	100%	100%
60.	The principal will be aware of what’s going on in the classrooms, ensure it’s a good fit for students, and share with other teachers, gifted staff, and principals.	93%	100%	80%	100%
64.	The principal will foster student growth accountability without rigidity.	100%	100%	100%	100%

(continued)

Table 8 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted LEARNERS Descriptor	All Subgroups	Principal <i>n</i> = 8	Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5	University <i>n</i> = 1
67.	The principal will hire teachers with gifted education background and a passion for working with gifted learners.	86%	88%	80%	100%
9.	The principal will promote project-based assessments that enable gifted students to think outside the box.	100%	100%	100%	100%
12.	The principal will support the belief that teachers facilitate learning.	86%	88%	80%	100%
16.	The principal promotes appropriate social emotional support via the curriculum.	93%	88%	100%	100%
21.	The principal will develop capacity within the building to address the needs of gifted children.	93%	88%	100%	100%
25.	The principal provides resources for teachers and others working with gifted learners to ensure gifted learners academic needs are being met.	100%	100%	100%	100%
66.	The principal will cultivate an atmosphere of innovation.	93%	100%	80%	100%
69.	The principal understands social emotional needs of gifted learners.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Percent consensus determined with at least 80% of 4-point scale ratings combined in Effective (3-point) and Highly-Effective (4-point) and mean of 3.50. Presented in rank order by mean. Highly-Effective practices noted; received consensus status in Highly-Effective (4-point) category.

**Gifted programs.** Table 9 indicates the level of consensus reached by each panel subgroup for each leadership practice. The leadership practices below indicates principal supported differentiation and thoughtful selection of gifted cluster teachers within gifted programs. All panels reached 100% consensus for the two highly-effective practices out of 34, noted in tables. Principal and supervisor subgroups reached 100% consensus on 18 effective practices and supervisors on 25.

The principals' subgroup lowest agreement level reached 75% consensus on three items about universal screening, fidelity of screening, and work of the gifted resource teacher, who reports to the principal. The principals' and supervisor' subgroups reached similar 88% and 80% respectively on item 12 about acceleration policies and procedures. Supervisors' subgroup reached lowest consensus at 80% on seven of the effective-practices.

Table 9

*Gifted Programs: Level of Consensus Reached Within Each Sub-Group By Descriptor in Rank Order by Mean with Percentage of Panelist Ratings Combined in Effective and Highly-Effective of 34-Effective Practices for Gifted Programs.*

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor	All Subgroups	Principal <i>n</i> = 8	Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5	University <i>n</i> = 1
44. <b>Highly-Effective</b>	The principal supports a differentiated curriculum with attention to student strengths and areas of growth.	100%	100%	100%	100%
29.	The principal expects that data drives instruction so that all learners have at least one year of academic growth.	100%	100%	100%	100%
36. <b>Highly-Effective</b>	The principal selects gifted cluster teachers with the same care and same attention.	93%	88%	100%	100%
38.	The principal make educational decisions based on data, criteria, and the best interest of the student.	100%	100%	100%	100%
18.	The principal will ensure that gifted education is included in the written plan such as strategic planning and professional development.	100%	100%	100%	100%
19.	The principal will plan professional development sessions for general education and gifted teachers in a timely manner.	100%	100%	100%	100%
27.	The principal will work collaboratively with supervisor/coordinator of gifted services to ensure the best practices are implemented, i.e. supports the model of delivery of services.	93%	88%	100%	100%

(continued)

Table 9 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
40.	The principal will communicate and market the gifted programs options and opportunities to all stakeholders.	100%	100%	100%	100%
66.	The principal supports the gifted resource teacher in the effort to develop a culture where teachers believe that students can and should have advanced content.	93%	100%	80%	100%
1.	The principal provides opportunities for teachers and parents to gain a full understanding of gifted programs and resources are vitally important.	100%	100%	100%	100%
2.	The principal engages all stakeholders into the process.	100%	100%	100%	100%
17.	Once cluster teachers are selected, the principal will follow up, offer support, and expect to see specific materials and grouping strategies used during observations.	100%	100%	100%	100%
34.	The principal supports flexible grouping.	93%	88%	100%	100%
45.	The principal communicates options and opportunities for students to explore beyond the school building.	93%	88%	100%	100%
49.	The principal advocates for curriculum that is rigorous, in-depth and complex.	93%	88%	100%	100%
11.	The principal questions the level of challenge to meet academic needs.	100%	100%	100%	100%
15.	The principal engages and communicates with parents.	93%	100%	80%	100%

(continued)

Table 9 (cont.)

Item	Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor	All Subgroups	Principal <i>n</i> = 8	Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5	University <i>n</i> = 1
22.	The principal will disaggregate the data for the so that the gifted learner and high ability gifted are part of the student achievement discussion.	100%	100%	100%	100%
26.	The principal will support the universal screening process, i.e. all.	86%	75%	100%	100%
63.	The principal actively incorporates gifted education professional development to improve teaching practices.	93%	88%	100%	100%
64.	The principal facilitates professional learning culture to support gifted programs.	93%	100%	80%	100%
4.	The principal ensures that parents and students are aware of opportunities for gifted learners during and outside of the school day.	100%	100%	100%	100%
8.	The principal must have some ownership of the program so he/she can espouse its importance to others.	93%	88%	100%	100%
10.	The principal has the responsibility to build their capacity in gifted education to be an advocate for the gifted program.	100%	100%	100%	100%
12.	The principal has knowledge of and supports acceleration policies and procedures.	86%	88%	80%	100%
13.	The principal is knowledgeable and implements researched based practices.	93%	88%	100%	100%
16.	The principal inspects what is expected—if the division philosophy is to differentiate, expect and reinforce this idea during meetings, walkthroughs, observations, and evaluations with teachers.	93%	100%	80%	100%

