

**The Perceptions of Directors of Gifted Education Regarding
Division Factors that Contribute to Proportionate or Nearly
Proportionate African American Representation in Gifted
Education**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined school divisions in the Commonwealth whose percentage African American students in gifted education were proportionate or nearly proportionate to their representation in the general student body in order to determine if there were any commonalities in their selection criteria. The conceptual framework suggests the type of assessments, professional development, multiple criteria, and students' self-perceptions are significant factors that determine the proportionality of African American students in gifted education programs within the Commonwealth. The reader has been provided with information on the historical perspective of disproportionate representation African Americans traditionally endured in gifted education. Data collected from interviews of directors of gifted education in school divisions that reported proportional representation of African American students in the area of General Intellectual Aptitude in gifted education. An analysis of the data revealed participating school divisions provided professional development on identifying underrepresented populations, used at least six multiple criteria options, selected both achievement and aptitude assessments during the screening process, and provided support for students' self-perceptions with a variety of programs which resulted in a proportional or near proportional African American representation in their gifted programs.

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CHAPTER 1

Research Problem

This study examined school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students were proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there were any commonalities in their selection criteria. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is cited by Ford, Grantham and Whiting (2008) as being the legal basis for school divisions that receive federal funds to discontinue practices that have a desperate impact on minority student representation in gifted education. Similarly Davis-Baskin (2000) views a disproportion of minorities as conflicting with Free and Appropriate Public Education.

Rationale for Investigating African American students in Gifted Programs

Scholars have investigated the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted education for some time (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000; VanTassel-Baska, Johnson, & Avery, 2002; Ford & Webb, 1994; Henfield, Moore III, & Wood, 2008). Their studies addressed factors that affect the selection of African American students. Research by Davis-Baskin (2000) focused on several aspects related to the selection of students for gifted education. She compared the proportionality of underrepresented populations in gifted education in two Title I schools located in a southwestern state with several similarities such as student demographics, years of teaching experience, and years of administrative experience. Her findings revealed the impact of practices, policies, and

procedures in determining how the proportionality of low income and minority students in gifted programs as compared to the general student population.

School divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are required to submit a five-year gifted education plan. The plans include identification of at least four selection components, including assessments used to identify students for gifted education (Palmer, 2009). A recent comparative analysis by Palmer in 2009 found that there was no relationship between the assessments used by school divisions in Virginia and proportionality of minority students (Palmer, 2009). This researcher proposes to investigate school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students are proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there are any commonalities in their selection criteria.

Historical Perspective

Research regarding minorities, more specifically African Americans, in gifted education dates back to Jenkins' study (1936). He discovered that despite high intelligence test scores, African American students were not considered highly intelligent. The effort to surpass the Soviet Union during the Cold War as Sputnik was launched proved to be the catalyst for dialogue that led to the development of special math and science programs (Cross & Cross, 2005). The passage of the Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) was the first federal legislation that addressed the differentiation of students' abilities. In 1972, Sidney P. Marland, Jr., Commissioner of Education under President Nixon, commissioned a study to ascertain the quality of education students were receiving from the nation's schools. In his report, Marland defined gifted and

talented students as pupils, who were identified by qualified professionals, and who are able to perform at optimal levels due to their exceptional abilities (Marland, 1972). This landmark study identified the following areas where high performance may be manifested by students: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability (National Association for Gifted Children, 2008). The report concluded that the federal, state, and local levels of government did not place a priority on nurturing students with high abilities. The findings of the report led to the passage of the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 and its reauthorization in 1994 (National Association for Gifted Children, 2008). The legislation was a component of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA, 1965). It included the awarding of grants to colleges, states, and districts that focused on all students of ability.

Data from The Office of Gifted Education of the Virginia Department of Education (Virginia Department of Education Annual Report, 2009) revealed that there are 1,235,309 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in Virginia's public schools including an ethnic demographic of: 56% White, 26% Black, 9% Hispanic, 6% Asian, .3% Native American, .1% Native Hawaiian, and 2.6% undetermined. Table 1 indicates the total student population within the Commonwealth and its ethnic demographics as reported to the Virginia Department of Education in September 2008.

Table 1

Total Population and Percentage of Public School Students in the Commonwealth of Virginia by Ethnicities 2007-08.

Total public school population: 1,235,309

Unspecified	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Hawaiian	Total
32,118	3,705	74,119	321,180	111,178	691,774	1,235	1,235,309
(2.6%)	(.3%)	(6%)	(26%)	(9%)	(56%)	(.1%)	

Virginia Department of Education (2008).

The Office of Gifted Education of the Virginia Department of Education also identified areas of giftedness as General Intellectual Aptitude only, Specific Academic Aptitude only, Visual/Performing Arts only, and Tech/Practical Arts only (Virginia Department of Education Annual Report, 2009). Data revealed that there were 176,994 students enrolled in an area of giftedness in 2009 (Virginia Department of Education Annual Report, 2009). However, based on the proportion of ethnicities in gifted education, 68.787% of gifted students in Virginia are White, 12.053% Black, 10.977% Asian, 4.853% Hispanic, .259% Native American, .11% Native Hawaiian, and 2.957% undetermined (Virginia Department of Education Annual Report 2009). Table 2 indicates the total identified gifted student population within the Commonwealth and its

ethnic demographics as reported to the Virginia Department of Education in September 2008.

Table 2

Total Population and Percentage of Gifted Identified Public School Students in the Commonwealth of Virginia by Ethnicity in 2007-08.

Total public school population: 176,994

Unspecified	Native American	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Hawaiian	Total
5,239	460	19,443	21,324	8,582	121,752	194	176,994
(2.96%)	(.26%)	(10.98%)	(12.05%)	(4.85%)	(68.79%)	(.11%)	

Virginia Department of Education (2008).

Similar disproportion exists throughout the country in gifted education. Yoon and Gentry (2009) cited statistics dating from 1978 to 2006 from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Elementary and Secondary School Survey and the Civil Rights Data Collection reflecting the national underrepresentation of Hispanics and African Americans in gifted education. There is a disproportion of Hispanics in forty three out of fifty states. Only in Louisiana and Maine are Hispanics proportionally represented in gifted programs (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Similarly, in forty two out of fifty states, African Americans are disproportionately represented in gifted education. Massachusetts, West Virginia and Wyoming are the only states where African American students are proportionally represented in gifted programs (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009).

Disadvantaged students historically are also disproportionately represented in gifted education (Ford, Grantham, Whiting, 2007).

There are at least three factors that result in poor test performance – test bias, inadequate instruction or lack of access to high quality instruction, and internal factors with the student (Ford, Grantham, Whiting, 2007). A student's ethnicity and socio-economic status may also affect the perception students would have of their academic potential. Minority students often face societal pressures that discourage academic achievement (Ogbu & Fordham, 1986). They also feel pressures of being different from peers (Preuss & Dubow, 2004). The chances of a minority student being surrounded by other academically talented students in gifted education to begin to develop more awareness and appreciation for intelligence and its benefits before the passage of the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 were low. The result was an under-appreciation of intelligence (Ogbu & Fordham, 1986). Children may exhibit a plethora of coping mechanisms to hide their intelligence for fear of being ostracized by other minority students. This researcher, having grown up in the described environment and now working with the described population was inspired, because of his experiences, to investigate gifted education. The continuing disproportion of minority students in gifted education programs prompted this researcher to investigate the identification and selection procedures that resulted in more proportional representation.

Significance of the Study

The researcher examined school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose percentage African American students in gifted education were proportionate or nearly proportionate to their representation in the general student body. His personal

experience as a student as well as his professional experiences also provided this researcher with a passion for the topic. This concern has persisted over many decades nationwide (Baldwin, 1987; Ford 1998; Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1996; Frasier, 1980; Torrence, 1977) and continues to be an issue in gifted education (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Grantham, 2003). In 2009, then-Governor Tim Kaine requested that the Virginia Department of Education conduct a study regarding the claims of racial disparity among students in gifted education programs throughout the state (Richmond Times Dispatch, 2009). This was the result of a resolution sent to the Virginia Department of Education by the Chesterfield Virginia Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The organization asserted that there was a disparity statewide of African American students in gifted education (Chesterfield Observer, Jan., 2000). African American students represented 26% of the students in the state yet only represent 12% of gifted students in the Commonwealth. To investigate this issue, the Chesterfield County Public Schools appointed a Gifted Education Task Force to conduct a study. Their findings, which were reported to the division's Gifted Education Advisory Committee, concluded that disparities existed within the gifted program. To address this issue, professional development was provided to teachers and administrators to assist them with recognizing students' diverse gifted behaviors that are usually manifested in traditionally underrepresented populations. The gifted education department of Chesterfield County Public Schools provided the training (Chesterfield Observer, Jan., 2000).

Purpose of the Study

This researcher investigated school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students were proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there were any commonalities in their selection criteria. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Directors of Gifted Education in school divisions in Virginia that have proportional or nearly proportional representation of African Americans in their gifted programs to identify any factors, including selected assessments, types and number of multiple criteria, professional development, and support for student self-perception that might contribute to the level of proportionality.

Justification for the Study

Research on race relations and the implications of race have been documented by scholars. Menchaca (1997) explored discrimination based on race that existed after the Spanish conquest and subsequently was exacerbated by the United States government when it conquered northern Mexico and annexed it as part of the United States. She demonstrated how segregation in schools was influenced by the people's perceptions of minorities from the late 1800's through the Civil Rights era to today. Recently, Ford (2008) asserted that educators continue to resist desegregation today as they use tracking and ability grouping strategies to perpetuate racial segregation among students. This study has the potential to add depth to the existing body of knowledge by presenting qualitative data obtained from division gifted education coordinators from localities in which there is a proportionate representation of African American students in gifted education. Such data include division gifted coordinators' perspective on the impact

achievement and aptitude assessments used in their division on the identification of African American students for gifted programs. The types of verbal and nonverbal assessments were identified. Additional data were sought regarding any perceived need for professional development for teachers to help them identify signs of giftedness in minority students as well as the types of professional development offered. The researcher also explored professional development for administrators in selected divisions. Moreover, the selection of multiple criteria and their effectiveness in resulting in proportional representation of African American students were investigated. Lastly, interviews with division coordinators focused on their perceptions of how students' intrinsic motivation reflecting their self-perceptions could possibly affect their academic performance. The manner in which school divisions provided support for African American students that resulted in their proportional representation in gifted education was also surveyed.

Research Questions

The overarching research question of this study is - What are the perceptions of directors of gifted education of school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose percentage African American students in gifted education is proportionate to their representation in the general student body? Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University doctoral student, Dr. Palmer conducted a quantitative study in 2009 investigating the relationship existing between the areas of giftedness, the numbers of multiple criteria used, and the standardized measures used for the identification of gifted students in divisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia and the proportionate representation of traditionally underrepresented minority populations. The researcher

received permission to use Dr. Palmer's data to conduct a qualitative study to answer the following research questions:

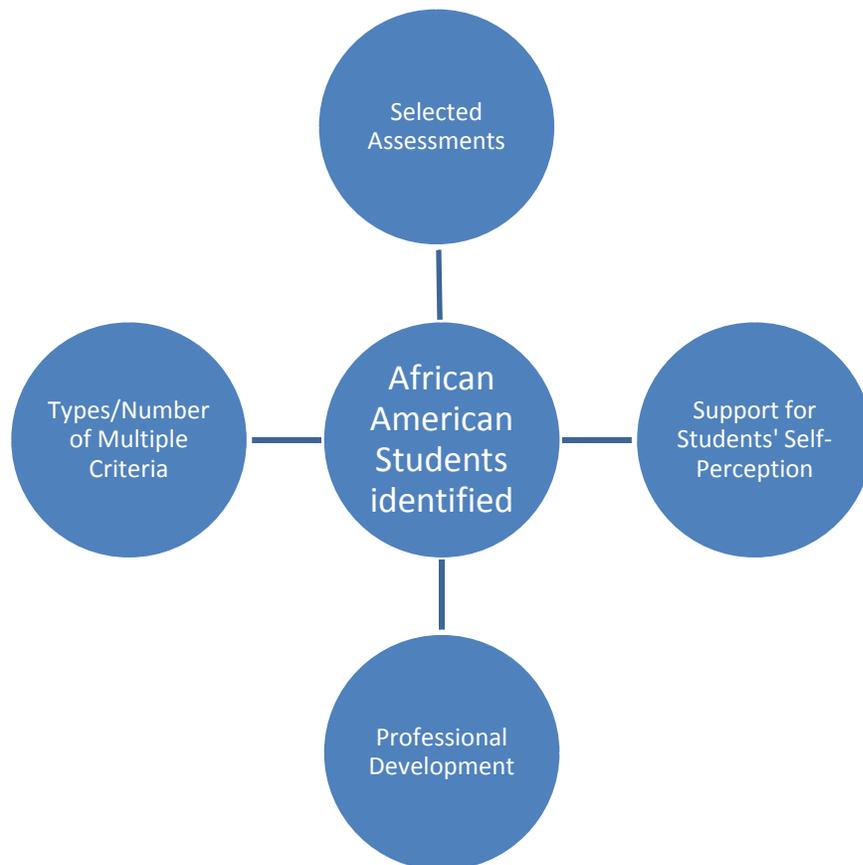
- What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of assessments and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?
- What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of multiple criteria?
- What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the types of professional development activities for teachers?
- What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding efforts that have been made to address the possibility of students' self-perception?

Conceptual Framework

This researcher identified the conceptual framework for this study based on a review of the literature about the factors affecting the identification of minority students for gifted education. Naglieri (1996) asserted verbal standardized test scores hindered minority students ability to be found eligible for gifted education. Similarly, Davis-Baskin (2000) found through her research that appropriate teacher training on identifying how giftedness is manifested in nontraditional students was beneficial in minority students being recommended for screening. Van Tassel-Baska (2007) reported performance tasks are appropriate in indentifying underrepresented populations for gifted programs. Teachers often have low expectations of minority students (Jenkins, 1936),

excluding Asian students, which may affect the referral process (Ford, 1996, Swanson, 2006). Burstein and Cabello (1989) identified factors that lead to a disproportionate number of teacher referrals for minority students. Irvine and Armento (2001) assert the different learning styles of African American students may result in them not being identified as gifted. Based on the information gleaned from the literature review, this researcher hypothesizes that multiple factors affect minority students' identification for gifted education. Figure 1 illustrates the Conceptual Framework for this research.

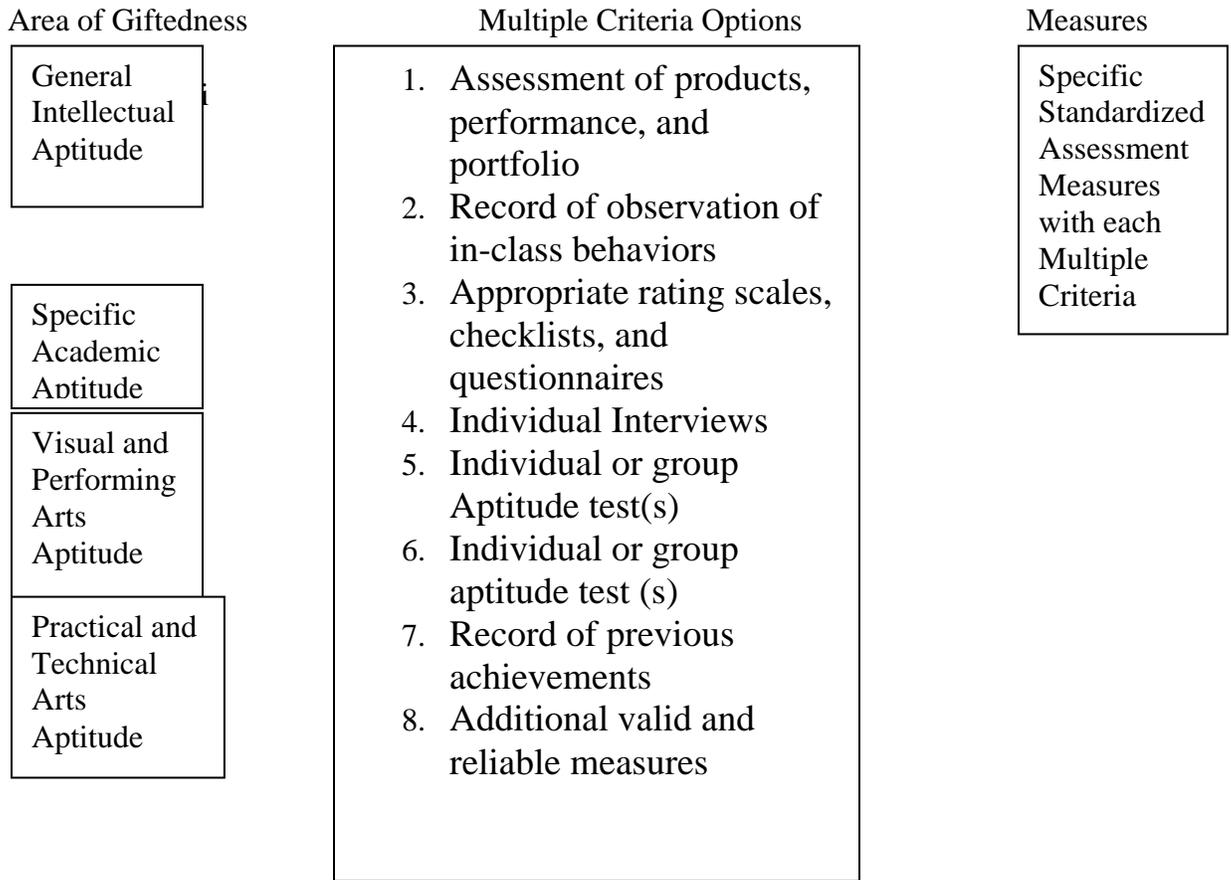
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: An illustration of factors affecting minority students identified as gifted.



