

ECBOCES Spring 2024 Gifted Program Collaborator Survey Analysis

Student Responses

111 responses K-12 (from a total of 259 gifted students)

Summary of Student Narrative Responses

"What do you like best about your gifted program at school?"

Kdg-5th grade: 26 students responded with the following:

- **Challenging Activities:** Students listed activities that push them intellectually, such as circuits, math problems, and unique projects.
- **Social Opportunities:** They value interactions with peers who share similar interests and abilities, often through group work, field trips, and ECBOCES regional events.
- **Supportive Environment:** Students benefit from the guidance of dedicated teachers and coordinators who understand their needs and provide appropriate challenges.
- **Diverse Learning Experiences:** They enjoy a variety of learning experiences, including hands-on activities, games, and real-world projects.
- **Personalized Programming:** Students appreciate individual attention and the opportunity to work at an accelerated pace.

6th-8th grade: 45 students responded with the following:

- **Challenging Activities:** Students like to be challenged by their teachers with activities that help them learn and grow.
- **Social Opportunities:** They responded that they enjoy field trips and having social interactions with like-minded peers.

9th-12th grade: 40 students responded with the following:

- **Academic Challenge:** They like the opportunity to take advanced courses.
- **Supportive Environment:** Students appreciate having encouraging teachers and coordinators who support them with their goals.
- **Personalized Programming:** Students appreciate the opportunity to be accelerated in order to work at their own pace. They also like the flexibility that allows them to pursue their interests.
- **Social Opportunities:** They like the chance to connect with other gifted students at ECBOCES regional events.

“Do you have any suggestions that could strengthen gifted programming?”

K-5 students responded with the following:

- More Challenging Work: Students would like more difficult assignments and projects.
- Increased Time: They would like more time dedicated to gifted programming.
- Personalized Learning: Students would like activities that are more tailored to their individual interests and strengths.
- Real-World Connections: They would like opportunities to apply learning to real-world situations, such as field trips or projects.
- Social Interaction: Students voiced that more opportunities for collaboration with peers would enrich their gifted programs.

6th-8th grade students responded with the following:

- Opportunities for Challenge: Students would like more advanced coursework options, such as advanced social studies classes and honors courses.
- Social Interaction: They suggested more opportunities to connect with other gifted students, specifically through school-wide events or clubs.
- Personalized Learning: Students would like more individualized attention and the ability to work at their own pace.
- Teacher Awareness: They emphasized the importance of teachers recognizing and addressing the unique needs of gifted students.
- More Field Trips and Events: Students would like more field trips and other enrichment activities.

9th-12th grade students responded with the following:

- More Advanced Coursework: Many students expressed a wish for more advanced coursework, such as honors or AP classes, and deeper dives into specific subjects like ancient civilizations.
- Increased Career Exploration: Students suggested more opportunities for career exploration, such as job shadowing or mentorship programs.
- Teacher Awareness: Students emphasized the importance of teachers understanding the needs of gifted students and tailoring instruction accordingly.
- More Social Opportunities: Some students suggested more social events and activities for gifted students to connect with each other.

Student Survey Questions	ES Agree/Strongly Agree	MS Agree/Strongly Agree	HS Agree/Strongly Agree
My school supports gifted students. MS, HS only		44/45 - 98%	40/40 - 100%
I know my identified gifted area(s) of strength. MS, HS I know why I was identified as gifted. ES	26/26 - 100%	41/45 - 91%	40/40 - 100%
I had a significant role in the development of my Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) this school year. MS, HS I helped write my goals in my Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) this school year. ES	20/26 - 77%	38/45 - 84%	38/40 - 95%
My ALP is meaningful and helpful to me. MS, HS only		34/45 - 76%	36/40 - 90%
The classes in my gifted strength area provide opportunities for me to push myself. MS, HS My schoolwork in my gifted subject area is at the right level for me (not too hard, but not too easy). ES	24/26 - 92%	34/45 - 76%	35/40 - 88%
My teachers understand my learning needs. MS, HS only		34/45 - 76%	36/40 - 90%
I learn new things at school. ES only	23/26 - 88%		
I do different work from some of the other students in my class. ES only	18/26 - 69%		
I work on assignments that interest me. ES only	16/26 - 62%		
When I move to the next grade or a new building, my teachers have my ALP. MS, HS only		44/45 - 98%	40/40 - 100%
There are teachers and/or a counselor who provide me with guidance on my ALP goals. MS, HS only		37/45 - 82%	40/40 - 100%
I know whom to talk to at school when I have questions about being gifted. ES only	23/26 - 88%		

Parent/Family Responses

63 Responses

Summary of Parent/Family Narrative Responses

“What are the strengths of the gifted program?”