(continued)

Table 9 (cont.)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 - Principal Leadership Practices for Gifted PROGRAMS Descriptor</b>	<b>All Subgroups</b>	<b>Principal <i>n</i> = 8</b>	<b>Supervisor of Gifted <i>n</i> = 5</b>	<b>University <i>n</i> = 1</b>
20.	The principal will make it a priority to attend the gifted professional development you plan for staff members.	93%	100%	80%	100%
25.	The principal will ensure the fidelity of screening process to ensure that students are identified without bias.	86%	75%	100%	100%
30.	The principal communicates an inclusive definition of giftedness.	93%	100%	80%	100%
37.	The principal allows gifted cluster to teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of gifted program.	93%	88%	100%	100%
50.	The principal fosters student choice with regard to assigned tasks, projects, when appropriate.	93%	88%	100%	100%
51.	The principal will encourage highly effective gifted resource teachers to coach and train general education staff.	93%	88%	100%	100%
65.	The principal understands that the gifted resource teacher is the primary expert in facilitating a program that supports content; based on different work and not more work.	86%	75%	100%	100%

Note: Percent consensus determined with at least 80% of 4-point scale ratings combined in Effective (3-point) and Highly-Effective (4-point) and at least a mean of 3.50. Items are presented in rank order by mean. Highly-Effective practices are noted and reached consensus in single Highly-Effective (4-point) category.

## Summary

Chapter 4 presented research conducted using mixed methods, three-round Delphi technique methodology and empirical data collection and analysis to identify principal leadership practices to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs. The Delphi panel was confirmed with 15 experts; however, one university discontinued.

Delphi Round I included two qualitative, open-ended questions to obtain principal practices from the panel for gifted learners and gifted programs. The researcher collapsed over 300 practices to create unique practices for Round II panel review. Delphi Round II included structured items—principal practices for panel review with 74 items for gifted learners and 66 items for gifted programs. Delphi Round III included structured items (principal practices) for panel review with 18 items for gifted learners and 14 items for gifted programs, with individual and panel ratings provided to review and revise. The Delphi expert panel identified a total of 39 effective-principal leadership practices for gifted learners, including eight *highly-effective* practices; and a total of 34 effective-practices for gifted programs, including two *highly-effective* practices.

## Chapter 5

### Findings, Implication for Practice, Future Research and Conclusions

#### Overview of the Problem

Principals are responsible for the teaching and learning that occurs in schools (Leithwood et al., 2004). As instructional leaders, principals are accountable for the academic achievement of all students (Owens, 2016). The national legislation and funding sources continues to support standards-based proficiency, state testing and accountability subgroups. The subgroups include Black, Hispanic, English Second Language (ESL), and Special Education students, and achievement gaps—not including gifted learners, gifted programs, or gifted underachievement.

Educational research found principal leadership and teacher instruction not aligned and consistent with current research and knowledge to address the gifted learner’s unique needs to advance academically to their potential (Davidson et al., 2007; Urlik, 2017). In recent years, educational research indicated gifted student underachievement, and underrepresentation of Black students identified for gifted education (Davidson et al., 2007; Grantham & Ford, 1998; Siegle, 2013). While the literature addressed the overall role, knowledge and skills of principals in schools (Leithwood et al., 2004), few empirical studies addressed the role of principals and effective leadership practices in gifted education—for gifted learners and gifted programs (Weber, Colarulli-Daniels & Leinhauser (2003).

#### Purpose of the Study

Leithwood et al. (2004) indicated the link between effective principal leadership practices and student achievement. A well-defined set of research-based, principal leadership practices are needed to effectively support teaching and learning in schools and the unique needs of gifted learners and gifted programs—to move beyond “knowing—to doing” (Leithwood et al., 2004; Urlik, 2017). Examining educational leadership to define what effective leadership practices for gifted learners and gifted programs looks like will be beneficial to scholars and practitioners in gifted education (Callahan & Plucker, 2013).

The theoretical framework linking principal leadership practices to student achievement, and two research questions guided design and implementation of the study to identify principal leadership practices to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs:

1. What does a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners?
2. What does a panel of experts identify as principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted programs?

### **Findings and Implications for Practice**

The Delphi panel identified eight highly effective principal leadership practices to support gifted learners and two highly effective principal leadership practices to support gifted programs. Implications for practice are indicated with each finding. In some cases, where the implication applies to more than one finding, it follows both findings, and the applicable findings are noted. The implications for practice were based on literature and contribution from the researcher principal-practitioner and gifted career professional. Several implications overlap multiple findings such as specialized professional development and principal communication and influence.

**Finding 1. The highly effective principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners' needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.** This principal leadership practice reached panel consensus in Round II with 93% panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, highest mean of 3.93, median of 4, lowest standard deviation of .26, and 100% ratings in either highly-effective or effective combined.

This highly effective principal leadership practice recognizes the unique needs of the gifted learner and appropriate instructional strategies to advance their academic talents (Clarenbach, 2007). Accelerated curriculum has been found to effectively allow high-ability students to move through the educational program at a faster rate or younger age, and may reduce or reverse gifted underachievement (Colangelo, Assoule & Gross, 2004; Siegle & McCoach, 2009).

***Implication for Practice.* Principals should encourage and support teachers in providing accommodations to meet the needs of their gifted students.** Pre-assessments should be used to determine needs of the gifted learner for curriculum compacting and flexible grouping. Independent study such as “Passion Projects” provide student research projects based on student interests. Urlik (2017) found professional development needed for teachers to implement strategies beyond “enrichment” activities.