The Virginia Department of Education develops a gifted education plan every five years (Palmer, 2009). As identified by the 2006-11 Gifted Education Plan, each school division is required to identify the areas of giftedness they are to use to identify students for their gifted programs. Additionally, the plan is to identify at least four of eight components of multiple criteria options to be used during their selection process as well

as the assessment standardized measure(s) to be used within each selected option. The areas of giftedness to be identified as well as the multiple criteria options and the specific standardized measure to be used within each criteria are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. 2008-09 Virginia Department of Education Gifted Education Plan Requirements



Definitions

The following terms and definitions were obtained from the Virginia Administrative Code from the Virginia Department of Education Web Site. (8 VAC 20-40-20) and from a review of the literature.

"Gifted Students" means those students in elementary and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through graduation whose abilities and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs.

These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated abilities and who have evidence of high performance capabilities, which may include leadership, in one or more of the following areas:

1. General Intellectual Aptitude(s). Students with advanced aptitude or conceptualization whose development is accelerated beyond their age peers as demonstrated by advanced skills, concepts, and creative expression in multiple general intellectual abilities or in specific intellectual abilities.
2. Specific Academic Aptitude. Students with specific aptitudes in selected academic areas: mathematics; the sciences; and/or the humanities as demonstrated by advanced skills, concepts, and creative expression in those areas.
3. Technical and Practical Arts Aptitude. Students with specific aptitudes selected technical or practical arts as demonstrated by advanced skills and creative expression in those areas to the extent they need and can benefit from specifically planned educational services differentiated from those provided by the general program experience.
4. Visual or Performing Arts Aptitude. Students with specific aptitudes in selected visual or performing arts as demonstrated by advanced skills and creative expression who excel consistently in the development of a product or performance in any of the visual and performing arts to the extent that they need and can benefit from specifically planned educational services differentiated from those generally provided by the general program experience.
5. "Identification" is the process of reviewing student data collected at the screening level and conducting further evaluation of student potential to determine the most qualified students for the specific gifted services available.
6. "Identification/Placement Committee" is a standing committee which is composed of a professional who knows the child, classroom teacher(s), others representing assessment specialists, gifted program staff, school administration, and others deemed appropriate. This committee may operate at the school or division level. In either case, consistent criteria must be established for the division (Virginia Administrative Code: 8 VAC 20-40-20, pgs.1-3).

7. "Metropolitan Achievement Test" is the test designed to measure achievement in the basic skills commonly found in state and district curricula. The content areas measured were reading, mathematics, language, science and social studies (Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence, 2001).
8. "Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test" is an assessment to measure nonverbal reasoning ability and general problem solving abilities in children (Pearsonassessments.com,2003).
9. "The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test" (OLSAT) is a test of abstract thinking and reasoning ability of children pre-K to 18. The Otis-Lennon is a group-administered, multiple choice, taken with pencil and paper, measures verbal, quantitative, and spatial reasoning ability. The assessment produces verbal and nonverbal scores. A total score is derived.
(<http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/statdigest/00digest/36-37.pdf>).
10. "Placement" is the determination of the appropriate educational option(s) for each eligible student (Virginia Administrative Code: 8 VAC 20-40-20, pg. 2).
11. "Screening" is the process of creating the pool of potential candidates using multiple criteria through the referral process, review of test data, or from other sources. Screening is the active search for students who should be evaluated for identification (Virginia Administrative Code: 8 VAC 20-40-20).
12. "Stanford 9" is an overall measure of achievement in basic skills.
(<http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/statdigest/00digest/36-37.pdf>).
13. "Urbanicity" is a term invented and copyrighted by W. Allen Martin which refers to the degree to which a geographic unit is urban (Martin, 1974)

Limitations of the Study

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all school divisions to complete a report detailing the ethnicities of students participating in their gifted education programs (Palmer, 2009). This researcher will attempt to gauge the explanations of how certain school divisions were found to have proportionality among the ethnicities of students in their programs. As data are gathered, the researcher will have no influence on how accurately respondents answer interview questions or their enthusiasm to participate in this study. Additionally, there may be logistical issues relating to access to the individuals who may participate in the interview process of this study. Moreover, archival documents to triangulate data may be difficult to obtain. Lastly, the researcher will attempt to locate how scholars currently assessed the validity and reliability of the

Otis-Lennon School Achievement Test (OSLAT). Research by Palmer (2009) indicated 75% of school divisions whose African American students' representation in gifted education were in proportion used the OSLAT performance measure.

Delimitations of the Study

This study is limited to school divisions in Virginia that have a significant minority population of students and that proportionality in the gifted program for African American students. However, each minority ethnicity that identifies students will not be identified in this study. South Asian American students, i.e. Asian Indians, Pakistanis were historically overrepresented in gifted education. Similarly, Southeastern Asian American students such as Chinese, Korean, and Filipino American students were also historically overrepresented (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009). The diversity of Asian Americans also resulted in Southeastern Asian American students, i.e. Laotians, Cambodians, and Hmong, being underrepresented in gifted programs. Therefore, identifying Asian American students as an underrepresented minority demographic is inaccurate (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Additionally, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and unknown ethnicities account for only 3.33% of all students in gifted programs through the Commonwealth of Virginia and are not statistically significant; therefore, will not be included as a minority demographic in this study (Department of Education Gifted Education Statewide 2007-2008 Annual Report). Conversely, African American students' representation in gifted programs is not as ambiguous. Hispanic students also have been traditionally underrepresented in gifted education. However, they are not included in this study due to the diversity within their ethnicity (Ford & Webb, 1999). Of the four areas of giftedness in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Virginia

Department of Education Yearly Report, 2009), General Intellectual Aptitude is the area of focus. The researcher focused on gifted programs across the Commonwealth that obtained a proportional representation of African American students in their gifted programs. Lastly, the nonverbal assessments reviewed through the literature included DISCOVER, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Project Breakthrough, and Performance Tasks.

Organization of the Study

This study was developed into five chapters to provide an in-depth investigation of the research problem and research questions. Chapter 1 includes the brief history of gifted education as well as the researcher's connection to the topic. It also includes the significance, purpose and justification of the study, as well as the research questions, conceptual framework, limitations, delimitations, definitions, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the most recent literature from key investigators, other significant studies, research themes, and a summary of the research. Chapter 3 contains the methodology that was used, as well as a review of the research questions, research design, purpose, population used in the study, and how the data were collected. A description of the data analysis used and how the researcher managed the collection of data are also presented in this chapter. An overview of the process, the findings based on the data, and a summary comprise chapter 4 of this study. Chapter 5 includes report a summary of the study, a review of the purpose, previous research, implications for practice, and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the researcher began to examine school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose percentage African American students in gifted education are proportionate or nearly proportionate to their representation in the general student body, a review of scholarly literature was required. The review includes a historical perspective of the progress African American students made in becoming identified. The subsequent literature chosen for review was empirically based. Moreover, the date of publication for selected articles and dissertations was within a 10-year period. Underrepresentation and gifted education were key words used to narrow the search. The online library of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Questia.com, ILLIAD, and Google Scholar were the locations from which studies were retrieved. Key words used as a part of the search process included gifted education, disproportion, identification, and minority.

Yoon Yoon and Gentry (2009) described the importance of proportionality in gifted education to educators by stating “Representation by race and ethnicity is one of the major issues facing gifted education in pursuit of a more equal representation of students in gifted education programs” (p.121). The Representative Index (RI) developed by Yoon Yoon and Gentry (2009) is the ratio of the proportion of students from racial categories enrolled in gifted programs compared to students from those racial groups in schools where gifted programs exist. The authors purported an RI equaling 1.0 would reflect a perfect proportion of representation by a race and ethnic group. An RI greater than 1.0 would suggest a greater likelihood towards overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group. Conversely, if the RI is less than 1.0, it would reflect an

underrepresentation of a racial and ethnic group (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Based upon the RI concept, African Americans and Hispanic students are perpetually underrepresented in gifted education with an RI ranging from 0.4 to 0.7 (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009).

In the article, *Breaking through Assumptions about Low-Income, Minority Gifted Students*, Julie Dingle Swanson (2006) noted the difficulty associated with identification of gifted minority students enrolled in schools having a high concentration of minority and low-income students. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews with a sample of selected principals and teachers, one of Swanson's findings revealed the possibility of teachers underestimating minority students' knowledge which could also lead to few minority students being referred to gifted programs. She also discovered the effectiveness of problem based learning approach to curriculum development was for minority students.

Underrepresentation: A Perpetual Issue

African American students have traditionally been underrepresented in gifted programs. Investigating the reasons for the disproportionate percentage of minority students in gifted education should continue to be studied. As those reasons are identified, students' chances of receiving a free and appropriate public education may increase. Patricia Davis Baskin (2001) presented the phenomenon that existed with schools in New Mexico that resulted in either underrepresentation or overrepresentation of populations in their programs. She identified the correlation between schools reflecting a proportional representation of all ethnicities in gifted programs and what actually occurs in some schools throughout her state (Davis-Baskin, 2000). Her study

revealed the practices, procedures, and policies of one school in her sample resulted in a proportional representation of minority and low-income students. To achieve this proportional representation, she suggested that gifted program enrollment should include ten percent either above or below the total minority population of a school (Davis-Baskin, 2000).

Contrasting this philosophy, Palmer (2009) reported the Commonwealth of Virginia viewed proportional representation of ethnicities equaling to 20% of the overall student population of ethnicities. Davis-Baskin (2001) asserted underrepresentation in gifted programs conflicted with the concept of free and appropriate public education with the legal precedent of *Brown v. the Board of Education*. She provided a historical perspective on the legality of proportionality in public education. A comparison between the rights of African Americans seeking to obtain an equal education and the rights of disproportionate populations seeking to obtain an appropriate education through their inclusion in school programs was gleaned.

Ford & Trotman (2000) offered a federal perspective by introducing the role of the Office of Civil Rights as it pertains to helping school districts analyze their assessments, procedures, and policies to decrease possible discriminatory practices in gifted education. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is cited as the legal basis for school divisions that receive federal funds to avoid practices that result in a disparate impact on minority groups in gifted programs (Ford & Trotman, 2000). The legislation prohibits discrimination based on the following areas: Assignment of Classes; Classes Designed for National Origin Minority Students with Limited English Proficient; Assignment of Students to Elective Classes; Assignment to Ability Grouping and

Tracking; and Testing, Evaluations, and Criteria for Student Assignment (Office of Civil Rights, 1998).

Tozer, Violas, and Senses, (2002) quoted Thomas Jefferson's perspective on education as:

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education (p. 6).

Tozer, Violas, and Senses (2002) also assert Jefferson believed that Negroes were less capable of self-governance and more governed by their appetites.

Jenkins (1936) suspected the potential of "Negro children would not be realized" in counties for educational opportunities for Negro of high intelligence were rare. (p.188). Although there had been research on the characteristics of gifted American children for fifteen years prior to Jenkins' study, there was limited research on the characteristics of gifted Negro children. Almost two decades later, there was a comprehensive focus on discovering the intellectual talents of students with the origin of the National Association of Gifted Children (Palmer, 2009). During the third year of the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC), the organization developed the Bessie Fabe Fund for Gifted to possibly fund graduate research and create interest in school planning for the gifted (President's message, Gifted Child Quarterly, 1957).

The Marland Report (1972) focused on assisting students achieve their academic potential through gifted education. The findings in the Marland Report were addressed in the passage of the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988

(P.L. 100-297). This act was authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and appropriated funds to gifted education (Palmer, 2009). Presently, the Javits grant is the sole source of federal funding for gifted education (Palmer, 2009). A year before the Javits grant was reauthorized in 1994, The United States Department of Education presented *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (1993). This publication focused on challenging gifted students and presented recommendations for gifted education, such as the need to provide opportunities to underrepresented populations so that their giftedness can be displayed and the need to broaden the criteria used to identify gifted students (United States Department of Education, 1993). Moreover, equity in gifted education was the issue in 1996 when the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) used formal written complaints regarding the discrimination of minority students in gifted education to conduct a study from 1992 through 1995 (United States Department of Education, 2002).

Selected Assessments

The type of assessments used by school divisions to determine student eligibility for gifted education that resulted in African American students being proportionally represented in schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia is an element of this study. Scholars have consistently presented data indicating that the type of assessment used by a school division affects low-income and minority students' chances of being identified for gifted programs. When achievement tests are the sole assessments used, fewer minority and low-income students are found eligible for gifted services due to their limited exposure to language and the heavy dependence on language in achievement tests (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000; Naglieri & Ford, 2003; Lohman, 2005; Renzulli, 2004). In

her study, Davis-Baskin defined the diagnostic instruments and their use such as The Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test, the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, The Matrix Analogy Test and the Ravens (Davis-Baskin, 2000). Recent data by Palmer (2009) identified 22 standardized measures used in divisions in the Commonwealth where there were proportional representation with African American students. The Standards of Learning (25%) and the Stanford 10 (50%) were the most frequently used verbal measures (Palmer, 2009). The OSLAT (75%) and NNAT (38%) were the nonverbal assessments most frequently used in these localities (Palmer 2009).

Nonverbal Assessments

There are various types of nonverbal assessments used to identify low-income and minority students for gifted programs. The researcher's literature review included a examination of DISCOVER, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) as compared to the Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT), Project Breakthrough, and Performance Tasks.

DISCOVER.

C. June Maker presented an assessment designed to increase the percentage of minority students in gifted education. In her empirical study, Maker attempted to address how educators relied too heavily on the use of screening instruments that adversely affected the selection of underrepresented minority populations for gifted education (Maker, 1996). Based on the literature, Maker presented in general terms the need for new identification practices to address the disproportion of minority students in gifted education. She attempted to determine a relationship between the instruments and criteria used to qualify minority students for gifted education and the actual number of students who were found eligible. She presented a possible relationship between the

instruments and criteria used to identify minority students eligible for gifted education. She presented a new assessment process called DISCOVER that was perceived as an alternative means of identifying minority students to reduce their underrepresentation in gifted education (Maker, 1996). Students from kindergarten through twelfth grade who were being screened for gifted service were considered to be the sample of the study. They were grouped in grades kindergarten through second, third through fifth, sixth through eighth, and ninth through twelfth. Observations of students demonstrating their problem solving processes were used. The observations were strengthened by the use of videotapes, audiotapes, and photography. These tools were to be examined later to ensure the judgments were consistent with each observer (Maker, 1996). Maker identified linguistic, logical-mathematical, and spatial as the three intelligences addressed in school (Maker, 1996). Examples of these intelligences observed in third grade included “linguistic – describe toys and make inferences about them, logical mathematical – write correct number sentences using numbers given, and spatial – make a flower with Pablo pieces” (Maker, 1996, p. 45). Fourth grade examples included “linguistic – tell a story about any and all of the toys in a bag, logical mathematical – write as many correct number problems as possible that have the answer 24, and spatial – make a machine using the Pablo pieces and connections” (Maker, 1996, p. 45). Lastly, Maker presented the three intelligences observed in fifth grade to include “linguistic – write about a personal experience, something imagined or anything else, logical mathematical – none, and spatial – make anything using the Pablo® pieces and connections” (Maker, 1996, p. 45).