- Identification: Parents in some districts noted the strong identification process and early intervention that takes place in their districts.
- Coordinators and Teachers: Parents frequently mention the high quality of staff involved in the gifted programs. Coordinators are praised for their dedication, communication skills, and ability to engage and support gifted students. Parents describe them as knowledgeable, responsive, and attentive to both students and parents. Parents appreciate the teachers who challenge and motivate their students.
- Challenging Curriculum and Opportunities: A common strength parents noted is the program's ability to challenge students, keeping them engaged and intellectually stimulated. High school students, in particular, benefit from opportunities to take college-level courses (concurrent enrollment), AP courses, and middle school students participate in STEM workshops and multi-genre research projects. At the elementary level, the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of gifted students.
- Individualized Support: Many responses highlight the personalized attention gifted students receive, particularly through one-on-one support and differentiated instruction. For instance, some elementary students benefit from regular meetings with coordinators, and at the high school level, there are opportunities for students to pursue their unique learning interests, flexibility for independent study, project-based learning, and opportunities for gifted students to learn together and even across grade levels.
- Communication and Parental Involvement: Communication is frequently noted as a strength. Parents appreciate receiving regular updates, including progress reports on ALPs and clear communication from gifted program staff. The involvement of parents in the educational process is emphasized, with some parents noting how well the program keeps them informed.
- Opportunities for Socialization: Several parents appreciate that gifted students have the chance to interact with other students who share similar intellectual abilities. In the elementary and middle schools, students are given opportunities for peer interaction, which fosters a sense of community.
- Flexibility and Acceleration: Parents stated that the gifted programs offer flexible options for gifted students, including the ability to accelerate their learning. This includes content acceleration, grade-level acceleration and, for high school students, the opportunity to take college courses.
- Special Programs and Field Trips: Parents appreciate the opportunities for gifted students to attend field trips and participate in regional events, enhancing their learning experiences outside of the classroom.

- Strong Focus on Social-Emotional Growth: At the elementary school level, there is recognition of efforts to support not only academic growth but also the social-emotional needs of gifted students, through programs like CKH (Capturing Kids' Hearts).

Parents also mentioned challenges in the gifted programs:

- Communication: Some parents felt that next steps for newly identified gifted students were not clear. Some also mentioned a lack of communication from some administrators and teachers, and an unclear program structure in middle/high school.
- Programming: Some stated that there are limited options outside of core subjects and one parent mentioned a lack of program in middle/high school.

“Do you have suggestions that could strengthen gifted programming in your child's school?”

- Room for Improvement: Some parents feel that the middle school and high school gifted programs could be more clearly defined or better coordinated. One parent noted that while the high school offers opportunities for challenging courses, there seems to be a lack of a formalized gifted program in some areas.

Survey Questions- Parents of Gifted Students from All School Levels	Agree/Strongly Agree
I can access information about our district's gifted policies and guidelines (e.g., handbooks, website).	54/63 - 86%
I know whom to contact if I have a question about my gifted child.	63/63 - 100%
Our school district offers gifted education training or support workshops to parents.	45/63 - 71%
My child's school is knowledgeable about the needs of gifted students.	51/63 - 81%

Survey Questions	Parents of ES Gifted Students Agree/Strongly Agree	Parents of MS Gifted Students Agree/Strongly Agree	Parents of HS Gifted Students Agree/Strongly Agree
I receive information about my school's gifted program.	20/22 - 91%	17/22 - 77%	27/30 - 90%
I know how my child was identified as gifted.	22/22 - 100%	20/22 - 91%	29/30 - 97%
I had input into my child's identification process when he/she was first identified.	19/22 - 86%	15/21 - 71%	28/30 - 93%
I am given the opportunity to provide input on my child's Advanced Learning Plan.	18/22 - 82%	15/21 - 71%	28/29 - 97%
When my child moved to the next grade or a new building, he/she was provided support as a gifted student.	17/18 - 94%	17/21 - 81%	28/29 - 97%
My child feels accepted and supported as a gifted student.	18/20 - 90%	19/21 - 90%	29/29 - 100%
My child has academic opportunities that allow him/her to push himself/herself.	16/22 - 73%	16/21 - 76%	29/30 - 97%
I know the different programming options my child is receiving to meet his/her gifted needs.	16/22 - 73%	15/21 - 71%	27/29 - 93%
My child is growing in his/her areas of strength.	14/22 - 64%	17/22 - 77%	28/29 - 97%
I am updated about my child's progress on his/her ALP goals.	16/22 - 73%	15/22 - 68%	29/30 - 97%