**Finding 2. The principal knows what effective instruction is, and looks like.** This practice reached panel consensus in Round II with 93% ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, highest mean of 3.93, median of 4, lowest standard deviation of .26, and 100% panel ratings in either highly-effective or effective combined categories.

Research indicates gifted learners need challenge, rigor, and special experiences. Gaines (2018) identified three core instructional strategies for gifted learners: differentiation, modification and extension of curriculum, and acceleration (p.21). Susan Winebrenner and Dina Brulless (2008), based on *The Cluster Grouping Handbook: How to Challenge Gifted Students and Improve Achievement* (2008), indicated what gifted students need for effective instruction:

- Flexible grouping,
- Curriculum differentiation, i.e. acceleration, compacting
- Continuous progress,
- Intellectual peer interaction,
- Continuity, and
- Teachers with specialized training in gifted education.

***Implication for Practice.* School divisions should provide for principals professional development for specific principal knowledge—for effective instruction and what it looks like—for gifted learners.** Supervisors of Gifted may be consulted in planning, assessing principal’s needs, and available resources. Conferences such as National Association for the Gifted Child Conference provide sessions for administrators and principals.

**Finding 3. The principal will ensure differentiation by all teachers.** This practice reached panel consensus in Round II with 93% ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 100% ratings combined in effective and highly-effective, highest mean of 3.93, median of 4, and lowest standard deviation of .26.

Tomlinson (2014) defines differentiation as “modifications of curriculum and instruction appropriate to the needs of the gifted learner”, and processes including matching mode of learning, readiness, and interest for motivation (p.198). To meet the needs of the diverse learners within the classroom, general education teachers must plan to modify their curriculum and instruction for each group of learners (Urlik, 2017).

Gifted learners need challenge and intellectual stimulation through curriculum and teacher differentiated instruction (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Reis (1998) found “a relationship

between unchallenging or inappropriate curriculum in elementary school and underachievement in middle and high school” (p. 729).

**Finding 4. The Principal supports a differentiated curriculum with attention to student strengths and areas of growth.** This practice reached panel consensus reached in Round II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, with 100% ratings effective and highly-effective combined, high mean of 3.86, median of 4, and low standard deviation of .35.

Urlik (2017) found comprehensive program design in gifted education in Colorado site-based districts supported the critical need for this specified principal leadership practice. Urlik found principals’ lack of knowledge and continued myths around gifted children, i.e. “enrichment” activities for gifted program—rather, than using programming models such as differentiation, acceleration, compacting curriculum with instructional groupings (homogeneous-with peers, and independent) to advance gifted student growth (p.166). Principals indicated little over half of the teachers in their schools used instructional strategies specifically designed for gifted students. Administrators found the curriculum continuously needed to be evaluated and modified to meet the needs of gifted students’ (Weber et al., 2003)

***Implication for practice (Findings 3 and 4).* School divisions should encourage principals to support differentiation to meet the needs of gifted learners.** Differentiated curriculum indicates principal leadership support for specialized professional development and building teaching capacity through a professional learning community. Principal leadership can challenge, support and recognize advanced teaching and learning in gifted programs, beyond time and proficiency.

Teachers may be reluctant to differentiate. The principal may develop use of the professional community of learning model to engage teachers in analyzing and sharing practices, “respectful” tasks, and building knowledge and skills in differentiation for gifted learners. The principal should facilitate all-staff professional development with “look fors” in observations by principal, pedagogy, pre-assessment, enrichment, Response to Intervention, compacting curriculum (acceleration), independent study, and flexible grouping. The school district central office, Virginia colleges, online courses, and Virginia Association of Gifted may be consulted for professional development options.

Teachers may first learn to differentiate through tiered-instruction, Response to Intervention (RTI), to provide varied strategies in challenge, complexity, outcome, product, and process to address various levels of student learning toward mastery/proficiency. Tier 1 provides whole class strategy, Tier 2 provides small group strategy, and Tier 3 provides individualized strategy.

**Finding 5. The principal communicates to staff the importance in recognizing and meeting the social-emotional needs of gifted learners; requires specialized instructions.**

This practice reached consensus in Round II with 86% of ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 100% ratings combined in highest 4-point scale ratings of effective and highly-effective, high mean of 3.86, median of 4, and low standard deviation of .35.

Leithwood, et al. (2004) indicated importance and scope of influence for principal leadership in setting directions for teaching and learning in the school. Cross (2002) indicated few educators are specialized in the social-emotional development of gifted students, and good research challenges the myths still believed by principals, teachers, and public about gifted students.

Principals emphasized communication skills and importance of social-emotional well-being of gifted students (Weber, et al., 2003). However, in Urlik (2017), principals ranked their highest knowledge in social-emotional needs for students but results indicated disconnect between knowledge and actual practice.

**Finding 6. The principal models the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners, their needs—avoids special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoids joking that trivializes, and realizes that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and perfectionist.**

This practice reached Delphi panel consensus in Round II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 93% ratings combined in effective and highly-effective, high mean of 3.79 median of 4, and standard deviation of .56.

McCoach and Siegle (2007) found many educators still believed specialized instruction and programs provided “privileges”- viewed as elitism—for gifted students, already performing above grade level. Like talented athletes and musicians, academic talent needs and deserves the support and development (Subotnik, et al., 2011).