Maker provided evidence that DISCOVER could be used as an alternate assessment instrument to address the underrepresentation of minorities in gifted education. The objective through the data collection was to determine if students would be able to demonstrate their giftedness in a nonverbal format. She revealed how through the observations, checklists, and portfolios, DISCOVER presented interesting and unexpected results. Maker's finding included how teachers changed their perceptions when they observed students working on tangram puzzles. This was the result of how teachers reflected on their teaching practices and students' characteristics. Students, who initially were not identified as gifted demonstrated signs of giftedness using this nonverbal assessment.

Renzulli (2010) cited this instrument as possibly serving as a prototype for future instruments in an effort to identify students eligible for gifted education. However, VanTassel-Baska, Johnson, & Avery (2002) cautioned test designers when creating performance assessments by suggesting that they should be aware of contextualizing tasks to ensure authenticity of the field being studied. Lohman (2005) cautioned against using nonverbal assessments prior to administering quantitative and verbal assessments by stating, "I first show that selecting students on the basis of such tests would exclude most of the students who would profit from and advanced instruction and include many who would not profit from it" (p.112).

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test.

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test is another nonverbal assessment identified by Naglieri and Ronnin (2000) that improves the chances for underrepresented populations to be found eligible for gifted education. They presented a quantitative study

on the differences between three matched samples: Whites and African American; Whites and Hispanics; and Whites and Asians using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). The data gathered for Naglieri and Ronning's study were derived from assessing students from kindergarten through grade 12 using the NNAT and the SAT-9. They asserted that during the fall 1995 data collection period, the SAT-9 and the NNAT were administered concurrently (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000). Naglieri and Ronning (2000) indicated a nationally representative sample of 89,600 students from kindergarten through grade twelve. Students were tested in both the fall of 1995 when 22,600 pupils were assessed and the spring of 1996 when 67,000 students were tested (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000). Their study focused on the differences across racial and ethnicity groups as measured by the recently published NNAT. The authors attempted to determine whether a nonverbal assessment, such as the NNAT, would reduce the negative effects on students with limited English skills; thus, making it a more appropriate instrument for this population of students (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000). Naglieri made a claim that the NNAT is fair to all cultures and that it presented insignificant mean differences. Naglieri and Ronning (2000) compared the data from the assessments and utilized a quantitative analysis by using an ANOVA to compare the group means for both the NNAT and the SAT – 9. Additionally, they mentioned “Pearson correlations were computed and compared across White, and other ethnic minority groups using a z test for the difference between independent correlations” (p.331).

Lohman (2005) did not reject the use of nonverbal assessments but did dispute the assertion that it was culturally fair. Additionally, Lohman (2005) stated that nonverbal assessments alone, or “figural reasoning” (p.20) are not genuine indicators of ability such

as assessments that have verbal and quantitative components much like the CogAT. He cautioned separating ability from achievement by suggesting how the two differ in degree and not in kind which would make it “impossible to measure verbal, quantitative, or spatial reasoning skills without recourse to verbal, quantitative, or spatial concepts and knowledge” (p. 20). Renzulli (2004) also echoed the need for a multi-layered assessment focusing on verbal, quantitative as well as nonverbal skills as an accurate measurement of a student’s ability to succeed in gifted programs. This perspective was affirmed by Be’langer and Gagne’ (2006) who declared that giftedness and talent could be presented intellectually, socially and artistically. However, Carman & Taylor (2010) attributed the lack of significant differences in performance between ethnicities in two studies by Naglieri (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000, and Naglieri & Ford, 2003) was an outcome of the groups being statistically controlled for multiple demographic variables, such as socio-economic class, before producing their results. Schools do not have the advantage of using statistical controls and thus are likely to see differences in ethnicities on the NNAT (Carman & Taylor, 2010).

Lohman (2005) favored focusing a student’s readiness for particular educational experiences instead of innate potential. He (2005) maintained both students whose primary language is not English and students who do not speak standard English stand to benefit from assessments such as the CogAT. Another issue Lohman (2005) had with Naglieri’s claim that the NNAT is culturally fair is because of how similar the NNAT was to the Raven’s test. He argued how Naglieri’s adaptations of the Raven’s test included systematically constructing items to emphasize pattern completion, analogical reasoning, series completion, or spatial visualization and manipulating the different levels

of the test by blocking the items to ensure that they contain different mixes of items. Further, another adaptation of the Raven included using two colors versus multiple colors as they are in the Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices. This was also a departure from the Standard and Advanced Progressive Matrices that used black and white (Lohman, 2005).

Lohman (2005) was not familiar with any research that would suggest manipulating the aforementioned factors would either reduce or eliminate ethnic differences. As Lohman reviewed a study by Naglieri and Ford (2003), which used data from a larger data set by Naglieri and Ronning, he recognized there was no explanation why there were more students (67,000) tested in the spring of 1996 than in the fall of 1995 (22,600 students). He considered this not to be representative of the planned national sample.

In response to the issues raised by Lohman, Naglieri and Ford (2005) there is no consensus regarding the most effective manner to measure ability. However, they advocated the use of the NNAT over other assessments that measure ability due to the significant variation in the item content. They continued by purporting that the disparity represented the various ways authors conceptualize and measure general ability which influences the identification of students for gifted services (Naglieri & Ford, 2005). Moreover, because Lohman and Elizabeth Hagan, were the authors of the CogAT, Naglieri and Ford viewed his issues with the NNAT with suspicion.

Project Breakthrough.

Swanson (2006) examined Project Breakthrough in her study *Breaking Through Assumptions About Low-Income, Minority Gifted Students*. Through the literature,

Swanson created a correlation between the assumptions of minority students resulting in their disproportionate representation in gifted education and efforts to reduce the disproportion by focusing on curriculum and instruction. Project Breakthrough was suggested to address this dilemma using qualitative and quantitative data using the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 and the William and Mary units (Swanson, 2006). Using their Reading Comprehension percentile ranks from the MAT-7 results the year before the program began; Swanson grouped the students into low, average, and high achieving groups. She maintains that this grouping was for statistical purposes only. To measure possible growth, Swanson compared the pretest and posttest scores of each student to assess the effectiveness of the program (Swanson, 2006).

Performance Tasks.

VanTassel-Baska, Feng, and Evans (2007) purport how many scholars in the field of gifted education believe new conceptions of giftedness and an innovative paradigm for identifying and selecting low-income and minority students would result in selecting these students who had been traditionally underrepresented. They presented an analysis in this study that monitored the progress of a performance task assessment geared towards identifying underrepresented students for gifted education. Alternative assessments, such as Maker's DISCOVER, was perceived as culturally sensitive to diverse groups. Previously, demographic homogeneity was viewed as the result of the reliance of a single standardized test score (Harris, Rapp, Martinez, & Plucker, 2007). During a three-year period, the state utilized a new performance-based dimension of identification. To examine the skills measured by assessments, the authors focused on the

difference between fluid and crystallized abilities. Various types of assessments highlight these abilities. VanTassel Baska, Feng, and Evans (2007) proposed that

part of the process of nontraditional assessment involves trying to tap into fluid rather than crystallized abilities. Dynamic assessment is one such nontraditional approach used to assess cognitive abilities that are frequently not apparent when most forms of traditional standardized tests are used. This type of assessment usually consists of a test – intervention-retest format, with the focus on the improvement students make after an intervention, specifically based on their learning of cognitive strategies related to mastery of the test taking (p. 219).

They assert performance task assessments draw on the fluid abilities and have shown promise in identifying minority and low-income students. Project DISCOVER, (Maker, 2001) is an example of this type of assessment (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). Assessments used in this study were the 2001 and 2002 Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA), which is the standardize assessment tool used to gauge the students performance on the state standards in grades three through eight. The Ravens Progressive Matrices, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Cognitive Ability Test and the Wechsler Scales were used less frequently in school districts (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). The MAT (Matirx Analogies Test) 7th Edition (50.7%), Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT; 23.8%); and TerraNova (22.5%) were the most frequently used achievement measures (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). Students' scores on the PACT were used to determine if they reached the threshold to meet the criteria for eligibility. There were four levels of proficiency of PACT in each subject area: less than basic, basic,

proficient, and advanced” (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007, p. 222). This instrument was administered statewide to students in grades three through eight to gauge how students performed on state standards (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). It assessed the students in the four content areas of English language arts, math, social studies, and science. Only the results for mathematics and English language arts (ELA) were used (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). The study revealed the performance based assessment when administered statewide identified more minority students eligible for gifted education than the traditional measures would have identified. Additionally, these students who were identified by the performance-based assessment possessed uneven profiles. Most of these students exhibited strengths in nonverbal skills versus verbal skills. However, the students’ performance on the PACT indicated these gifted students were less proficient and advanced than those students who were identified via traditional measures. Yet, they had shown improvement in math for two years. (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007). The use of nonverbal assessments during the screening process assisted minority students in gaining entry into gifted programs (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000; Naglieri & Ford, 2005; Lohman, 2005; Swanson, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, Feng, Evans, 2007; Maker, 1996). Conversely, Carmen & Taylor (2010) indicate ethnicity does not have a greater impact on the performance of minorities on the NNAT as does socio-economic status. Palmer (2009) identified 14 achievement assessments and 15 aptitude assessments that were used in proportional and school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Due to Palmer’s findings that not one consistent aptitude nor achievement assessment was used that resulted in proportionality of minorities in gifted education programs, the researcher proposes examining the

perceptions of assessments used by directors of gifted education of divisions where the percentage African American students in gifted education is proportionate to their representation in the general student body.

Types and Number of Multiple Criteria

In Virginia, localities are required to establish procedures for screening, referring, identifying, and serving students from kindergarten through twelfth grade who are gifted in at least one areas of general intellectual or specific academic aptitude (8VAC20-40-20). Professional qualified staff identifies students through multiple criteria to determine their potential or aptitude demonstrated in one or more of the areas of general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, career and technical aptitude and visual or performing arts aptitude. School divisions have discretion whether or not to identify and serve students found eligible for gifted services in technical aptitude and visual or performing arts aptitude or both (8VAC20-40-40, pg. 5).

Virginia localities must choose at least four criteria including: assessment of products, performance, and portfolio; record of observation of in-class behaviors; appropriate scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual interviews; individual or group aptitude tests; individual or group achievement tests (awards, etc); and additional valid and reliable measures (Palmer, 2009). Palmer recently investigated possible correlations between the multiple criteria divisions chosen and proportional representation of minority students in gifted education in those divisions.

Be'langer & Gagne' (2006) asserted "The more numerous the forms of giftedness or talent, the larger the population of gifted and/or talented persons when more ability domains are" (p.135). Regarding the use of multiple criteria, Renzulli (2005) says

the 'gems of wisdom' that might be uncovered in the process of collecting a broader range of identification information are, in effect, thrown in the trash if a student does not reach a pre-determined cut-off level on a cognitive ability test (p. 25).

Renzulli (2004) also suggested the use of multiple vehicles in assessing students' abilities in determining their eligibility. His view supported the need for multiple criteria in the identification of more minority students. However there is a question whether the increase of minority students in gifted education would result in a proportional representation of minority students.

In her study, Palmer (2009) found there was no correlation between the multiple criteria options chosen and the school divisions that had a more proportional representation of minority students than other divisions. Although there was no correlation, her study revealed seven school divisions used all eight criteria suggested by the Commonwealth of Virginia which resulted in proportional representation of minority students.

VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans (2007) reviewed the literature from various researchers to develop a clearer perspective regarding the types of identification instruments. They discovered when identifying gifted students in any context, it is effective to use multiple criteria and informational sources. During a three-year period, South Carolina utilized a new performance-based dimension of identification labeled Project STAR, a new state identification protocol, The purpose of this investigation was two-fold - first, to investigate how Project STAR, analyzed student demographic profiles using performance tasks during a three-year period: second, to examine gifted eligible

students' 2-year performance on the high stakes state achievement assessments based on performance (VanTassel-Baska, Feng & Evans, 2007). The authors of this study identified three possible options that students in South Carolina may be found eligible to receive gifted services. Students were found eligible for gifted education by meeting specified criteria on individual or group measures as defined by four dimensions. Those dimensions include (A) aptitude and achievement, (AB) aptitude and performance, (AC) achievement and performance, and (BC) performance.

To provide alternatives to the aforementioned traditional measures, multiple forms of assessments including portfolios, nominations, grades, inventories, checklists, and other traditional and nontraditional instruments were used in Project STAR (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans, 2007).

Professional Development

In many instances, teachers in public education have been managing their teaching responsibilities by their own creativity (Joyce & Showers, 1983). Many scholars reference professional development as an integral component in any identification process. Professional development was also cited as a barrier to identifying minority students. VanTassel-Baska, Xuemei, Quek, & Struck (2004) contributed a teacher's inability to modify the curriculum for fear of reducing the rigor of the content on the lack of training. Similarly, these researchers state some teachers would become influenced by their negative feelings towards their minority students and cause them not to feel welcomed in gifted programs (VanTassel-Baska, Xuemei, Quek & Struck, 2004). The result would be minority students' low performance that teachers already expect (VanTassel-Baska, Xuemei, Quek, & Struck, 2004; Briggs, Reis, and Sullivan, 2008).

Davis-Baskin examined whether the schools provided training opportunities for their teachers to assist them in identifying giftedness in students from diverse backgrounds.

Children living in poverty lack test savvy and are not motivated to perform well academically (VanTassel-Baska, Johnson, Avery, 2002; Castellano, 2007; McBee, 2006; Ford, Moore III, Whiting, Grantham, 2008; Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005). The literature also cited teachers' difficulty recognizing signs of giftedness in low income and minority students. Their perceptions are also affected by students' home environments, which are not viewed as stimulating and have a negative effect on a student's potential for giftedness (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, Quek, & Struck, 2004). The results are negative, stereotypical and prejudicial beliefs about minority students which increase the possibility of perpetuating discriminatory policies and behaviors (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008).

Due to the importance of referrals relating to the identification of minority students in some policies, students may not proceed to the assessment phase of the screening if their abilities are viewed as inferior (Ford, Moore, III., Whiting, Grantham, 2008). McBee (2006) asserted the referral process is an apparent foundation of biasness affecting entry into gifted programs but that reliable information should be made available to evaluate and modify current practices.

Briggs, Reis, and Sullivan(2008) identified how the selection of underrepresented populations influenced educator biasness and perceptions of cultural behaviors, as well as the quality and quantity of teacher preparation working with minority students. They present a "cultural-deficit model" (p. 132) which reflects a belief that customs other than those reflected by the dominant culture are perceived as deviant or inappropriate.

Swanson (2006) investigated how the curriculum was used to influence teachers' perceptions of low-income and minority students which ultimately affected students' for gifted services. She purported how teachers initially wanted all students to benefit from the use of curricula that had been designed for only gifted students. (Swanson, 2006). She then maintained the staff expected to use rigorous curricula that would result in identifying students from underrepresented populations.

Interest-based clusters, another integral component Project Breakthrough, built on students' strengths and interests, involved them in real-world problems and provided them with instruction geared towards enhancing problem solving skills. Swanson created a correlation between the assumptions of minority students resulting in their disproportionate representation in gifted education and efforts to reduce the disproportion by focusing on curriculum and instruction. Project Breakthrough was suggested to address this dilemma using qualitative and quantitative data (Swanson, 2006). Swanson explained how Project Breakthrough's conceptual framework relied on the growing theory articulating how the use of curricula and pedagogy for gifted students was a benefit for all students (Swanson, 2006). She endorsed the importance of identifying successful professional development programs geared towards assisting teachers to change their behaviors while managing students' behaviors in the classroom (Swanson 2006). She recommended teachers receiving training in the use of language arts and science curriculum developed by the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary.

A cooperative effort between Project Breakthrough's teacher development coordinator, teachers and principals planned to initiate three years of training which

consisted of graduate courses, school-based sessions and in-class coaching. Additionally teachers were able to network with scholars whose expertise were teaching students of poverty, problem-based learning, curriculum development, and broadened views of intelligence (Swanson, 2006). Swanson proposed that the goal of Project Breakthrough was to change classroom teachers' beliefs as they observed what students could do when provided opportunities to use higher level thinking skills. The suspicion was that a breakthrough in their attitudes would occur. She goes further to suspect that with minimal curricular interventions, low-income and minority students would benefit from advanced curricula and are challenged by pedagogy (Swanson, 2006). At the end of the project, there was a threefold increase in minority students in the gifted program.