Gifted Coordinator, Teacher, and Administrator Responses

20 Gifted Coordinator Responses, 128 Teacher Responses, 22 Administrator Responses

Survey Questions	Gifted Coordinators Agree/Strongly Agree	Teachers Agree/Strongly Agree	Administrators Agree/Strongly Agree
I'm aware of my district's/building's gifted education budget.			15/22 - 68%
Teachers in my school(s) have opportunities to provide input related to gifted education.			20/22 - 91%
Teachers in my district are provided opportunities for professional development on instructional strategies for gifted students.			18/22 - 82%
Parents in my school receive information about gifted programming	20/20 - 100%	100/128 - 78% 23/128 - 18% Don't Know	21/22 - 95%
I can access information about the district's gifted policies and guidelines (e.g., handbooks, website) -Teachers & Coordinators Educators in my building can access... - Administrators	18/20 - 90%	117/128 - 91%	20/22 - 91%
My district seeks referrals for gifted identification from multiple sources (achievement tests; state tests; CogAT; and teacher, parent, and community member referrals).	19/20 - 95%	112/128 - 88% 11/128 - 9% Don't Know	
My district uses a body of evidence, rather than just one data point, for gifted identification.	20/20 - 100%	107/128 - 84% 15/128 - 12% Don't Know	
The gifted identification process occurs at any time of the year in my school.	20/20 - 100%	91/128 - 71% 32/128 - 25% Don't Know	
Students are given the opportunity to provide input on their ALPs.	20/20 - 100%	92/128 - 72% 35/128 - 27% Don't Know	20/22 - 91%
Parents are given the opportunity to provide annual input on their child's ALP.	20/20 - 100%	83/128 - 65% 43/128 - 34% Don't Know	22/22 - 100%

A student's ALP achievement and affective goals are created prior to or at the beginning of each school year.	17/20 - 85%	80/128 - 63% 43/128 - 34% Don't Know	18/22 - 82%
The ALP's in my school are used by the student and school staff to guide instruction throughout the year.	18/20 - 90%	93/128 - 73% 15/128 - 12% Don't Know	21/22 - 95%
When I have a gifted student in my classroom, I regularly monitor my students' progress towards their ALP goals and share it with parents periodically.	14/16 - 88% N/A 4/20	89/128 - 70%	18/22 - 82%
My district has a procedure for transitioning gifted students between grades and schools to ensure continuity in programming.	18/20 - 90%	64/128 - 50% 57/128 - 45% Don't Know	18/22 - 82%
I differentiate instruction to meet the needs of my gifted students.	17/18 - 94% N/A 2/20	113/128 - 88%	18/22 - 82%

Summary of Narrative Responses

Gifted Coordinators

“In which areas do you need support?”

- Daily Programming - 12
- Identification - 9
- Specific PD for teachers in your district - 9
- ALPs - 6
- Specific PD for yourself - 2
- One person added - PD for administrators, specifically looking for the implementation of gifted strategies and differentiation in the classroom, gifted learner traits, and that programming is not just giving them more work.

“What type of professional development do you think the teachers in your district need regarding gifted education?”

- Daily programming, how to differentiate instruction for gifted students - 13
- Support with ALP goals - 4
- Identification - 3
- Affective support - 2
- GT characteristics - 2
- 2e strategies - 1
- Engaging underachievers - 1
- Referrals - 1

Teachers

“What type of PD do you currently have or have you had in recent years on the topic of differentiation?”

- Differentiation PD: A large number of teachers mentioned receiving training on differentiation through ECBOCES. While ECBOCES is a common source, teachers also mentioned workshops, college courses, in-services, book studies, and self-directed learning (online resources). Several teachers indicated they hadn't had differentiation PD in recent years, or that the PD focused on general differentiation strategies for all learners, not specifically GT students.
- Focus on Specific Skills: A few responses mentioned PD on differentiation for math, reading, and multilingual learners; and ALP goal development and support.
- Effectiveness: Some teachers found their differentiation PD helpful, particularly those focused on GT students and creating challenging assignments but some teachers expressed feeling the differentiation PD they received wasn't applicable to teaching GT students or that it didn't address their specific needs.
- More Training: Several teachers indicated they would like more PD on differentiation, especially for GT students.

Administrators

“What are the strengths of your district's gifted programming?”

- Strong Program Leadership: Several administrators mentioned gifted coordinators who are organized, communicative, and passionate about the program.
- Communication: Clear communication with staff and parents about resources, requirements, and student needs was highlighted.
- Collaborative Effort: Coordinators who work well with teachers and other collaborators create a strong program foundation.
- Early Identification: The ability to identify gifted students at a young age was seen as a strength. Some administrators noted recent improvements in identifying gifted students in elementary schools. It was also mentioned that small class sizes in some schools allow for better identification of student strengths.
- Continuity Between Buildings: Consistent identification and support across all grade levels strengthens the program.
- Strong Teachers and Curriculum: Passionate and skilled teachers who find unique ways to support gifted learners were identified as a key strength.
- Differentiation: Administrators mentioned efforts to support teachers in using differentiation strategies to meet individual needs.
- Program Changes: Administrators highlighted recent improvements and excitement about the program's future.
- Increased Awareness: Efforts to make teachers more aware of gifted students' needs and differentiation strategies were mentioned as positive developments.

“Do you have any suggestions that could strengthen gifted programming in your district?”

- Differentiation Training: A major theme was the need for more professional development for teachers on differentiation strategies specifically for gifted students.
- Characteristics Training: Several administrators felt that all teachers need a better understanding of gifted students and how to support them in the classroom.
- Improved Communication: Better communication between coordinators, teachers, and administrators was seen as an area for improvement by some.
- Transition Support: Smoother transitions between elementary and middle school for GT students was highlighted as a need in one large district.
- Increased Funding: Some administrators suggested allocating more funding for gifted programs to potentially expand resources and opportunities.
- Full-Time Coordinator Positions: A few mentioned the need for full-time GT coordinators, suggesting current coordinators are overwhelmed.