***Implication for practice (Findings 5 and 6). Principals should provide professional development for all staff, including counselors, to heighten perceptions and sensitivity for***

**specifics in social-emotional for gifted learners, i.e. perfectionism is unhealthy.** Implications for this highly-effective practice present broad application in principal leadership practices for both Findings 5 and 6. Training should address how to recognize social-emotional needs and characteristics of gifted learners, and how to respond and model attitude—appropriately and effectively. Comprehensive program design standards must consider affective (e.g., social and emotional) needs as well as academic needs (Reis, 2006);

**Finding 7. The principal provides feedback for teacher growth.** This practice reached consensus in Round II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 100% ratings combined in highest 4-point scale ratings of effective and highly-effective, high mean of 3.86, median of 4, and low standard deviation of .35.

Teachers are influenced and motivated by leadership roles and practices in the organization, including direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization (Leithwood, 2004). Teachers need administrator knowledgeable example to follow, support, and encouragement (Urlik, 2017).

**Finding 8. The principal monitors teacher effectiveness.** This practice reached consensus in Round II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 100% ratings combined in effective and highly-effective, high mean of 3.86, median of 4, and low standard deviation of .35.

The National Association for Gifted Children (2012) standards indicate successful principals monitor the performance of teachers and students to ensure all children achieve their full potential. However, national legislations, NCLB and recent ESSA, continue to drive proficiency instruction with state testing for accountability on principal leadership for teacher effectiveness and student performance (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012).

Gallagher & Gallagher (1994) stated “to be effective, gifted programs need principals who are knowledgeable about gifted education and can provide the leadership necessary to monitor the performance of teachers to ensure gifted students reach their full potential (p.99) However, recent studies noted principals’ stereotype gifted learners resulting in inappropriate and ineffective practices to effectively support gifted student achievement (Gaines, 2018; Urlik, 2017).

***Implication for practice (Findings 7 and 8). The Principal should monitor teacher effectiveness and provide feedback to teachers for professional growth.*** Both, monitoring

teacher effectiveness (Finding-7) and providing teacher feedback for growth (Finding-8), go hand-in-hand in highly-effective principal leadership practices to effectively support gifted learners—and teachers of gifted learners.

In monitoring teacher effectiveness, informal classroom visits and formal observations should look-for delivery with high-level questions by teachers for rigor and challenge, and to pique gifted learner motivation and interest. The principal should also determine what are students *doing* in the class? The post-op meeting allows principal a critical leadership opportunity and feedback to motivate and cultivate teacher growth with individualized principal attention. Planning meetings to address both teacher and student growth—in setting Smart-e goals including student achievement with teacher input and accountability in lesson plans and delivery. Student data review—academic, discipline and attendance reflect achievement, social-emotional and student-teacher relationship. Teacher attendance and extra-curricular (student clubs/events) reflect teacher-leader, and professionalism should reflect personal teacher actions for continuous professional growth. The Virginia Department of Education’s recent ESSA plan focused accountability, and school state accreditation on student academic growth; yet, still by federal student subgroups, not including subgroup for gifted students (VDOE).

**Finding 9. The principal establishes a schedule that allows gifted and general education teacher collaborative planning.** This practice reached consensus in Round II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, 100% ratings in either effective and highly-effective combined, high mean of 3.86, median of 4, low standard deviation of .35.

Scheduling common planning time is an independent, technical variable/factor within the scope of influence of the school principal (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Common planning time facilitates significant staff development to share and analyze teaching and student learning lessons, strategies, and practices (Weber, 2003, p.61).

***Implication for practice.* The Principal should create school schedules that provide common/collaborative planning time for general education and gifted education teachers, with aligned access for content/grade-level, and support by gifted resource teacher.** The meetings designed to schedule and plan together, reduce isolation, and targeted, professional development time.

**Finding 10. The principal selects gifted cluster teachers with the same care and same attention as general education teachers.** This practice reached panel consensus in Round

II with 86% of panel ratings in single 4-point highly-effective category, with 93% combined panel ratings in either highest 4-point scale ratings of effective or highly-effective, highest mean of 3.86, median of 4, and lowest standard deviation of .35.

Siegle (2013) indicated 50% of gifted students may underachieve, with the teacher having the most direct influence on student learning. In Virginia, gifted cluster teachers are general education teachers in the school, selected by the principal, in consultation with the Supervisor of Gifted Education. The gifted cluster teachers reports to and are evaluated by school principals. The gifted cluster teacher's classes contain the gifted-identified students enrolled at the school. Thus, gifted cluster teachers are responsible for the instruction of gifted students enrolled at the school.

***Implication for practice.* The Principal will select/designate the gifted cluster teachers with the same care and attention as the general education/content teachers, special education teachers, and English second language teachers.** The principal is influential and involved in hiring teachers at the school, and selects teachers for gifted students at the school. At the hiring point, the principal may exercise leadership and influence teacher selection for high-potential candidates as future gifted cluster/resource teachers at the school.

### **Future Research**

Additional research needed to advance principal leadership practices to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs (Weber et al., 2003). Future research may study the implementation and impact of the highly-effective principal leadership practices found in this study, identification of additional highly-effective principal leadership practices, and evaluation of gifted programs and services, professional development, and university preparation programs.

While the Delphi panel in this study identified highly effective principal leadership practices for gifted learners and gifted programs, future research may investigate implementation and impact of the principal leadership practices in schools and programs. Further studies may examine needs assessment for targeted professional development for principal leadership and teachers of gifted learners and gifted programs.

The Delphi expert principals in this study mainly served in elementary schools. Future research may focus on secondary levels—middle and high school, and specialty programs. Future studies may examine highly-effective principal leadership and practices across multiple, gifted student transitions in the secondary levels and specialized programs.

Many leadership studies have been conducted at Virginia Tech, further studies may examine a meta-analysis of all the leadership practice studies conducted over the years to determine findings and implications for practice.