The importance of training teachers to become integral components in the selection of minority students for gifted education was presented in the National Research Council Panel Report *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education Executive Summary* (2002). Teacher quality was a state level recommendation which referenced general education teachers requiring improved teacher preparation and professional development to assist them in serving the needs of special and gifted education students. Their state licensure requirements included:

Competency in understanding and implementing reasonable norms and expectations for students, and core competencies in instructional delivery of academic content; Coursework and practicum experience in understanding, creating, and modifying an educational environment to meet children's individual needs; Competency in behavior management in classroom and non-instructional school settings; Instruction in functional analysis and routine behavioral

assessment of students; Instruction in effective intervention strategies for students who substantially exceed minimum standards; Coursework and practicum experience to prepare teachers to deliver culturally responsive instruction becoming familiar with children's beliefs, values, cultural practices, discourse styles and other features familiar with the lives that may have an impact on classroom participation and success and be prepared to use this information in designing instruction (National Research Council Panel Report, 2002, pg. 8).

VanTassel-Baska (2006) conducted an analysis of evaluation findings across 20 gifted programs. Her findings revealed a need to address the nature and quality of professional development teachers receive. She asserted the in-service provided was inadequate and lacked an empirical framework. Moreover, the training provided was based on teacher interest and willingness with no follow up expectations regarding how strategies would be implemented in the classroom.

Support for Students' Self-perception

Davis-Baskin (2000) examined two schools and suggested the need to determine the policies, practices, and procedures exercised by the two schools which resulted in one school being sensitive to the cultural linguistic and socio-economic factors of minority students and the other assuming they were just as sensitive but continue to be influenced by traditional signs of giftedness (Davis-Baskin, 2000). This awareness may lead to a broadened perspective resulting in a re-examination of practices, policies, and procedures to identify students who meet the non-traditional characteristics. Staiger (2004) asserted from her ethnographic study that the scarcity of minorities in gifted programs could potentially exacerbate psychological effects created by segregated schools on minority

students. Minority students react to their teachers in a manner that provides a link to teachers' expectations and student outcomes (VanTassel-Baska, Feng, Quek, & Struck, 2004). Swanson (2006) identified how students' perceptions of their academic abilities negatively impacted their opportunities for selection into gifted programs. Teachers' perceptions of minority students' abilities changed as a result of the project. Henfield, Moore, III., & Wood (2008) purported how minority students' lack of motivation to do school work and their fear of being separated from their social and peer group influenced low teacher expectations. Staiger (2004) found through investigating a magnet program in an urban California high school how minority students equate giftedness with "whiteness" (p. 162). This view echoed by Ogbu (1986) in his "Acting White Theory"(p.176). Ogbu asserted African American students were susceptible to emulate behaviors they perceive as a norm for their culture. Their view of being academically successful was perceived as outside the norm of their cultural behavior. Further, Ogbu purported those who believed academic success was outside their culture also viewed others who valued academic success did so outside their culture. Fryer (2006) found this phenomenon was exacerbated in schools where there was ethnic diversity. However, Fryer challenged Ogbu's theory when minority students attended schools where there was little or no diversity. He found no evidence of this phenomenon existing in schools where there is not a diverse student body.

Ford (1992) emphasized the importance of educators becoming more knowledgeable of the perceptions minority students may have of themselves and how those perceptions could affect their potential for academic success. She presents a multicultural framework containing six required components of:

(1) engaging teachers in self-awareness activities to explore their attitudes and perceptions concerning cultural groups and beliefs, and the influence of their attitudes on students' achievement and educational opportunities; (2) exposing teachers to accurate information about various cultural and ethnic groups including their historical and contemporary contributions, lifestyles, interpersonal communication patterns, and parental attitudes about education; (3) helping educators explore diversity that exists between and within cultural and ethnic groups; (4) showing teachers how to apply and incorporate multicultural perspectives into the teaching-learning process to maximize the academic, cognitive, personal, and social development of learners; (5) demonstrating effective interactions among teachers, students, and families; and (6) providing opportunities for teachers to manifest appropriate application of cultural information to create a healthy learning climate (107-114).

Ford (1992) endorsed a focus on comparative education issues, the sociology of education, and urban and ethnic studies, specifically Black studies to further understand African American students, held on university campuses, workshops, professional education and development, and conferences.

Summary of Research

Minorities have been disproportionately represented in gifted education since its inception (Jenkins, 1936; Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, Johnson & Avery, 2002). The review of the literature in this chapter presented evidence of the influence assessments, multiple criteria, professional development, and students' self-perception have on the proportionality of minority students for gifted education.

Researchers concluded verbal assessments have a negative impact on the selection of minority students for gifted programs (Renzulli, 2004; Brown, et. al, 2005; Ford, Grantham & Whiting, 2007). Similarly, nonverbal assessments were perceived to provide minority and low-income students an equal opportunity to become identified for gifted services (Naglieri & Ronning, 2000; Lohman, 2005, VanTassel-Baska, Feng and Evans, 2007). Minority students' chances of becoming eligible for gifted services are also enhanced through the use of multiple criteria that allow students to demonstrate their giftedness in a variety of methods (Be'langer & Gagne', 2006; Renzulli, 2004; Palmer, 2009). Studies examining the identification of minority students for gifted programs also strongly suggest professional development for teachers to assist them in identifying signs of giftedness manifested in underrepresented populations (Ford, Moore, III., Whiting, Grantham, 2008; Swanson, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, 2006, McBee, 2006). Minority students' perceptions of themselves coupled with cultural influences may affect their enthusiasm towards academic excellence (Ogbu, 1986; Henfield, Moore, & Wood III, 2008; Fryer, 2006, Ford, 2002). Professional Development focused on these psychological issues some minority students' face as a facet of gifted programs that also utilize multiple criteria and nonverbal assessments may yield positive results.

Unlike special education law that is guided by federal legislation IDEA, there is no federal policy for the identification and placement of gifted students (Ford & Webb, 1994). Currently in Virginia, all school divisions are required to choose at least four of a total of eight identification criteria to select students to determine their eligibility for gifted education (8VAC-20-40-20). Palmer (2009) identified divisions within the

Commonwealth that have a more proportional representation of minorities in gifted education.

This researcher will investigate the void in the literature that focuses on localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia that have assessment procedures that result in a proportional representation of African American students in gifted education. Emphasis will be given to investigating professional development for teachers, assessment instruments, criteria selected, and students' self-perceptions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

This researcher investigated school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students are proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there are any commonalities in their selection criteria. The following research questions were investigated: (1) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of assessments and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education? (2) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of components and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education? (3) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the types of professional development activities for teachers and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education? (4) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding efforts that have been made to address students' self-perception and the proportionality of African American being selected for gifted education?

Research Design/Methodology

This researcher conducted a qualitative study by interviewing seven Directors of Gifted Education of the divisions that have a proportional representation of African American students in their gifted programs. Interview questions were developed based on the recommendations from Seidman (2006) to conduct in-depth phenomenological interviews. Additionally, the length of the interview was communicated to last approximately 60 minutes as Siedman (2006) recommends. Lastly, an advantage of

using interviews is that it allowed the researcher to observe nonverbal language and that it allowed the researcher to ask probing questions based on responses.

Research Design Justification

A qualitative study presented the perceptions of gifted education directors of seven school divisions in the Commonwealth that have a proportional representation of African American students in gifted education. Seven Directors of Gifted Education were interviewed to determine their perceptions regarding factors that resulted in a proportional representation of this student group. Each division's 5-year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted as well as their Gifted Annual Report was reviewed to triangulate data.

Sample/Site Selection

Permission was sought and obtained from Palmer (2009) to use her data presenting divisions that have a proportional representation of African American students in the gifted programs in their respective localities obtained from her quantitative study, "A Comparison of Criteria used in Gifted Identification in the Commonwealth of Virginia" (Appendix A). A review of data presented in her study, disclosed eight school divisions whose African American populations in gifted programs were in proportion to their overall representation of the student body. The General Intellectual Aptitude was the area of giftedness in which African American students were in proportion to their overall student body representation in seven school divisions. A review of Palmer's data indicated there were no school divisions in which there was proportional representation of more than one minority ethnic group (Palmer, 2009). A purposeful sample included

the divisions that have proportional representation of African American students in their gifted programs. The seven school divisions will serve as the sample.

Data Collection and Gathering Procedures

The researcher interviewed the directors of gifted education programs in the seven Virginia school divisions in which African American students are in proportion in gifted programs to their proportion of the overall student body. The researcher sought written permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Appendix B). With approval, the researcher sought permission from the seven superintendents of those localities proposed to be included in the sample. Upon approval from the superintendents, written permission was sought from the directors of gifted education of the divisions in the sample. Through interview questions associated with the four research questions, the researcher gathered in-depth data provided by the participants. Additionally, there was an opportunity for probing questions to gather data that provided another perspective or additional data on the factors that contribute to the proportional or near proportional representation of African American students in the division's gifted program.

When permission was granted, the researcher scheduled interviews with directors at a time and location convenient for the interviewee. During the scheduling process, a request was made to analyze each division's Gifted Annual Report as well as their current five-year Local Plan for the Education for the Gifted to obtain data to triangulate. If a director was not able to participate, it was noted as a reason for the lack of data. If none of the seven directors agree to the interview, assistance from selected alumni of Virginia

Polytechnic Institute and State University was sought to influence directors to participate.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher read the research protocol.

Instrument Design and Validation.

Interviews with Directors of Gifted Education.

Original interview questions were developed by the researcher to ask directors of gifted education in seven localities. The interviews were guided by literature from the Seidman study (2006). The questions were based on research from scholars in the field such as Naglieri, Lohman, VanTassel-Baska, Ford, and the National Research Council Panel Report *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education Executive Summary* (2002). Interview questions were field tested by a group of elementary school principals. Interviewees were asked to provide responses that reflect actions during the past five years. Interviews were conducted in person to allow the researcher to gauge verbal and nonverbal language of the directors interviewed. There were 10 open-ended interview questions divided by the four areas of the conceptual framework: assessments, multiple criteria, professional development, and students' self-perception. A copy of the interview questions is included in the appendix.

Data Treatment, Management, and Analysis

Directors of gifted education for selected localities were asked to sign an informed consent form. Based on their agreement to be included in the study, the directors were assigned a letter of the alphabet to maintain confidentiality. The letters were assigned according to the order of approval from divisions and recorded. Interview responses were collected using a digital recorder. The researcher followed the suggestions from Creswell (2003) by collecting raw data then preparing data for an

analysis. The interviews were digitally recorded. After responses were digitally recorded, they were forwarded to a transcriptionist to be transcribed. After the responses were transcribed, they were forwarded to the respective directors to confirm accuracy of transcribed responses. Corrections were made according to responses from directors. Afterwards, data were read and color-coded for themes. Lastly, there was an attempt to inter-relate the themes and interpret the meaning of those themes using the Constant Comparative Method and frequency chart. The researcher searched for commonalities in interviewees' responses from the interview questions. Such commonalities were noted according to the research question they addressed. The transcription of interview questions and answers were stored and locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's home office. All responses will be destroyed by shredder after the dissertation defense.

Development of Interview Questions

With the permission of the chairperson, the researcher began data collection procedures on December 6, 2010 as the 2008 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Doctoral Cohort validated the interview questions to be asked using a validation instrument (Appendix C). The tally of responses (Appendix D) indicated there were no interview questions that received higher than 60 percent agreement in the areas of association and clarity. After the researcher revised interview questions, the 2008 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Doctoral Cohort validated the revised interview questions using the validation instrument (Appendix E). The results of the validation indicated 79 percent of the revised questions received at least 80 percent agreement (Appendix F). The remaining 21% of the questions that did not meet the 80% criteria was eliminated.

Scheduling Interviews

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to proceed with the study on April 4, 2011. On April 11, 2011, letters were sent to superintendents of the seven school divisions with proportional or near proportional African American representation in gifted education within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The purpose was to obtain permission to interview the director of gifted education of their respective localities (Appendix G). After a two-week period on April 25, 2011, only one division responded which resulted in a second letter being sent requesting permission to remaining division Superintendents. The responding division requested a copy of the research plan, data collection instruments, and proof of IRB approval. Additionally, several questions were posed to the researcher relating to the study. On April 28, 2011, all requested information was sent to the first responding division. On April 28, 2011, the researcher attempted to contact via telephone the Superintendents of the school divisions that had not responded. The researcher was not successful reaching any of the superintendents of the six remaining divisions yet to respond; however, the researcher was able to electronically submit the request to include the division in the study.

On April 25, 2011, the first approval arrived via U.S. Postal Service from a division identified as Division A. On May 4, 2011, the researcher called the Director of Gifted Education Division A and left a voice mail message. Later that week on May 6, 2011, the researcher received approval from a second school division via U.S. Postal Service. This division was identified as Division B. On May 9, 2011 the researcher called to schedule an interview date with its director and left a voice mail message. The

researcher received a rejection from one of the five remaining divisions yet to respond on May 10, 2011 but continued to reach the superintendents of the four remaining divisions. A message was left for each division leader. The first responding division sent an electronic approval memorandum with a suggested interview date of June 9, 2011. The division that responded on April 25, 2011 was identified as Division C. Due to the state's Standards of Learning assessments during this period, the researcher had to decline this date but offered alternative date of June 15, 2011.

On May 24, 2011, the researcher verbally communicated with the superintendent of one of the remaining three divisions and was asked to provide the study request via email. The request was sent electronically and the researcher received an electronic approval memorandum the following day. The division was identified as Division D. The researcher verbally contacted the director of Division D and agreed on an interview date of July 21, 2011. The researcher discovered that the digital recording assistant had a schedule conflict and could not make the interview date of July 21, 2011. The researcher decided to keep the interview date of July 21, 2011. The interview with Division C had to be postponed due to a request from the director but informed the researcher that a new date would soon be proposed. The Director of Gifted Education from Division C subsequently emailed two suggested dates from which the researcher was to choose. The researcher chose July 5, 2011. The researcher discovered that the digital recording assistant had a schedule conflict and could not make the interview date. The researcher kept the interview date of July 5, 2011. The digital recording assistant was scheduled to be out of the country during the scheduled interviews.

The researcher received a phone call on June 7, 2011 from the Director of Gifted Education from Division A with a proposed interview date. The interview date agreed on was July 28, 2011. Due to the digital assistant not being available for this date, the researcher decided to discontinue efforts coordinating schedules with directors as well as the assistant and only focused on dates convenient for directors. The researcher continued to have difficulties getting a response from one of the last two divisions yet to respond. On June 12, 2011 the researcher verbally requested assistance from his committee chairperson and committee member with reaching the superintendents from the two remaining divisions that have yet to respond. Requests via electronic mail were sent on June 13, 2011 and June 16, 2011 to a dissertation committee member seeking assistance with contacting one of the two remaining superintendents. Another request via electronic mail was sent on June 28, 2011 to one of the remaining two Superintendents who had not responded. The researcher called the Superintendent each week from June 26, 2011 through July 22, 2011 to obtain permission from the remaining division. The researcher emailed two committee members to ascertain the status of the assistance in obtaining permission from one of the remaining divisions. On July 25, 2011, the researcher confirmed with his committee chairperson the need to seek permission from the superintendent instead of the director.

The researcher sought assistance via electronic mail on July 7, 2011 from a department of education contact with scheduling an interview with one of the two remaining divisions yet to respond. The researcher received verbal approval from one of the two last remaining divisions yet to respond at the Virginia Model for School Improvement “Breaking the Ranks” training. The division was identified as Division E.

An interview date of August 1, 2011 was electronically confirmed with the director of Division E. The director from Division A sent electronic mail on July 19, 2011 to the researcher requesting to reschedule the interview date due to an unplanned situation. The researcher replied with the suggested dates of August 15, 2011 through August 19, 2011 and August 30, 2011 through September 2, 2011. The interview date mutually agreed upon was August 16, 2011. The researcher received email on August 27, 2011 from his chairperson reporting that it appeared as though permission from the remaining school division would not be given.

Time Line

Based upon a successful Prospectus Examination and approval from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University IRB, this researcher began his study on April 11, 2011 by scheduling interview dates with directors of gifted programs and collecting other data. There was an attempt to schedule interviews one week from each other starting the week of July 5, 2011 to allow retrieval and transcription of data from interviews, and to organize other sources of data. This process was completed on August 15, 2011.

Methodology Summary

This researcher investigated school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students are proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there are any commonalities in their selection criteria. The review of the recent dissertation by Dr. Karen Palmer as well as the proposed research questions justified the use of interviews to produce findings. Additionally, school divisions whose African American students are

not proportionally represented in gifted programs of their respective divisions would benefit by emulating the practices and procedures of those localities that were successful in attaining proportionality with their African American students in their gifted programs.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY/FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students are proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there are any commonalities in their selection criteria. The following research questions directed this study:

(1) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of assessments and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?

(2) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the selection of components and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?

(3) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding the types of professional development activities for teachers and the proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?

(4) What are the perceptions of gifted education directors regarding efforts that have been made to address students' self-perception and the proportionality of African American being selected for gifted education?

Data Findings

Experiences

The researcher used his conceptual framework which included professional development, selected assessments, the number and types of multiple criteria options, and

support for students' self-perceptions to glean data. The responses from each interview, as well as information obtained from the 5-year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted, and the Gifted Annual Report were included were used to determine findings.

The researcher requested from the Director of Gifted Education from Division C the division's 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted and Gifted Annual Report. The director from Division C was unaware of such reports and referred the researcher to the Director of Research and Evaluation for the division who was also unaware of the reports. After experiencing much difficulty with obtaining permission from the superintendent from Division E to conduct this study, the researcher was able to conduct the interview with the Director of Gifted Education from Division E. There was a need to ensure confidentiality of the responses of the interview of the Director of Gifted Education from Division B due to the uncertainty the director had of her responses due of the other responsibilities she assumed for the division. The interview with the Director of Gifted Education from Division D began with an obstacle that jeopardized the integrity of the interview. As the researcher began to convey the elements of the research protocol, the director of this division objected to being digitally recorded. The researcher alleviated the concerns the director from Division D had by reiterating confidentiality, the destruction of the recording and assurance of the steps to ensure accuracy of the transcribed interview. The director of this division agreed to proceed with the interview. Division A was the first to provide the approval for this researcher to conduct his study. Conversely, the Director of Gifted Education from division A was the last interview the researcher was able to schedule, obtain the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted, and the Gifted Annual Report.

Professional Development

At the beginning of the interview with Division C, the director was unable to provide the 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted. Despite the initial difficulty with obtaining the aforementioned reports, the researcher experienced better results than obtaining the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted and the Gifted Annual Report with the interview of the director from Division C. After introductions, the researcher communicated his appreciation for the interview and research protocol which included assurances of confidentiality, accuracy of transcribed responses, and the destruction of recorded and transcribed material and proceeded with the interview. The director from Division C emphasized that her department provided professional development for teachers during the beginning of both semesters of an academic year. She stated,

One of the things that the division has been doing or I have been doing when I submit my plans for staff development for teachers within this division, we have what we call 'Faculty Awareness' at the beginning of the school year. During that time, I meet at every school with the gifted teacher to set up a schedule and share with them the information from our gifted plan and entertain questions. We also invite parents at orientations at that particular time.

During these meetings for teachers, she also discussed the use of resources such as the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) used to assist teachers with identifying signs of giftedness in underrepresented populations in secondary grades. The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted highlighted the use of the Harrison

Observation Student Form for students in elementary schools as well as SIGS for secondary students. Professional development was also reported in the plan to be provided at a central location and open to all teachers and not just teachers of gifted students. The director from Division C also viewed her job as becoming an essential part of the schools by providing professional development for classroom teachers during their grade level meetings and for gifted teachers on the use of measures such as the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test Version 8 (OLSAT) and the Wide Range Reading Achievement Test (WRAT). The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted identified professional development for primary full or part-time teachers. The director from Division C viewed this as an opportunity for gifted resource teachers to train primary grade classroom teachers to challenge students who may not have previously been identified to ascertain that their ability level for future referral opportunities. She explained the gifted resource teachers' job is to "...meet with teachers in grade level meetings to remind them what the gifted program is all about because it is not something they see all of the time."

After exchanging pleasantries with the director from Division E, the researcher began the interview by reviewing the research protocol. As in previous interviews, professional development was the focus of the first interview question. The director from Division E explained the training she and the resource teacher provided on a quarterly basis regarding identifying signs of giftedness in underrepresented populations and multiple criteria options used during the screening process. Due to the size of this division, the director from Division E and resource teacher from this division were responsible for providing training for all schools. However, despite the size of this

school division, the director from Division E oversaw only programs related to gifted education. This fact was presented in the Gifted Annual Report. The director from Division E also stressed how she and the resource teacher attended conferences held at nearby colleges and universities. She purported, “We also attend various conferences throughout Virginia especially like at William and Mary and the University of Virginia.” The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted identified gifted education teachers enhancing their overall skills from training experiences adapted from Susan Winebrenner, Carol Ann Tomlinson, the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary Gifted program. Moreover, the plan revealed gifted education teachers were encouraged to explore learning opportunities through field experiences, competitions, and community service. Classroom teachers were also advised to seek training through local and graduate courses in gifted education as well as participate in Gifted Education professional development opportunities provided by the division.

The interview with the Director of Gifted Education from Division B began with the researcher communicating the research protocol. The director from Division B divulged the other areas of supervision for which she was responsible. The Gifted Annual Report confirmed this fact as it conveyed other areas the director of this division also supervised programs not under the scope of gifted education.

As the director from Division B described the professional development provided for the division, she described the fall in-service she and the teacher/coordinator supplied for the schools in the division. She explained the in-service “gives the characteristics of what she would be looking for in gifted students.” The teacher/coordinator subsequently followed up with building level presentations to solicit referrals. Upon receipt of

referrals, the teacher/coordinator assisted with reviewing scores and other data regarding the screening process. The director from Division B portrayed the teacher/coordinator as a consultant on the high school level performing training as a group and for individual schools. The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted highlighted the training for teacher/coordinators in curriculum differentiation, and social and emotional needs of gifted students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade. The plan also identified training for all teachers to assist them with enhancing their understanding of gifted students' needs.

The director from Division D described the professional development as an opportunity to train all teachers on the cultural differences students bring into the classroom. She explained the importance of beginning with this type of training due to the variety of minority students that are enrolled in schools in this division. She asserted,

We make sure that our teachers have an awareness of understanding of the different learning styles and cultural backgrounds that is (sic) the most important things. We do that school-wide first before we look at any achievement. We have to look at the categories and that's based on the culture of the school, whether it is minority in that group or whether it's Native Americans, or whether it is our White or Hispanic students. What we try to do is make sure every opportunity is offered to all of our students.

The director from Division D further illustrated her perception of the difficulties teachers have working with African American students which was the rationale of providing division-wide professional development that focused on cultural diversity. After teachers received the exposure to cultural differences, the gifted resource teacher

for the division then offered training during the school day and after school on the signs of giftedness. The director from Division D depicted the focus of the professional development as she stated, “the gifted teacher goes into the schools and talk about what it is to be gifted and what to look for before we begin testing. We work with that first, and then we bring in workshops that deal with Gifted Education.” She described the areas of focus the gifted resource teacher emphasized as how to identify a gifted child, the differences and why they are different, and how to discern why a child would act out, of which may not be the result of a true behavioral issue. Moreover, the director from Division D explained the preconceived notions some teachers have of gifted students by making the assumption that gifted students are gifted in all areas. In addition to in-house training, she stressed teachers are encouraged to attend workshops provided by the gifted center of a local university. Along with the gifted resource teacher, the director from Division D also attended workshops geared towards increasing the awareness of identifying students from underrepresented populations. When it was logistically feasible, she brought presenters to the schools with the permission of building principals. Teachers are also encouraged to pursue training through a local gifted center as part of their professional development program.

The Division Statement of Philosophy for Education of the Gifted contained in the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted from Division D reflected the director’s perspective on the focus of professional development offered. It stated

Teachers who work with these students should have an awareness and understanding of their unique learning styles, needs, and characteristics....shall strive to provide its gifted and talented students with opportunities that meet their

identified needs and talents, utilizing evaluation and assessment techniques that foster their uniqueness and their sense of self-worth and dignity.

Prior to the beginning of the interview of the Director of Gifted Education from Division A, the researcher described the research protocol and stressed the fact that the digital recording of the interview would be kept inside a locked box at the home office of the researcher and destroyed after an anticipated successful defense. The researcher continued by emphasizing the data would be triangulated with the division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted as well as the Gifted Annual Report. The decision to stress the security and destruction of the digital recording was in response to a perceived concern the director from Division A displayed when the researcher described confidentiality and triangulation. The director of this division inquired why the divisions were identified by alphabetic letters, what steps would the researcher employ to ensure the security of the digital recording, and the need to triangulate data.

After addressing the issues relating to the research protocol, the researcher began the interview, starting with a focus on professional development. The director from Division A described how training was provided but not through her office. She stated, ...professional development opportunities specifically to teachers for identifying signs of giftedness in African American students had not been provided. The principals and Coordinator of Elementary Instruction, who also served as Gifted Coordinator, provided workshop sessions reviewing the Checklist of Gifted Behaviors. Through the use of PD 360, an online professional development site, teachers review various educational on specific subjects.

The director from Division A continued to stress the roles of the principal and Coordinator of Elementary Instruction relative to providing the training to teachers. The principal was depicted as the central figure by identifying specific training needs of staff members through needs assessment surveys. After obtaining data, the principal prioritized needs gleaned from the assessment and presented a priority list of professional development needs to the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction. After receiving list from building principals, the coordinator sought job embedded training through a nearby college. Teachers were also encouraged to seek endorsements in gifted education to enhance their abilities to identify signs of giftedness, to provide differentiated instruction, and to improve pedagogy resulting in eliciting critical thinking skills in students.

The Division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted supported the responsibilities shared of both principal and Coordinator of Elementary Instruction shared by the director. The plan also identified software, identified as PD360, and teachers attending the Virginia Conference on Gifted Education as supplemental resources. The director from Division A described the budgetary constraints as the rationale of ascertaining and delivering professional development to teachers. Additionally, the small size of the division was cited as a reason a full-time gifted resource teacher was not hired when there was a vacancy.

Selected Assessments

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 2 (NNAT 2) and the OLSAT 8 were the aptitude assessments identified during the interview with the Director of Gifted Education from Division C. The director from Division C discussed varying the usage of the OLSAT 8 in relationship with the demographics that existed within the city. The

rationale she presented was to glean more information that could be derived from an aptitude assessment. The WRAT was identified as the achievement test administered during the selection process. These assessments were also presented in the division's 5-Year Local plan for the Education of the Gifted. The director reported the need to delve deeper to determine the eligibility of certain students with the use of the Thematic Unit, a measure administered only by a licensed psychologist. She stated, "also, when it is necessary, we will use the Thematic Unit. It cannot be administered by anyone, except a certified psychologist. This is one reason we only use the Thematic Unit for certain students." However, the Unit as administered by a licensed psychologist is not referenced in the 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted.

The director from Division E asserted her division used a multiple step process regarding the assessments used during the screening process. She identified the use of any standardized tests that are available such as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted for Division E also highlighted additional valid and reliable measures such as Benchmark, Passmark, the SOLs, Stanford 10, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening assessments and The Kingore Observation Inventory. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) and SAGES II were presented in the local plan as other aptitude tests to be used if there was a need to obtain more information. The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) were the achievement assessments the director revealed during the interview. Similarly, the Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Student (SAGES) II was the aptitude test the director from Division E cited. The local plan explicitly stated that Division E was

“aware of the need for multiple assessment options for students entering the referral process from the underserved populations.”

As the director from Division B provided information about the selected assessments, she compared the process used to identify eligible students for gifted services as those used for other special programs. She maintained, “We follow very similar procedures as you would follow in special education and we have that school get permission to have that school’s psychologist to do evaluations.” Among the achievement and aptitude assessments used by Division B included the Otis Lennon School Ability Test, the SAGE, in addition to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) and the Peabody Individual Achievement Test. The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted also identified the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test as an aptitude assessment used during the eligibility process.

All students of Division D were previously screened annually using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) asserted the director. Although this measure was still being used, the director from Division D revealed intentions of using the Stanford 10 assessment for students from Prekindergarten through second grade. She also identified the use of the Otis Lennon School Ability Test, the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) as the achievement and aptitude assessments used during the screening process. The Director of Division D asserted, “so we do group tests, we do individual tests, we do psychological tests, and we do educational testing.” In addition to the selected assessments described by the Director from Division D, the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted listed The Test of Cognitive Abilities, The Raven Progressive Matrices-Standard and the Wescheler

Individual Achievement Test III as alternative measures used to glean more quantifiable data for a more accurate picture of students.

The screening process to identify students eligible for gifted services described by the director of Division A began with administering assessments to students in both elementary and middle schools. The director illustrated the procedures used as she asserted,

During the screening process, students in grades 3, 5, and 7 are administered the Otis Lennon School Ability Test which allows us to view the results and have a pool of students to be considered. On some occasions, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement and the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) IV are also administered on an individual or as needed basis.

The reason presented by the director on the use of multiple aptitude and achievement assessments was an attempt to develop a pool of students to be considered and that the selected assessments had proven to be reliable measures of students' academic talents. Moreover, the director of Division A maintained no single instrument will determine if a student should be included or excluded for consideration.

The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted reflected the same aptitude and achievement assessments emphasized by the director during the interview but also identified the Universal –Nonverbal Intelligence Test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, the Weschler Individual Achievement Test, the Stanford 9, and the Raven, and the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs).

Number and Types of Multiple Criteria Options

The director of Division C identified six multiple criteria options during the interview. She identified achievement assessments, aptitude assessments, classroom teacher observations, parent observations, records of previous accomplishments, student portfolios and appropriate rating scales such as the SIGS. To ascertain as accurate view of each student during the screening process as possible, the multiple criteria options were not weighted which would potentially allow one option to levy more influence on the results of the students' eligibility. The director of Division C mentioned the rationale of not weighing multiple criteria options as a means of identifying underrepresented populations by stating "it may be necessary to look at all views to get the full picture."

The director from Division E identified the multiple criteria options her division used as a part of their identification procedures. She mentioned teacher observations, student product and performance portfolios, community observations, parental observations, and ability as well as achievement assessments. Regarding the use of a variety of multiple criteria options and assessments, the director from Division E stressed "we really try to get a multiple perspective on the student." Division E's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted also identified appropriate rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires, in addition to individual interviews and record of previous honors and awards that equaled a total of eight multiple criteria options.

The director from Division B mentioned her division does not necessarily perform a screening process due to the size of their division. She stressed, "because we are so small, we don't do a screening process. We would do maybe a review of records, and a conversation and we meet with the teachers. We look at any type of student product, any

type of work the student has done.” The 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted explicitly communicated the division’s goal of not allowing only a single instrument, score, or criterion to exclude or include a child for eligibility. The plan also identified six multiple criteria options used during their screening process which included student products and portfolios, observation of in-class behaviors, appropriate rating scales, individual or group aptitude tests, individual or group achievement tests, and a record of previous achievements and awards.

The director from Division D presented the multiple criteria options her division used during the screening process. She identified recommendations from teachers, parents, and students as well. Additional multiple criteria options the director of this division identified were classroom observations, students’ work samples, students’ report card grades, and their cumulative records. This director explained the rationale for using a variety of multiple criteria options as “...a method of obtaining information that is reliable and valid.” Division D was one of the few divisions in the study that weighed their multiple criteria options. The director of Division D cited report card grades and recommendations were weighed the heaviest. The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted identified the multiple criteria options the director illustrated but it also included rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires.

In an attempt to gain more data to ascertain students’ academic talents in the area of General Intellectual Aptitude, the director of Division A mentioned, “we look at student products, including performance and portfolios, observations of class behaviors, records of achievements as well as group and individual tests.” The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted also lists the aforementioned multiple criteria options.

Support for Students' Self-Perception

The director from Division C provided much dialogue on efforts to provide support for students' self-perceptions than addressing other elements of the researcher's conceptual theory during the interview. She highlighted the student questionnaire entitled "This is me" that mirrored a summer camp for gifted students where they participated in an open discussion of "Who I am." Additional attempts to address students' self perception as described by the director from Division C included gifted teachers mentoring not only gifted students but students who were not identified as gifted. Professionals were brought into schools as guest speakers, mentor students, or provided experiences for the children. Lastly the director of this division explained that each school is required to have an identification placement team to screen students to determine their eligibility. To provide support for students' self perceptions and other emotional needs, each Identification Placement (IP) Team was required to have a guidance counselor as a member. The Gifted Annual Report identified college/career counseling – group counseling for secondary students and specific counseling addressing giftedness issues – group for elementary and middle school students. The director from Division C cited a mentoring program design that provided a model of career opportunities for students. A mentorship program was presented in the 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted under the SPECTRUM Program. This three tiered program included the Explore Component for grades kindergarten through grade 2, the Search component for grades 3 through 6, the Discover component for grades 7 and 8, and the Challenge Program for grades 9 through twelve.