## **Conclusions**

“The more gifted children are, the more they need a gifted leader” (Taylor, 1994, p.16)  
This dissertation Delphi study contributed empirical, educational leadership research on the role of principal leadership practices in gifted education. The theoretical framework linking principal leadership to student learning and achievement, and two research questions guided the research design and conducting the study: What principal leadership practices effectively support (1) gifted learners and (2) gifted programs?

A Delphi three-round research-based methodology included one qualitative open-ended questionnaire and two structured questionnaires for empirical data collection and analysis. The Delphi panel of 14 experts, across Virginia, consisted of eight school principals, five supervisors of gifted, and one university professor. The panel rated the level of effectiveness of principal leadership practices in supporting gifted learners and gifted programs on a 4-point Likert scale from not-effective (1) to highly-effective (4). Panel consensus was determined with at least 80% panel agreement and a mean of 3.5. The Delphi panel identified eight highly-effective principal leadership practices to support gifted learners and two highly-effective principal leadership practices to support gifted programs.

Eight highly-effective principal leadership practices identified to support gifted learners included:

- The principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners’ needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.
- The principal knows what effective instruction is, and looks like.
- The principal will ensure differentiation by all teachers.
- The principal communicates to staff the importance in recognizing and meeting the social-emotional needs of gifted learners; requires specialized instructions.
- The principal provides feedback for teacher growth.
- The principal monitors teacher effectiveness.

- The principal establishes a schedule that allows for gifted and general education teacher collaborative planning.
- The principal models the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners, their needs—avoids special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoids joking that trivializes, and realizes that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and perfectionist.

Two highly-effective principal leadership practices identified to support gifted programs included:

- The principal supports a differentiated curriculum with attention to student strengths and areas of growth.
- The principal selects gifted cluster teachers with the same care and same attention.

The highly-effective principal leadership practices present implications in practice. To successfully implement highly-effective practices, principals and teachers need specialized, professional development in gifted education. Highly-effective principal leadership practices to support gifted learners and gifted programs require specialized knowledge and skills in monitoring, feedback and accountability for gifted student achievement and growth, and teacher effectiveness and growth in the development and implementation of instructional strategies including differentiation, acceleration, compacting curriculum, flexible grouping, and independent study. Professional training will heighten professional sensitivity; develop appropriate perceptions and priority in selection of gifted cluster teachers and principals to effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs. Principals should make or delegate contact with school, local, district, state, university, and national organization in gifted education to assess their needs and identify gifted resources available to plan and implement the 10 highly effective principal leadership practices.

To develop underrepresented and changing future student populations, highly-effective principal leadership support, and prepare our nation's gifted and talented students for challenging rigor in future college and careers, future studies are recommended to evaluate gifted programs in schools and districts, and implementation and impact of the highly-effective principal leadership practices in this study. Research recommended includes study of administrator and teacher professional development and university preparation programs for alignment with current research in principal leadership practices for highly-effective support of gifted learners and gifted programs.

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Appendix A

Virginia Tech: Certificate of Training in Human Subjects Protection



## Appendix B

### Virginia Tech: IRB Approval and Full Consent for Participants



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732 Fax 540/231-0959  
email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 14, 2019  
**TO:** Carol S Cash, Ted S Price, Dora Mae Banks  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study  
**IRB NUMBER:** 17-1128

Effective January 13, 2019, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **January 29, 2019**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **January 28, 2020**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **January 14, 2020**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**  
FULL CONSENT FORM for PARTICIPANTS  
**Consent is Implied with the Submission of this Questionnaire**

**Title of Project:** Identify Principal Leadership Practices that Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs

**Investigator(s):** Carol S. Cash (Faculty) E-mail: [ccash48@vt.edu](mailto:ccash48@vt.edu)  
Ted S. Price (Faculty) E-mail: [pted7@vt.edu](mailto:pted7@vt.edu)  
Dorie M. Banks (student) E-mail/phone: [dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu); 757-344-1988

**Purpose of this Research Project:** The purpose of this research study is to identify principal leadership practices that effectively support gifted learners and gifted programs. My name is Dorie Banks, and I am a public school principal, and a doctoral student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University conducting educational research. You have been selected for this research study because of your expertise and support of gifted learners and gifted programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The subject pool will have representation from the eight regions in Virginia (excluding Montgomery County Public Schools) with an estimate of eight supervisors of gifted, eight principals, and 4 university professors.

**Procedures:**

- Panel participants will be asked to complete a short questionnaire every other week, with a total of three rounds of questionnaires.
- Each questionnaire should take about 30-45 minutes to complete and you are asked to return the surveys within a week by email to [dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu).
- Panel participants' responses as well as any identifying information data will be treated with respect and kept secure and confidential.
- I will be actively engaged in the study. If you have any questions during the study or please contact me at (757) 344-1988 or [dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu)

**Risks Involved:**

- There are minimum risks involved in participating in this study.

**Benefits:** Results of the study will impact educational practices, leadership, and selection of principals, professional development, teaching, and student achievement. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

**Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:** The data collected will be treated with respect and confidentiality as each panel expert will be given a code to identify their questionnaire; i.e. P1= Principal; U1= University; S1 = Supervisor of Gifted, etc. Information containing identifying information such as phone numbers, email addresses, and other information that would identify an expert will be kept under lock and key (Dalkey, 1967). The data will remain under lock and key at the researcher's home until a successful final defense, and at successful dissertation defense, data will be destroyed. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

**Compensation:** No compensation will be earned as a result of your participation in this project.

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**  
FULL CONSENT FORM for PARTICIPANTS  
**Consent is Implied with the Submission of this Questionnaire**

**Freedom to Withdraw:** It is important to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

**Participants' Responsibilities:** "I voluntarily agree to participate in this study by:

- Completing a short questionnaire every other week, with a total of three rounds of questionnaires.
- Each questionnaire should take about 30-45 minutes to complete and you are asked to return the surveys within a week by email to [dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu).

**Questions or Concerns:** If you have any questions during the study you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

**Subjects' Consent:** Consent is implied with the Submission of this Questionnaire

***First Questionnaire Begins Here:***

Please list as many responses as you can think of to the questions below in the spaces provided. You may use additional space if needed. Thanks in advance.

1. **What do you believe are principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted learners?**

2. **What do you believe are principal leadership practices that are effective in support of gifted programs?**

## Appendix C

### Round I: Email to Recruit Delphi Panel

February 11, 2018

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#### Gifted Education Leadership Practices

9 messages

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**Dora Banks** <dorieb7@vt.edu>

Sun, Feb 11, 2018 at 7:14 PM

Bcc: cheryl.mccullough@apsva.us, christy.harris@bvcp.net, llet@bcpschools.org, shogan@mail.dps.k12.va.us, dashburn@essex.k12.va.us, greathoj@fcpsk12.net, jcox@martinsville.k12.va.us, shaywood2@ycsd.york.va.us, patty.haskins@powhatan.k12.va.us, muddje@pwcs.edu, paulat@gilesk12.net, gflanaga@nps.k12.va.us, dbanks1@nps.k12.va.us

Dear Supervisor of Gifted Services:

I would like to invite you to participate in doctoral study about Principal Leadership Practices in Gifted Education. You have been selected to participate on this panel based on your expertise in gifted education. Also, would you recommend a school principal and/or university professor to participate on the panel study?

The study will involve a round of three questionnaires every other week. Each questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to submit the questionnaire within 1 week.

Once you complete and email the first attached questionnaire you will be given a code to protect your identity and your responses will be kept confidential throughout the process. Please return the first questionnaire by Sunday, February 18th.

Thank you kindly for your support and participation.

Sincerely,

Dorie Banks, School Principal  
(Doctoral Candidate, VT)  
[dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu)  
(757)344-1988

---

 **Firsta Questionnaire.pdf**  
442K

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**Haywood, Sarah** <shaywood2@ycsd.york.va.us>

Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 7:46 AM

To: Dora Banks <dorieb7@vt.edu>

Good morning, Dorie-

I am happy to help, and I will send responses in the next day or two. I will also give thought to a principal or professor to suggest.

**Appendix D**  
**Round I: Results of Delphi**

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**Question #1: Practices for Gifted Learners**

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*Cluster children*

*Teaching Assignment/Select the right teachers that can serve the students- non traditional*

*Provide Leadership opportunities to help them build their leadership skills and capacity*

*Provide strong social emotional support from the guidance counselor due*

*Allow gifted students to work vertically with their gifted peers who are older and or younger*

*Provide choice with reading and writing; provide open ended experiences for students to extend their thinking*

*Provide flexible grouping and interventions when gifted learners need specific academic support*

*Provide an opportunity for students to present Passion Projects to explore what they want to learn*

*Realize that most gifted students are extremely sensitive and are perfectionists*

*Assist teachers with protecting student's emotional health through professional development*

*Cluster Grouping*

*Use of data to support planning*

*Differentiate the Content*

*Data Analysis*

*(2)Prof. Training Cluster Teachers*

*(2)Quality Staff Development for Cluster/Gen Ed Teachers*

*Coaching for new teachers in the Cluster Model*

*Regular Parent Meetings*

*School Counselor Role in Social Emotional Needs of GT*

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*Establish a schedule /Joint teacher planning/Ensure Differentiation by all teachers*

*Add Gifted Resource to the school leadership team to ensure voice of depth and complexity of curriculum*

*Ensure full dissemination of information to students, parents on all middle and high school programs*

*Belief that teachers facilitate learning/learning should be personalized*

*Progress monitoring to ensure each learner received the appropriate curricular opportunities in each classroom*

*Support Project Based Learning*

*Support the idea of personalized learning*

*Supporting the pre-assessment that indicate students' proficiency without re-teaching material/content*

*Know what effective instruction is, looks like and provide feedback for teacher growth*

*Know the students, personally connect, and understand their needs and interests*

*Create a vision and expectation for excellence for all students*

*Hire teachers with gifted education background/passion for working with gifted learners*

*Set expectation that ongoing data drives instructional decisions for gifted learners so that all learners have 1 year of academic growth*

*Principal practices: understands their social emotional needs of gifted learners*

*Understand and support needs of gifted to include: 2E; ELL, low socio-economically*

*Stay current in best practices in working with gifted learners*

*Include parents in conversations about needs of gifted learners*

*Can frame and show connections between different schools, county-wide initiatives and needs of gifted learners*

*Actively incorporate the needs of gifted learners in the AOP*

*Model the appropriate attitude regarding gifted learners and their needs- avoid special treatment that would lead to elitism, avoid joking that trivializes*

*Cultivate an atmosphere of innovation; foster student growth accountability without rigidity*

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*Incorporate functioning/meaningful PLCs or collaboration with other teachers of the gifted to develop differentiate lessons*

*Adopt a facet of personal growth that encompasses learning about gifted education.*

*Reach out to help when he/she doesn't know*

*Seek help talking w parents regarding tests, referrals, recommendations, or working with teachers*

*Get feedback from parents of the gifted and gifted students themselves to see if needs are being addressed*

*Being aware of what's going on in the classrooms, ensure it's a good fit for students, and share with other teachers, gifted staff, and principals*

*Understand quiriness, understand that gt students might have asynchronous or 2E behaviors*