Additional support for students' self-perception presented in the 5-Year Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted included Emerging National Merit Scholars, Discover Academic Challenge Tournament, National Competitive Initiatives, and the Renaissance –Middle School Elective. However, a mentorship program was not identified in the Gifted Annual Report or the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted. Additionally, participation in Odyssey of the Mind was identified as an integral component of the gifted program of this division that assisted in supporting students' self-perceptions. The director from Division C noted "one thing that our Superintendent was very good about, we do the Odyssey of the Mind and there was one pre-requisite, that he did not want them all gifted."

The director for Division E explained the need to continue working on support for students' self-perception. She mentioned a partnership with a local university where gifted students participated in "mind games" every year with college students. This director also implied the value of the partnership was a result of not only gifted students interacting with each other, but the opportunity to interact with college students. She maintained, "That's been a huge thing and it has been really good. The kids look forward to doing it every year, identifying with college students." The mentorship opportunity was also presented in the division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted. Additionally, the director from Division E asserted the value of other programs such as Sycamore Rouge, a theater company located within the community where students received theatrical training in productions that featured performances related to issues students confronted related to their giftedness. This director also attributed the success of achieving proportionality of African American students to Jacobs Ladder, their after

school program, that also addressed the negative perception of being gifted typically expressed by students.

The 5-Year Local Plan for Education of the Gifted identified additional initiatives provided by the division that included the Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies as well as the Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Arts. The division's plan also highlighted guidance services that addressed special needs of the gifted in small group sessions. The Gifted Annual Report also emphasized the support provided by guidance services offered in group and individual formats for elementary and secondary students. The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted cited the participation Guidance Counselors had during the screening process of the pool of candidates. College and career counseling services were provided to high school students. This type of comprehensive support was unknown by the director. However, the director of Division E did underscore the summer enrichment program that was also presented in the Gifted Annual Report that was subsequently obtained from the Director from Division. Another component of the support for students featured in the division's plan was to highlight student accomplishments in the local newspaper and in the Gifted Achieving Through Excellence (G.A.T.E.) Revue.

The director of Division B illustrated the various programs which provided support for students' self-perception. They planned a fall workshop that presented research from Ranford Reese on the Black Paradox. She described his work as "...he addresses under-achievement. He addressed the entire areas in there on under-achievement and why some African American males don't want to be recognized for their academic abilities". The director from Division B felt that it was necessary to

address this phenomenon with teachers so they would have a better perspective of issues that confronted some African American students. The director of this division also briefly explained the partnership with a local university's gifted center where students participated in a variety of programs designed for gifted students where most participants were African American students. The students' exposure was designed to address their aversion to being identified as gifted. She also highlighted two governor school programs – The Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Environmental Studies and The Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies. She identified the Chesapeake Bay's program involved "taking our students at the 10th grade so they go through to the community college and they are assessed in the basic areas in the community college and then go to the community college site where the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School is located." The director from Division B described the Maggie Walker program "designed for our students in the 9th grade, that's 9th through 12th and that's a full day program. They go in and they are assessed at Maggie Walker to determine whether or not they can participate in that, if they meet the qualifications to participate in that program."

The division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted also recognized the two governor's school programs and provided more of an explicit explanation of each program. The plan identified the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School's focus on Science and Mathematics. The rising juniors and seniors students of this program were served under the Specific Academic Aptitude area of giftedness and received dual enrollment credits. It is housed at the Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw, Virginia. It further emphasizes The Maggie Walker Governor's School program served rising

freshmen through rising seniors under the area of General Intellectual Ability area of giftedness in Richmond, Virginia. It provided a comprehensive college preparatory program of study which focused on government, international studies, science as well as mathematics. The division's Gifted Annual Report also highlighted the Summer Regional Governor's School programs described by the director.

Mentoring was also a component that provided support for students' self-perception identified by the director of Division B. She described a career coach who met with high school students on a regular basis and discussed with them the types of careers and qualifications that were required. Additionally, the guidance counselors were portrayed as mentors for students where their academic performance is reviewed and are presented with other mentorship prospects. Both the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted and the Gifted Annual Report highlighted the mentorship opportunities with school division personnel. The director from Division B also identified the local church as being extremely active in mentoring. However, neither the local plan nor the annual report recognized the mentorship contributions the area church provided as explained by the director.

As students are screened for eligibility, the director from Division D stressed the need to sit with students and parents along with the gifted resource teacher to express their expectations of students in the program as an attempt to provide support for their self-perceptions of being gifted. She stated, "before we bring them in the classroom, we let them know this is what is expected, this is what's going to happen here, this is what's going to happen there." The director of Division D also mentioned the partnership with the area university where the gifted resource teacher attended workshops and returned to

engage in dialogue with the students based on information gathered from the training. Students are challenged because of what the director perceived as their high self esteem. She reports, "...our kids think highly of themselves and if you tell them that they can't do something, they are going to prove to you that they can do it whether they can do it or not. They really get upset." The director of this division also stressed how the word "gifted" is used sparingly to take away the stigma the term created. However, she acknowledged the term gifted did not affect all students in the same manner and the need for gifted personnel to become more familiar with the students so they will have a better understanding of how to approach students. The director of Division D then described the STEM program, a summer enrichment series that involved a partnership with a local university where students enjoyed their interaction with college students. This mentorship for students in high school is presented in the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted.

The Gifted Annual Report described initiatives that were identified by the director such as cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in a regular heterogeneous classroom, college/career group counseling for students in grades three through high school, specific counseling addressing giftedness issues in both the group and individual settings for all students from grades kindergarten through high school. Moreover, Saturday Enrichment and Summer Regional Governor's School were presented in the Gifted Annual Report as initiatives to provide support for students' self perception in the upper elementary grades through high school.

The guidance counselors were described by the director from Division A as being instrumental with the support for students' self-perceptions by various methods. She

asserted,” The Guidance Counselors support us with the administration of various assessments that may be needed during the screening process. The Guidance Counselors also support students who may be found eligible to participate in the gifted programs by assigning and keeping them informed of various enrichment activities.” Additionally, the director from Division A explained Guidance Counselors assisted with registering students for Saturday Academies for students in grades 3 – 5, assisted students in the eighth grade with applying to the Appomattox Regional Governor’s School, and ensured high school students took necessary dual enrollment courses, Advanced Placement courses, and Early College Scholars Programs. Guidance Counselors also played a vital role in identifying a pool of students to apply to the Meherrin Regional Summer Governor’s School.

The Gifted Annual Report from Division A confirmed the support the Guidance Counselors provided with specific counseling addressing giftedness issues in both the group and individual settings. The report also identified career/college counseling Guidance Counselors supplied in addition to students from grades three through 12 participation in Saturday and Summer Enrichment programs and middle school students’ participation with the Summer Regional Governor’s School. The director from Division A did not reference support for elementary and middle school students’ self perception listed in the Gifted Annual Report as cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in a regular heterogeneous classroom. Moreover, she also did not reference the support for high school students’ self perceptions identified in the Gifted Annual Report as flexible multi-aged /grade grouping of gifted and regular education students according to academic skill level in a regular heterogeneous classroom. The local Plan for the

Education of the Gifted also identified the support Guidance counselors provided small group counseling sessions addressing special needs of the gifted for all students from kindergarten through twelfth grades and college/career counseling for middle and high school students. It also confirms cluster grouped and heterogeneous grouped differentiation by a regular classroom teacher.

Description of Data

Data were derived from a compilation of interviews, Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted, and Gifted Annual Reports from each participating school division. The researcher used the Frequency Chart and the Constant Comparative Method to report data. Figure 1 identified the regularity in numerical value the components from the researcher's conceptual framework occurred or were referenced from the interviews, and topics from the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted and the Gifted Annual Plan.

Figure 1

Data Sources: I –Interviews; LP – Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted; GAR – Gifted Annual Report	<i>School Division</i>	Division A	Division B	Division C	Division D	Division E	Total
<i>Conceptual Framework Component</i>							
Professional Development		I – 5; LP – 4; GAR - 1	I – 6; LP – 2; GAR - 1	I – 4; LP – 2; GAR - 1	I – 5; LP – 3; GAR - 1	I – 7; LP – 5; GAR - 1	I – 27; LP – 16; GAR - 4
Selected Assessments		I – 3; LP – 3; GAR - 0	I – 4; LP – 3; GAR - 0	I – 6; LP – 4 GAR - 0	I – 4; LP – 3; GAR - 0	I – 3; LP – 3; GAR - 0	I -20; LP – 16; GAR - 0
Number and Type of multiple Criteria		I – 3; LP – 2; GAR - 0	I – 4; LP – 3; GAR - 0	I – 4; LP – 2; GAR - 0	I – 3; LP – 2; GAR - 0	I-3; LP – 2; GAR - 0	I – 17; LP – 11; GAR - 0
Support for Students’ Self- Perception		I – 4; LP – 4; GAR - 7	I – 7; LP – 4; GAR - 5	I – 4; LP – 4; GAR - 6	I – 5; LP – 4; GAR - 6	I – 5; LP – 4; GAR - 5	I – 25; LP – 20; GAR - 29

Explanation of Data

Data in Figure 1 indicated consistency from the directors from the five divisions in the areas of professional development and support for students’ self-perception were

the most frequently emphasized components of the researcher's conceptual framework. Professional development was stressed in the directors' responses from interview questions in 27 instances, Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted in 16 instances, and the Gifted Annual Reports in 4 instances. Support for students' self-perception was highlighted in the aforementioned data sources in interview responses 25 instances, Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted – 20 instances and in the Annual Gifted report 29 instances. The number and type of multiple criteria options were revealed in the interview responses 17 instances, in the Local Plans for The Education of the Gifted in 11 instances, and the Gifted Annual Reports in zero instances. The selected assessments interview responses were revealed in 20 instances, in the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted were revealed in 16 instances, and the Gifted Annual Report were revealed in zero instances. The frequency with which professional development and support for student's self self-perception suggested the directors attributed these components to proportionality of African American students in their gifted programs than selected assessments and the number and type of multiple criteria options.

Data presented in a theme chart in the Appendix revealed emerging themes from directors' responses to interview questions, Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted, and the Gifted Annual Reports. Themes derived from data sources included the focus of professional development at the beginning of the year that assisted teachers with identifying the signs of giftedness in students, the use of Identification Placement teams that included input from Guidance Counselors, support from Guidance Counselors through individual or group counseling sessions, and support from Guidance Counselors with mentoring students or developing mentorship opportunities for students. Additional

themes presented in the data sources included the use of achievement as well as ability assessments and the use of more than four multiple criteria options during the screening process.

A summary of the responses from interviews, in addition to the themes highlighted in the Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted and the Gifted Annual Reports are presented below and details are listed in Appendix H.

Summarizing the Data

Professional Development

The directors perceived the use of professional development was instrumental with achieving proportionality or near proportionality representation of African American students in their gifted programs. This training was held at the beginning of school year at each participating division. Division E provided professional development on a quarterly basis. The primary focus of training provided to teachers and gifted resource teaches in each participating division related to identifying signs of giftedness in students, specifically from those students from underrepresented populations. Each division also participated in training provided by the College of William and Mary Gifted Center. Additionally, the purpose of the professional development offered in each division was explicitly communicated and was viewed by the directors as critical in achieving proportionality or near proportionality representation of African American students in gifted programs. Moreover, the rationale of the training was presented in each division's Division Statement of Philosophy for Education of the gifted highlighted in the local Plan for the Education of the Gifted.

Selected Assessments

Through the responses each director had given, offering both aptitude and achievement assessments was perceived as providing additional information on students abilities that resulted in proportionality or near proportionality representation of African American students in gifted programs. Although participating divisions had the option of using only one assessment as part of their criteria, the use of aptitude assessments in combination with achievement assessments was viewed as providing a more well-rounded perspective of each student screened for eligibility. Each director communicated the concern of only using achievement assessments as being a disadvantage to African American students which potentially affected their chances of being found eligible.

Number and Types of multiple Criteria Options

Divisions are mandated by the Commonwealth to use at least four multiple criteria options during their screening process. Palmer (2009) found that no combination of the same four criteria were found that resulted in proportional or near proportional representation of minority students, specifically African American students, in gifted programs throughout the Commonwealth. The researcher also did not find the consistent use of multiple criteria used by the participating divisions that attained proportional or near proportional representation of African American students in gifted programs. However, the researcher found directors identified more than four multiple criteria options during the screening process contributed to the proportional or near proportional representation of African American students in their divisions. The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted for each participating division identified at least six multiple

criteria options used to identify students eligible for gifted services. Division E used all eight multiple criteria options during their screening process.

Support for Students' Self-Perception

Each director stressed unique initiatives designed to provide support for students self-perceptions that contributed to a proportional or near proportional representation of African American students in their gifted programs. Identification placement teams were also recognized by each director as a contributor of proportional or near proportional representation of African American students. Additionally, each director stressed the input their guidance director provided by serving on their school's Identification Placement Teams as a contribution to reaching proportionality or near proportionality. Moreover, individual or group counseling and career/college counseling provided by guidance counselors were consistently cited by directors and confirmed by their respective Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted as well as in each participating division's Gifted Annual Reports.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia whose African American gifted students are proportional or nearly proportional to their representation in the overall student body in order to determine if there are any commonalities in their selection criteria.

Summary of Findings

Finding #1: The findings of the study revealed professional development contributed to a proportional or nearly proportional African American representation in gifted education. Training provided at the beginning of the year and focused on identifying signs of giftedness was proven to be an effective practice of school divisions that reached proportional or nearly proportional representation of African American students, an underrepresented population. Training was conducted by the Director of Gifted Education along with the assistance of a Gifted Resource teacher. The principals along with central office support of one division were responsible for providing training to teachers. Professional Development was also provided by allowing teachers to attend conferences at local colleges and universities and the Gifted Education Center at the College of William and Mary. Each Director of Gifted Education emphasized the need to train teachers to ensure teachers knew the differences between giftedness manifested in students and behaviors associated with being compliant. Expanding teachers' cultural awareness was viewed as a critical component in identifying signs of giftedness. Briggs, Reis, and Sullivan (2008) found the quality of teacher preparation negatively affected minority students' opportunities to be found eligible for gifted services.

Similarly, VanTassel-Baska (2006) conducted an analysis of evaluation findings across 20 gifted programs. Her findings revealed a need to address the nature and quality of professional development teachers receive. Professional development also increased teachers' awareness of the signs of giftedness in African American students and dispelled the myths some teachers had about their African American students. VanTassel-Baska, Xuemei, Quek and Struck (2004) stated some teachers would become influenced by their negative feelings towards their minority students and cause them not to feel welcomed in gifted programs. Ford, Moore, III., Whiting, Grantham (2008) found minority students would not advance to the assessment stage of the screening process because their abilities were viewed as inferior by teachers.

Finding #2: Through his study, the researcher found the use of aptitude assessments as well as achievement measures increased African American students' opportunities to be found eligible to receive gifted services. As Palmer (2009) found that there was no consistent assessment used that indicated proportionality, each Director of Gifted Education identified the use of a variety of aptitude assessments used across divisions such as the Raven Progressive Matrices – Standard, Weschler III, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test, the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test. Responses from the interviews of two directors indicated the use of Virginia's Standards of Learning Assessments as the achievement test used. However, only one division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted confirmed its use and a disclaimer in another plan revealed other achievement assessments may be used. Other achievement assessments used as identified by the interview responses and the local plans included the Stanford 9, Stanford 10, Woodcock

Johnson, Metropolitan Achievement Test, Wide Range Reading Achievement Test and Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Student. However, each school division used the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test although different versions were noted by two divisions. The Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted also identified the use of both aptitude and achievement measures. Although Palmer (2009) found there was consistent measures used by divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia that indicated proportionality, Lohman (2005) recognized verbal and quantitative components as genuine indicators of a student's readiness for gifted programs. He advocated the use of both aptitude and achievement measures much like the CogAT. Renzulli (2004) also endorsed verbal, quantitative as well as nonverbal skills as an accurate measurement of a student's ability to succeed in gifted programs. This perspective was affirmed by Be'langer and Gagne' (2006) who declared that giftedness and talent could be presented intellectually, socially and artistically.