*Be patient parents and seek to understand and help with their concerns*

*Ensuring fidelity of services*

*Supporting differentiation for gt students*

*Monitoring teacher effectiveness*

*Developing capacity within the building to address the needs of gifted children*

*Working with parents of gifted learners*

*Professional Development for Teachers*

*Parental Training*

*Providing Resources/ opportunities for gt students*

*Incorporating Activities to support gifted learners- competitions, clubs, special student interests, student leadership*

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## **Question #2: Practices for Gifted Programs**

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### **University Professors**

Engaging all stakeholders into the process

Provide opportunities for teachers and parents to gain a full understanding of gifted programs and resources are vitally important

Actively engaged principals typically find monetary resources to support gifted learners

Principal must have some ownership of the program; he/she can espouse its importance to others

Principal has the responsibility to learn as much and be an advocate for the gt program  
Work on the “front line” with interactions with parents.  
Address referrals, identification, social emotional needs  
Questions the level of challenge of academic needs; requires knowledge of the program  
Gifted Education/Programs should be included in the written plans, such as professional development  
School improvement plans, and strategic planning documents  
When analyzing whole school student achievement data, the principal should disaggregate so that the gifted learner and potentially gifted are part of the discussion

### **Supervisors:**

Work collaboratively with supervisor/coordinator of gifted services to ensure the best practices are implemented (i.e. supports the model of delivery of services)  
Work collaboratively with parents of gifted learners  
Work collaboratively with supervisors of gt to hire teachers of gifted learners  
Supports and takes part in ongoing professional development of gifted pedagogy  
Expects that data drives instruction so that all learners have at least one year of academic growth

Communicate an inclusive definition of giftedness rather than an exclusive only the high achieving compliant students are gifted  
Actively incorporate gifted education professional development  
Show value for the gifted education program through time, attention, and budget  
Cultivate school-community partnerships that may provide enrichment opportunities  
Be supportive/responsive with gifted advisory members to support gifted programs  
Marketing/Communicating the gifted programs options and opportunities to all stakeholders  
Creating partnerships with universities, state, and local agencies to advance gifted programs  
Being aware of, supporting, making use of acceleration policies/procedures  
Inspecting and Expected- Expect and reinforce differentiation and reinforce the idea through walkthroughs, observations, and evaluations with teachers  
Principals should be supportive of gifted programs by talking with parents regarding tests making recommendations for referrals (or not)

## **Principals**

High effective gifted resource teachers to help coach and train staff

Communication with parents through meetings and newsletters based on current topics

Survey parents to identify needs of the gifted learners to help grow the program

Training of guidance counselors on the needs of gifted learners

Provide blended ways to include digital learning.

Have students learn about topics that they are passionate about

Extend the Learning to the community through Project Based Learning

Job embedded Professional Development

Providing

Cluster Model

Data Driven Decision Making

Professional Development for Teachers

Support with Staffing

Coaching

Professional Development for Parents

Strong Communication with Parents

Effective classroom monitoring

**Appendix E**  
**Round II: Email and Delphi Survey**

Dora Banks <dorieb7@vt.edu>

Attachments

Tue, Aug 21, 2018, 11:55 PM

Dear Expert Panel Member:

Thank you so much for your participation in this study regarding gifted learners and gifted programs. I realize that any time of the year is a busy time for you, so I am very grateful for your wiliness to share your knowledge and expertise regarding effective leadership practices on this topic. There was such depth and breadth in the responses from Round I it has taken some time to compile and ensure all the experts' responses are represented in **Round II**.

The panel responses have been compiled into 140 leadership practices. Please review the attached word document, rate and return via email no later than Wednesday, August 29, 2018.

Please let me know if you questions. Again, thank you for your participation!

Respectfully,

Dorie M. Banks

Virginia Tech

██████████

██████████

# Supervisor of Advanced Instruction

## Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study Doric M. Banks

### Delphi study: Round 2 – Survey

This survey addresses principal leadership practices that are effective in support of *gifted learners and gifted programs*

This document is a compilation 140 principal leadership practices received by the expert panel members who responded during Round 1. The expert panel membership is representative of: principals, gifted supervisors, and university professors across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Please circle your rating for each item below using the following rating scale:  
1-Not Effective 2-Slightly Effective 3- Effective 4-Highly Effective

Question 1: Principal leadership practices in support of <i>gifted learners</i>		Rating
1.	The principal is flexible and willing to make instructional decisions in support of gifted learners without fear of providing preferential or special treatment.	1 2 3 4
2.	The principal is willing to support accommodations to meet gifted learners' needs, i.e. accelerated curriculum material, independent work, and or small group time.	1 2 3 4
3.	The principal ensures scheduling for pull-out and/or push-in services.	1 2 3 4
4.	The principal ensures the fidelity of gifted services.	1 2 3 4
5.	The principal supports flexible grouping and interventions when gifted learners need specific academic support.	1 2 3 4
6.	The principal supports homogeneous grouping, i.e. ability.	1 2 3 4
7.	The principal will <i>cluster</i> gifted children with others who fall within the same category.	1 2 3 4
8.	The principal will allow gifted students to work vertically with their gifted peers who are older and or younger.	1 2 3 4

## Appendix F

### Round III: Email and Delphi Survey

Dear Panel Expert:

This is the **final round** in the Delphi Study. *Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study*

Thank you so much for your valuable contribution in Rounds I and II and your timely responses.

The attached survey of 32 total items in **Round III** were selected for review if the panel rating was **less** than 80%.

**The final round** allows panel expert(s) the opportunity to review the panel ratings as well revise personal ratings if you choose to do so.

If you decide to leave the item blank, the researcher will determine no change to your rating.

Kindly email your responses by **Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>**.

Should you have questions, please feel free to email me.

Thanks kindly,

Dorie Banks  
[dorieb7@vt.edu](mailto:dorieb7@vt.edu)

Happy New Year!

**Round-3: Final**

*Identifying Principal Leadership Practices to Effectively Support Gifted Learners and Gifted Programs: A Delphi Study*

**Directions:** Please review items for Question-1 & Question-2 surveys.

**Rating Scale:** 1-Not effective 2-Slightly effective 3-Effective 4-Highly effective.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 – Principal leadership practices for gifted learners:</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Item Mean</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Percent of 3 or 4 ratings</b>	<b>Your Rating and Code: P1</b>	<b>To revise your rating Enter 1 – 4 or If left blank = no change</b>
<b>6</b>	The principal supports homogeneous grouping, i.e. ability.	3.14	71%	<b>3</b>	
<b>19</b>	The principal will assist teachers with protecting student’s emotional health through professional development.	3.21	79%	<b>2</b>	
<b>23</b>	The principal will provide professional training of cluster teachers and general education teachers.	3.21	79%	<b>3</b>	
<b>24</b>	The principal provides resources for gifted students.	3.14	71%	<b>3</b>	
<b>27</b>	The principal provides students with choice based on interest.	3.36	79%	<b>3</b>	
<b>31</b>	The principal incorporates enrichment activities in support of gifted learners, i.e. competitions, clubs, special student interests, student leadership, Mad Science Night, etc.	3.07	79%	<b>3</b>	
<b>32</b>	The principal provides leadership opportunities to help them build their social influence and capacity.	3.00	71%	<b>2</b>	

(continued)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 – Principal leadership practices for gifted learners:</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Item Mean</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Percent of 3 or 4 ratings</b>	<b>Your Rating and Code: P1</b>	<b>To revise your rating Enter 1 – 4 or If left blank = <i>no change</i></b>
<b>40</b>	The principal actively incorporates the needs of gifted learners in accountability operating plan (AOP).	3.07	71%	<b>2</b>	
<b>45</b>	The principal provide workshop for parents of gifted learners.	2.79	71%	<b>3</b>	
<b>46</b>	The principal provide workshops for gifted students i.e. self-efficacy.	2.79	64%	<b>2</b>	
<b>47</b>	The principal will host regular parent meetings and include parents in conversations about needs of gifted learners.	2.79	57%	<b>2</b>	
<b>48</b>	The principal will ensure full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school programs.	3.50	79%	<b>4</b>	
<b>49</b>	The principal will seek feedback from parents of the gifted to see if their children’s needs are met.	3.14	79%	<b>2</b>	
<b>50</b>	The principal will be patient with parents and seek to understand and help with their concerns.	3.08	71%	<b>3</b>	
<b>51</b>	The principal will seek feedback from gifted students themselves to see if needs are being addressed.	3.21	79%	<b>2</b>	
<b>54</b>	The principal will add the gifted resource teacher to the school leadership team.	3.36	79%	<b>4</b>	
<b>72</b>	The principal can frame and show connections between different schools, county-wide and needs of gifted learners.	2.92	57%	<b>2</b>	

(continued)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 – Principal leadership practices for gifted learners:</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Item Mean</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Percent of 3 or 4 ratings</b>	<b>Your Rating and Code: P1</b>	<b>To revise your rating Enter 1 – 4 or If left blank = <i>no change</i></b>
<b>74</b>	The principal seeks help talking with parents regarding tests, referrals, recommendations, or working with teachers.	3.14	71%	<b>2</b>	
<b>5</b>	The principal ensures full dissemination of information to students and parents on all middle and high school gifted programs via robo calls, evening events, flyers to homes and school webpage postings.	3.58	79%	<b>4</b>	
<b>6</b>	The principal seeks funding for the gifted program.	3.23	71%	<b>2</b>	
<b>7</b>	The principal actively engages principals typically find monetary resources to support gifted learners.	2.79	57%	<b>2</b>	
<b>14</b>	The principal is committed to powerful literacy philosophy throughout the curriculum.	3.29	79%	<b>4</b>	
<b>32</b>	The principal supports the Cluster Model.	3.29	79%	<b>4</b>	
<b>33</b>	The principal supports ability grouping at the elementary level to narrow the range of abilities in the classroom.	3.07	71%	<b>2</b>	
<b>35</b>	The principal supports ability grouping at the high school level.	3.17	64%	<b>4</b>	
<b>37</b>	The principal allows gifted cluster to teachers to serve consecutive years when professional training has been provided to increase capacity of gifted program.	3.36	79%	<b>4</b>	

(continued)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Q1 – Principal leadership practices for gifted learners:</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Item Mean</b>	<b>Panel Rating: Percent of 3 or 4 ratings</b>	<b>Your Rating and Code: P1</b>	<b>To revise your rating Enter 1 – 4 or If left blank = <i>no change</i></b>
<b>41</b>	The principal will create partnerships with universities, state, and local agencies to advance gifted programs.	3.14	64%	<b>2</b>	
<b>42</b>	The .Principals supports the gifted program by talking with parents regarding tests and make recommendations for referrals or not.	3.29	79%	<b>2</b>	
<b>53</b>	The principal will survey parents to identify needs of the gifted learners to help grow the program.	3.21	79%	<b>2</b>	
<b>58</b>	The principal will extend the learning to the community through project based learning.	3.36	79%	<b>3</b>	
<b>59</b>	The principal will promote professional development for parents of gifted learners.	2.93	71%	<b>2</b>	
<b>60</b>	The principal will reject functional literacy and rejection of the remediation model.	3.14	64%	<b>4</b>	