Finding #3: The researcher found the participating school divisions in his study all used at least six or more multiple criteria components as part of their screening process to determine students eligible for gifted education. The practice resulted in proportional or nearly proportional African American representation in their gifted programs. State regulations require divisions to use at least four multiple criteria options during the screening process to determine students' eligibility. Be'langer & Gagne' (2006) asserted, "The more numerous the forms of giftedness or talent, the larger the population of gifted and/or talented persons when more ability domains are" (p.135). The directors revealed the use of at least six multiple criteria components to determine students' eligibility. The Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted from each division confirmed the use of six

multiple criteria components as a part of their identification process. This finding is consistent with Renzulli (2004) who also suggested using multiple components to assess minority students' abilities and their potential to become successful in gifted programs. His view supported the need for multiple criteria in the identification of more minority students. VanTassel-Baska, Feng, & Evans (2007) found it is effective to use multiple criteria and informational sources when identifying gifted students.

Finding #4: Other findings of the study identified guidance counselors as instrumental members of schools' Identification Placement Teams in providing support for students' self-perceptions. School Guidance Counselors were recognized as instrumental to the selection of underrepresented populations by serving on Identification Placement teams, providing group and individual counseling, and developing mentorship opportunities for students in each school division of the study. The Gifted Annual Reports and Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted also identified the roles of School Guidance Counselors regarding the screening process of students. Additionally, students participated in special programs such as summer enrichment and Governors' Schools designed to provide emotional support were also themes gleaned from each interview and highlighted in the local plans and Gifted Annual Reports. Each Director of Gifted Education stressed the importance of students enhancing their self-perceptions by interacting with other gifted students in special programs as well as in gifted classes. They described African American students who participated in programs with other African American students helped to demystify a perception that they aren't supposed to achieve academic excellence. The Gifted Annual Reports confirmed this fact as they identified students receiving support for their self-perceptions by being grouped

age/grade peers in regular homogeneous classrooms. Moreover, each Director of Gifted Education stressed the importance of addressing students' self-perception and acknowledged how it can possibly have a negative effect on a students' potential for academic excellence. Scholars found the psychological impact on minority students affected their abilities to reach their academic potential. Through her ethnographic study, Staiger (2004) asserted that low numbers of minority students in gifted programs could have the potential of exacerbating psychological effects resulting from segregated schools. The researcher suspected the support for students' self-perception is essential to student success. Ford (1992) stressed that it's important for educators to become more aware of the perceptions a minority may have of themselves and their potential for academic success can be affected by those perceptions. Henfield, Moore, III., & Wood (2008) found minority students feared being separated from their peers which contributed to their lack of motivation to do school work and influenced low expectations teachers had of them.

The researcher was able to obtain data through the interviews of five directors of gifted education, the Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted, and the Gifted Annual Reports of divisions where there is proportional or near proportional African American representation in gifted education. The researcher attempted to gain the directors' perspectives on the factors that contribute to the proportional or near proportional representation of African American students in the gifted program in their school division. Most of the responses were confirmed by the Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted as well as the Gifted Annual Reports provided by the directors.

Implications of Findings

The researcher recommends that school leaders acknowledge the perceptions Directors of Gifted Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia possessed to achieve proportional or nearly proportional African American representation in gifted education and the division factors that contributed.

Implication #1: School leaders should provide teachers with professional development activities that would help them identify the signs of giftedness. Once trained at the beginning of the year, teachers will have an opportunity to use knowledge during the period they become acquainted with their students to ascertain students' abilities and begin to closely monitor students who may exhibit signs of giftedness for possible referrals. The Director of Gifted Education for Division C identified the gifted resource teacher's responsibility is to remind the teachers what the gifted program is about and it is not something that they see all of the time.

Implication #2: School leaders need to utilize at least six multiple criteria options in the selection procedures for gifted students. Additionally, school leaders must recognize the value of using both aptitude and achievement measures to determine students who are being considered for gifted education. School divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are required to use at least four multiple criteria options during their screening process of their gifted education programs. Directors of Gifted Education should utilize at least six multiple criteria options during the screening process. The use of a variety of multiple criteria options will provide identification teams with a more comprehensive perspective of students being considered to be eligible for gifted

services. The director from Division D explained the rationale of using a variety of multiple criteria options as a means of obtaining reliable and valid information.

Implication #3: School leaders should provide opportunities for African American students to interact with gifted peers in programs. Students will be allowed to engage with other gifted students that could enhance peer relationships to positively influence students' self-perceptions. The Director of Gifted Education for Division E explained how the gifted students in her division look forward to playing "mind games" every year with the college students from the nearby university

Implication #4: School leaders should engage guidance counselors during the screening of students as well as during group and individual counseling sessions to achieving proportional or nearly proportional representation of African American students. Guidance counselors' expertise will allow them to provide more insight during the selection process and communicate any concerns they may have to gifted teachers and administrators to provide support for students' self-perceptions. The 5-Year Local Plans for the Education of the Gifted for each division identified the Guidance Counselors as a part of their screening process.

Implication #5: As a part of their selection procedures identified in their Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted, school leaders should utilize achievement and aptitude assessments during the schools' screening process. The use of both achievement and aptitude assessments will continue to provide a more comprehensive perspective of students being considered to be eligible for gifted services. The director of Division D asserted, "so we do group tests, we do individual tests" while describing the variety of assessments her division used.

Implication #6: School leaders should require gifted education teachers to provide gifted enrichment opportunities for students. Students will engage in enrichment opportunities with other gifted education students that should develop more peer relationships which could serve as a positive influence on students' self-perceptions. The Director of Gifted Education for Division B highlighted the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Environmental Studies and the Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies, two governor school programs their gifted students attend.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions for further studies as reflected from the finding from this study on The Perceptions of Directors of Gifted Education regarding division factors that contribute to a proportional or nearly proportional representation of African American in gifted education.

1. This present study should be replicated to compare other states' gifted education identification practices that include professional development, selected assessments, numbers and types of multiple criteria, and the support for students' self-perception that would increase the body of knowledge regarding the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted education.
2. A quantitative study should be conducted to compare the types of professional development offered through colleges and universities that contribute to a proportional or nearly proportional representation of African American students in gifted education.

3. A quantitative study should be conducted to compare the type of support for students' self-perception offered through school divisions that result in a proportional or nearly proportional representation of African American students in gifted education.

Reflections

The researcher anticipated the findings of the study would reflect a number of dependent variables in the participating school divisions such as student ethnicity demographics, location, and the ethnicity of each Director of Gifted Education developed. According to the Virginia Department of Education, African American students were the predominant ethnicity in each participating school division and were identified as: Division A -74%; Division B – 40%; Division C – 69%; Division D – 59%; Division E – 93%. Additionally, the location of each division of the study was within 120 miles from state colleges and universities that the researcher perceived as enhancing the professional development opportunities provided to teachers. Moreover, the ethnicity each Director of Gifted Education was described as African American. The researcher found the directors had a personal awareness of the cultural challenges African American students experienced that affected their motivation of achieving academic success.

It was both a challenge and a joy to conduct this research. Ever since the beginning of my educational career, I suspected the need for educators to challenge low-income and minority students' academic abilities while providing resources that were appropriate to students' diverse cultural needs. As an elementary school principal, I wondered how many of our students who attended Title I schools had the intellectual gifts that were hidden beneath the behaviors they exhibited as a result of living in

poverty. This study proved both the need to challenge students' academic abilities with appropriate resources while also providing support for their emotional needs.

The interviews that were conducted provided an in-depth perspective of the Directors of Gifted Education regarding their attempts to close the achievement gap of gifted programs. Attaining permission from superintendents from some divisions was difficult. However, once permission was granted from the superintendents who did not decline the request, the information gleaned from the interviews helped to determine the findings. It is my hope that this study will assist low-income and minority students reach their full academic potential through gifted education.

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Appendix A**MEMORANDUM****DATE:** April 4, 2011**TO:** Carol Cash, Ronald Holloman**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 26, 2013)**PROTOCOL TITLE:** The Perceptions of Directors of Gifted Education Regarding Division Factors

that Contribute to Proportionate or Nearly Proportionate African American Representation in Gifted Education

IRB NUMBER: 11-336

Effective April 4, 2011, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the new protocol

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 promptly 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

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your

research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:Approved as: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6, 7**Protocol Approval Date: **4/4/2011**Protocol Expiration Date: **4/3/2012**Continuing Review Due Date*: **3/20/2012**

*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 federally 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.

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Appendix B

Dear Dr. Ron Holloman,

**Congratulations! I am glad to resend granting my permission to use my data from
my dissertation data set.**

I know you are looking forward to celebrating this great event in your career,

Karen

**Karen Palmer, Ph.D., NBCT 1999-2009
Adjunct ECSU**

Dear Dr. Ron Holloman,

**Congratulations! I am glad to resend granting my permission to use my data from
my dissertation data set.**

I know you are looking forward to celebrating this great event in your career,

Karen

**Karen Palmer, Ph.D., NBCT 1999-2009
Adjunct ECSU**

Appendix C

Instrument Validation 1

Interview Validation Instrument – Directors of Gifted Education

Interview Pilot Test

- Purpose:** To determine the reliability and validity of the interview questions by reviewing questions for content (do interview questions provide an accurate measure of what is supposed to be measured?) and clarity (are the interview questions easy for the participants to understand?)
- Procedures:**
1. Read interview questions
 2. Circle the number that corresponds to the appropriate research question identified in the key. Identify the research question to which the interview question is related.
 3. Circle the number that corresponds with the clarity rating listed in the key
 4. Circle the number that corresponds with the association rating listed in the key

Key

Research Questions:

1. How did the selection of assessments result in proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?
2. Why did the selection of components result in proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?
3. What types of professional development activities for teachers contribute proportionality of African American students being selected for gifted education?
4. Why do teachers view students' perception of themselves affect proportionality of African American being selected for gifted education?

Clarity:

- 1 = Very difficult to understand
- 2 = Difficult to understand
- 3 = Somewhat easy to understand
- 4 = Easy to understand
- 5 = Very easy to understand

Association:

- 1 = Very weakly associated with research question
- 2 = Weakly associated with research question
- 3 = Associated with research question

4 = Strongly associated with research question
 5 = Very strongly associated with research question

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences during from the 2008-2009 academic year. For the following questions, please choose one response, unless otherwise noted.

1. What types of professional development opportunities were provided that assisted teachers in developing culturally responsive questions based on students' beliefs, values, and cultural practices that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

2. What were the assessments used that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	2 2 3 4 5

3. What criteria components were used to select eligible students that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

4. Describe students' role during the identification process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

5. What was the rationale for using the selected assessments that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

6. Describe the frequency in which African American students are the referral source to be screened that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

7. Describe the responsibilities of gifted coordinators at each school regarding professional development that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

8. How were the criteria components weighted during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

9. Describe the manner in which teachers, parents, students, and administrators provided input that determined the assessments used that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

10. Compared to other criteria components, what weight was assigned to student questionnaires or other self-assessment measures that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

11. What was the rationale for selecting the criteria components used that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

12. Describe the professional development that assisted teachers in becoming competent in behavioral management in classroom and non-instructional school settings that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

13. What policies regarding assessments have the division adopted that addressed the disproportion of minority students in gifted education that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

14. How were the selected assessments weighted during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

15. Describe the manner in which teachers, parents, students, and administrators provided input to determine the criteria components used that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

16. How were professional development opportunities measured to determine their effectiveness that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

17. How were the selected assessments weighted against other criteria components during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

18. Describe the parents' role related to criteria components used during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

19. Describe the frequency professional development opportunities were offered which focused on meeting students' individual needs that contributed to a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

20. Describe any policies that addressed the perception gifted education students have of themselves and how such policies resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students being selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D

Validation Tally 1

Question #	Research Question	Clarity	Association
1	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3	2,5,4,2,4,5,4,4,5,1,5,3	4,5,4,2,5,5,4,4,4,1,4,3
2	1,2,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	5,5,4,3,4,5,3,3,4,3,5,3	4,5,4,3,5,5,3,4,4,2,5,3
3	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,	4,5,3,2,5,5,4,3,4,3,5,3	5,5,3,3,5,5,4,5,4,2,5,3
4	4,4,4,4,2,4,4,2,4,4,1,1	4,5,4,3,4,5,4,2,2,5,3,3	4,5,4,3,3,5,4,2,3,5,4,2
5	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,	4,5,4,2,3,3,4,4,3,4,5,3	4,5,4,2,4,2,3,4,3,4,5,3
6	4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,	3,4,2,1,4,3,3,3,3,1,5,3	4,4,3,2,5,5,4,4,3,1,5,3
7	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,5,4,5,5,4,3,2,2,5,3	4,5,4,2,5,5,4,4,2,2,5,3
8	2,2,2,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,	3,5,4,1,4,5,4,3,4,4,4,3	4,5,2,1,4,5,4,3,3,4,4,3
9	1,?,1,1,2,2,1,2,1,4,1,1	4,?,4,2,4,3,4,3,2,3,4,3,	4,?,1,3,3,1,4,3,2,3,4,3,
10	1,4,4,4,2,1,1,2,2,4,2	4,5,4,3,4,5,2,2,3,4,5,3	3,5,4,3,4,5,3,2,2,3,5,3
11	2,2,2,1,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,	4,4,4,3,4,5,3,2,3,4,4,3	4,4,4,3,4,5,3,2,3,4,5,3
12	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,5,2,1,3,3,4,5,4,2,5,3	5,5,4,4,5,4,5,5,4,5,3,3
13	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,1,1,1,	4,5,4,3,4,5,4,2,3,2,5,3	4,5,1,3,3,5,4,3,3,2,5,3
14	1,1,1,1,1,2,1,1,1,1,1,	4,5,4,3,5,4,3,3,4,3,3,3	4,5,4,3,4,2,3,3,3,3,4,3
15	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,4,4,2	4,2,4,3,4,5,3,1,3,4,3,3	4,2,4,3,3,1,3,1,2,4,2,3
16	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,5,3,2,5,5,4,5,4,3,5,3	5,5,4,3,4,5,4,5,3,4,5,3
17	2,1,1,1,2,2,1,1,2,2,1,2	3,5,1,3,4,3,3,5,2,1,4,3	2,5,3,3,4,2,4,5,2,3,4,3
18	2,2,4,2,2,2,2,1,2,2,2,2	4,2,4,3,4,2,3,1,4,1,5,3	4,2,3,3,4,2,3,1,3,1,5,3
19	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,5,4,4,4,3,4,4,4,2,5,3	4,5,4,5,5,4,4,4,3,2,5,3
20	4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,3,4	4,5,4,4,4,3,4,5,4,2,3,3	5,5,4,4,4,5,4,5,4,4,2,3

Appendix E

Instrument Validation 2

Interview Validation Instrument – Directors of Gifted Education

Interview Pilot Test

- Purpose:** To determine the reliability and validity of the interview questions by reviewing questions for content (do interview questions provide an accurate measure of what is supposed to be measured?) and clarity (are the interview questions easy for the participants to understand?)
- Procedures:**
1. Read interview questions
 2. Circle the number that corresponds to the appropriate research question identified in the key. Identify the research question to which the interview question is related.
 3. Circle the number that corresponds with the clarity rating listed in the key
 4. Circle the number that corresponds with the association rating listed in the key

Key

Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of division gifted education directors regarding the selection of assessments result in greater proportionality of African American students in gifted education?
2. What are the perceptions of division gifted education directors regarding the selection of multiple criteria options result in greater proportionality of African American students in gifted education?
3. What are the perceptions of division gifted education directors regarding types of professional development activities for teachers contribute proportionality of African American students in gifted education?
4. What are the perceptions of division gifted education directors regarding efforts that have been made to address students' self-perceptions that result in greater proportionality of African American students in gifted education?

Clarity:

1 = Very difficult to understand

- 2 = Difficult to understand
- 3 = Somewhat easy to understand
- 4 = Easy to understand
- 5 = Very easy to understand
- Association:**
- 1 = Very weakly associated with research question
- 2 = Weakly associated with research question
- 3 = Associated with research question
- 4 = Strongly associated with research question
- 5 = Very strongly associated with research question

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences during from the 2008-2009 academic year. For the following questions, please choose one response, unless otherwise noted.

1. What types of professional development opportunities were provided to teachers to assist them in identifying signs of giftedness in minority students that have resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

2. What assessments were used during the screening process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

3. What were the multiple criteria options presented in your gifted education plan that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students selected for gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

4. Describe students' involvement in the identification process that has contributed to a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

5. Why were the assessments used during the screening process selected that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

6. Describe the frequency in which African American students refer themselves for gifted education that result their being found eligible?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

7. Describe the responsibilities of gifted coordinators at each school regarding professional development that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

8. Describe how the multiple criteria options were weighted during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

9. During the selection process when multiple criteria options weighted, what measure was assigned to student questionnaires or other self-assessment measures that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education.

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

10. Describe the manner in which teachers, parents, students, and administrators were able to provide input that determined the assessments which resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

11. What was the rationale for selecting the multiple criteria options used that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

12. How was professional development provided to teachers that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

13. What policies regarding the selection of assessments have the division adopted that addressed the disproportion of minority students in gifted education that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

14. What practices addressed students self-perceptions that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

15. How were professional development opportunities measured to determine their effectiveness that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

16. How were selected assessments weighted against the other multiple criteria options during the selection process that resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

17. Which multiple criteria option included in your gifted education plan was more influential which resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

18. Describe the professional development opportunities offered which focused on identifying signs of giftedness in low income and minority students that contributed to a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

19. Describe any policies that addressed the perception gifted education students have of themselves and how such policies resulted in a more proportional representation of African American students in gifted education?

Research Question	Clarity	Association
1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix F

Validation Tally 2

Question #	Research Question	Clarity	Association
1!	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,3,	5,5,4,4,4,4,5,4,5,5,4,4,	5,5,4,5,4,4,5,4,5,5,4,4,
2!	1, 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,4,1,	5,5,5,5,5,4,5,5,5,5,4,4,	5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,
3!	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,4,2,	5,5,5,5,4,4,5,4,5,4,5,4,	5,5,5,5,5,4,5,5,5,4,5,4,
4. X	2,2,4,4,4,2,4,4,4,4,4,4,	5,5,4,5,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,4,	5,5,4,5,4,4,3,5,3,5,5,4,
5.!	1,1,1,1,1,2,1,2,1,1,1,1,	4,5,5,5,4,4,4,5,5,2,5,4,	4,5,5,5,4,4,4,4,5,2,5,4,
6. !	4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,2,4,	4,5,4,3,4,3,5,5,5,3,4,5,	4,5,4,5,4,4,5,5,5,3,4,5,
7. !	3,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,5,5,5,3,4,5,4,5,4,5,4,	4,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,2,5,4,
8. !	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,	5,5,5,5,4,4,5,4,5,4,5,4,	5,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,3,5,5,
9. X	4,2,2,2,2,2,1,4,4,2,2,2,	3,5,4,3,4,4,3,4,5,4,3,3,	3,5,5,4,4,4,3,5,4,4,4,4,
10.X	1,1,1,1,4,2,1,2,1,1,1,1,	5,5,4,5,4,4,4,4,5,3,5,3,	5,5,4,5,2,4,4,4,5,2,4,4,
11.X	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1,2,2,2,2,	4,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,4,4,	4,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,4,4,
12.!	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,1,3,3,3,3,	5,5,4,5,4,4,5,4,5,5,5,5,	4,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,5,5,5,
13. X	1,1,1,1,1,2,1,1,1,1,1,1,	5,5,5,3,4,4,5,4,5,3,4,4,	5,5,5,4,4,4,5,4,5,4,5,4,
14.!	4,4,4,4,4,2,4,4,4,4,4,4,	4,5,4,5,3,4,5,4,5,4,5,4,	4,5,4,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,5,4,
15. X	3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,	4,4,5,5,5,4,5,4,5,4,4,4,	5,5,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,5,4,
16. X	2,2,1,2,1,2,2,2,1,1,1,2,	4,3,4,4,3,4,4,5,5,4,4,3,	3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5,4,4,4,4,
17. !	2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,	5,4,4,5,3,4,5,4,5,4,4,4,	5,4,5,5,4,4,5,4,5,4,4,4,

18.X	3,3,3,3,3,2,3,1,3,3,3,3,	5,4,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,4,3,	5,4,5,5,4,4,5,5,5,4,5,3,
19.!	4,4,4,4,4,2,4,4,4,4,4,	4,5,5,5,3,4,5,4,5,4,3,4,	4,5,5,5,3,4,5,5,5,4,3,4,
!	Questions to use		
X	Questions not to use		

Appendix G

Letters to Superintendents

Dear Superintendent:

I am gathering data for my dissertation in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and I would like to invite your director of gifted education to participate in an interview about their perceptions resulting in proportional representation of African American students in gifted education. This study is statewide that includes the directors of gifted education in school divisions where African American students are proportionally represented in gifted programs. The directors of selected divisions have important information to share on the success of their gifted programs in attaining proportional representation of African Americans. Responses that they provide will be kept confidential while also maintaining the anonymity of interviewees. No identifiable information will be included in this research. A summary of data will be documented.

Please indicate below whether you will grant permission to your director of gifted education to participate in this study by completing and returning the bottom portion of this letter in the envelope provided.

I am available to address questions or concerns you may have and can be contacted at nupsiace@msn.com or (757) 850-5093.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.
Sincerely,

Ron A. Holloman
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix H

Themes Gleaned from Data Sources

THEMES GLEANED FROM DATA SOURCES

Division/Data Source	Interview	5-year Plan	Annual Report on the Status of Gifted Education
Division A	<p>Professional Development – Building principals and Coordinator of Elementary Instruction provide workshops sessions reviewing a checklist of gifted behaviors through the use of PD360. Teachers, who attend the Virginia Conference on Gifted Education.</p> <p>Numbers and</p>	<p>Professional Development – Gifted teachers required to attend Professional Conferences, workshops, and Seminars; General Education teachers invited to attend Intellectual Characteristics In-service, and Gifted Education Endorsement.</p>	<p>Professional Development - Administrators oversees programs other than gifted education. Support for Students’ Self-Perceptions – Cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in homogeneous classrooms, Guidance provided College/Career</p>

	<p>Types of Multiple Criteria Options –</p> <p>Review student products from performances and portfolios, observations of in-class behaviors, records of achievements, individual and group achievement tests, Group and Individual Aptitude assessments.</p> <p>Selected assessments – Otis Lennon, Virginia Standards of Learning, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Woodcock Johnson, Wechsler</p>	<p>Numbers and Types of Multiple Criteria Options –</p> <p>Student products, portfolios, and performances; record of in-class behaviors; rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; Record of previous achievements and awards, individual and group achievement; individual or group aptitude assessments.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Otis Lennon, Naglieri nonverbal Ability Test, Universal</p>	<p>group counseling, Saturday Enrichment programs, Summer Enrichment Programs, and summer Regional Governors’ School</p>
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	<p>Intelligence Scale for Children, Support for Students' Self-Perceptions – Guidance Counselors assigned as mentors and encourage students to attend Saturday Academies for students in grades 3 – 5. Guidance Counselors assist with identifying students to apply to the Meherrin Regional Summer Governor's School, and the Appomattox Regional Governor's School, and encourage students</p>	<p>Nonverbal, Intelligence Test, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Metropolitan Achievement Test, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement. Support for Student's Self-perceptions – Guidance Counselor individual and groups counseling sessions, Guidance Counselor college/career counseling sessions, students grouped</p>	
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	<p>to enroll in dual enrollment and AP courses, and participate in Early College Scholars Program.</p>	<p>homogeneously according to age and grade peers, provide parents and community members to become an integral part of the gifted program,</p>	
<p>Division B</p>	<p>Professional Development – offers fall in-service that presents characteristics of gifted African American students. PD provided as a group and at individual schools. Number and types of Multiple Criteria options – Portfolios, class observations, appropriate rating</p>	<p>Professional Development – In-services provided to personnel who work with gifted learners, Teachers attend conferences that relate to gifted education. Numbers and Types of Multiple Criteria Options – Assessment of Student products, performance, and</p>	<p>Professional Development – Director oversees other programs not under gifted education. Support for Students’ Self-Perception - Cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in homogeneous classrooms, Guidance provided</p>

	<p>scales, meetings with teachers, review participation in previous honors programs, awards received, questionnaires, student academic performance, grades, and information gleaned from parents who independently sought services from the William and Mary Gifted Center. Criteria options are weighted with assessments weighing the most.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – The SAGE, WISC, Otis Lennon, Peabody</p>	<p>portfolios; Record of observation of in-class behaviors; Appropriate Rating Scales, checklists, and questionnaires; Record of previous achievements; individual or group aptitude assessments, individual or group achievement assessments.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Otis Lennon, SAGES 1 and 2, Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test. Support for Students’ Self-Perception – Guidance</p>	<p>College/Career group counseling, Summer Enrichment Programs, and Summer Regional Governors’ School</p>
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	<p>Individual Inventory, SOLs, The Waste.</p> <p>Support for Students’ Self-Perception –</p> <p>Students go to the William and Mary Center for Gifted Education, participate in two Governor School programs – The Chesapeake Bay Governor School for Environmental Science, and the Maggie Walker Governors School for Government and International Studies, provide students with mentors within the building and area</p>	<p>College/Career counseling, small group and individual counseling sessions, The Chesapeake Bays Governor’s School, The Governor’s School for Government and International Studies,</p>	
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	<p>church members serve as mentors, engage school Guidance Counselors to review students' records, and review research from Randford Reese's Black Paradox</p>		
<p>Division C</p>	<p>Professional Development – Provides “Faculty Awareness” at the beginning of each school year where director and resource teachers meet at each school where 5-year gifted plan is presented. Gifted traits in students are identified. Teachers</p>	<p>Professional Development – Teachers are trained on the use of the Harrison Observation Student Form for primary grades and Scales for Identifying Gifted Students for secondary grades to assist in screening and identification</p>	<p>Professional Development – Director oversees other programs not under gifted education. Support for Students’ Self- Perception - Cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in homogeneous</p>

	<p>receive training in administering the Otis Lennon and the WRAT. Second semester PD is also offered to teachers of gifted students and general education teachers, offer orientation to parents. Gifted Resource teachers are required to offer PD for their respective buildings throughout the year.</p> <p>Number and Types of Criteria –</p> <p>Teacher observations, parent observations, student academic performance in</p>	<p>process.</p> <p>Number and Types of Multiple Criteria Options – Record of observation of in-class behaviors; appropriate rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual or group aptitude assessments, individual or group achievement assessments, assessment of student products, performance, and portfolio; and record of previous achievements.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Otis</p>	<p>classrooms,</p> <p>Guidance provided</p> <p>College/Career group counseling, and Summer Enrichment Programs</p>
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	<p>reading and math, Student surveys are also allowed. SIGS are used with parents and teachers.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – NNAT 2, Otis Lennon 8, WRAT, and the UNIT.</p> <p>Identification Placement Team is established at each school and reviews student data from criteria. Criteria are not weighted.</p> <p>Support for Students’ Self-Perception – Provide “local experts” who are professionals from</p>	<p>Lennon Version 8, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test version 8, WRAT-2 version 8</p> <p>Support for Students Self-Perceptions – Guidance Services including career/college counseling, small group counseling, individual counseling, Saturday or summer services, Summer Regional Governor’s School, Summer Residential Governor’s School, cluster grouping of gifted students in heterogeneous</p>	
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	<p>the community to provide students models and mentors from different professions. Provide a summer camp entitle “Who I am”. Guidance Counselor is a member of each Identification Placement Team. School Psychologists provide support to Identification Placement Teams. Gifted Teachers are required to meet with students to help students understand what gifted program entails and provide hands-on activities. Focus is to design</p>	<p>grouping,</p>	
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	<p>gifted program to fit student by allowing them to work independently or cooperatively.</p>		
<p>Division D</p>	<p>Professional Development – Survey administered annually to gauge type of PD teachers prefer. Most PD provided to schools on learning styles, cultural differences, and signs of giftedness through the College of William and Mary and Virginia State University. Workshops are also provided to parents and teachers.</p>	<p>Professional Development – will provide yearly professional development on the referral process for all new and returning staff members, encourage professionals to seek an endorsement in gifted education; attend one to two annual workshops on identification, procedures, new information on identifying the</p>	<p>Professional Development – Director oversees other programs not under gifted education. Support for Students’ Self-Perception - Cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in homogeneous classrooms, Guidance provided College/Career group counseling, and Summer</p>

	<p>Guidance Counselor also provides PD to teachers.</p> <p>Numbers and Type of Multiple Criteria</p> <p>– Teacher, parent, and student recommendations, teacher observations, student records, students’ work, students’ grades.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Naglieri is given to all Kindergarten students as part of Spring screening. Also SOLs, Otis Lennon, Stanford 10.</p> <p>Support for Students’ Self-perception -</p>	<p>underserved populations, Administrators attend gifted education conferences, staff attend staff development provided by gifted resource teacher in the building or division.</p> <p>Numbers and Types of Multiple Criteria Options - Record of observation of in-class behaviors; appropriate rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual or group aptitude</p>	<p>Enrichment Programs, Saturday Enrichment Programs, Summer Regional Governors’ School and Summer Residential Governor’s School</p>
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	<p>Current gifted students will talk to recently qualified students. Gifted Coordinator attend workshops at nearby universities and return to speak to students based in information gleaned from training.</p> <p>Cohort of gifted students created to provide support to each other.</p> <p>Becoming familiar with students is stressed. Term “gifted” often not used with students.</p> <p>Norfolk State University students offer assistance with</p>	<p>assessments, individual or group achievement assessments, assessment of student products, performance, and portfolio; and record of previous achievements.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Weschler III, Otis Lennon, Test of Cognitive Abilities, Raven Progressive Matrices – Standard, Stanford 10 Support for Students’ Self-Perceptions - Guidance Services including</p>	
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	<p>the STEM program. Guidance Counselor and School Psychologist serves on identification team. Guidance Counselor stays engaged with students.</p>	<p>career/college counseling, small group counseling, individual counseling, and mentorships</p>	
<p>Division E</p>	<p>Professional Development – Gifted Teachers and Resource person attended conferences at the College of William and Mary, UVa, for job embedded PD. Meet quarterly with teachers to regarding identification, criteria and differentiating</p>	<p>Professional Development – Gifted resource Teacher is required to possess an endorsement in Gifted Education, to obtain PD from local and graduate classes, and to participate in Gifted Education Professional Development. Elementary teachers</p>	<p>Professional Development – Administrator oversees only programs related to gifted education. Support for Students’ Self – Perception – Cluster grouping of gifted students with age/grade peers in a regular heterogeneous</p>

	<p>curricula.</p> <p>Numbers and Type of Criteria –</p> <p>Teacher observations, student portfolios, and record of student academic performance, community observations, parent observations.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Otis Lennon, SAGES II, SOLs</p> <p>Support for Students’ Self-perceptions –</p> <p>Partnership with Virginia State University where</p>	<p>are required to obtain PD from local and graduate courses and participate in Gifted Education Professional Development.</p> <p>Middle and high school gifted teachers are required to obtain PD from local and graduate courses and participate in Gifted Education Professional Development.</p> <p>Training reflects works from Susan Winebrenner, Carol Ann Tomlinson, the College of William and Mary, the</p>	<p>classroom, Guidance Services addressing special needs of the Gifted through college/career counseling through group counseling, specific counseling addressing giftedness issues through group and individual settings.</p>
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	<p>students are paired with students from VSU to play mind games similar to Battle of the Brains, interaction with 4H, provide Jacob’s Ladder after-school enrichment program, and participation in Sycamore Rouge, a theatrical program that provides theatrical training and offers performances related to issues intelligent students face.</p>	<p>University of Virginia gifted programs.</p> <p>Numbers and Type of Multiple Criteria</p> <p>– Assessment of student portfolios; record of observations of in-class behaviors; record of rating appropriate scales, checklists, and questionnaires; individual interviews; and record of previous achievements. A minimum of 4 members serve on the Identification Placement committee. A</p>	
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		<p>minimum of 3 professionals evaluate and analyze the student products/ portfolios, using a matrix form ranging from one to five rating scale. No one criteria will prevent students from being identified as gifted.</p> <p>Selected Assessments – Kingore Observation Inventory, Otis-Lennon Student Ability Tests 7th Edition, Virginia’s Standards of Learning, passmark grades, Stanford 10, and Phonological Awareness Literacy</p>	
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		<p>Screening, SAGES, and WISC III.</p> <p>Support for Students' Self- Perception –</p> <p>Student participation in the Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies and the Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Arts and Technology, Guidance Services address special needs of gifted students in group or individual sessions, mentorships, newspaper and media coverage</p>	
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		<p>highlighting student accomplishments, students' products, presentations and performances featured in an annual Gifted Achieving Through Excellence (G.A.T.E.) Revue, conferences and sessions scheduled for parents, parents provided an opportunity to serve on Gifted Advisory Committee</p>	
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