

EdWeek
Research Center

Gifted Education

Results of a National Survey



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the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

About Editorial Projects In Education

Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization based in Bethesda, Md. Its primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. EPE covers local, state, national, and international news and issues from preschool through the 12th grade. Editorial Projects in Education publishes Education Week, America’s newspaper of record for precollegiate education, the online Teacher, EdWeek Market Brief, and the TopSchoolJobs employment resource. It also produces periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as books of special interest to educators.

The Education Week Research Center conducts surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in Education Week and special reports such as Quality Counts, and Technology Counts. The center also conducts independent research studies and maintains the Education Counts online data resource.

About the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is dedicated to advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need.

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2019, the Education Week Research Center conducted a survey of more than 1,200 K-12 gifted and talented teachers and coordinators to learn more about how districts and schools define, identify, serve, and instruct students in gifted and talented programs. A major objective was to gain a better understanding of the extent to which districts are experiencing and addressing issues related to the over or under-representation of specific student groups in gifted education. The findings suggest that gifted programs likely face serious equity-related challenges.

Definitions and Screening: Gifted education is largely defined as intellectual or academic giftedness. Relatively few educators say their districts' definitions account for the fact that certain groups (e.g., students from low-income families) have historically been under-represented in gifted education. On average, 12 percent of students are defined as gifted, respondents say. Among students identified as gifted, 68 percent are receiving services. Parent/student opt-out is the most common reason why identified students are not enrolled in gifted programs. Non-IQ tests are the most common means of screening students for giftedness. The Cognitive Abilities Test or CogAT is the most frequently-reported screening assessment. Most respondents say the district always pays for screening, which most commonly occurs after teacher referrals.

Uneven Equity: Most educators say their district's screening process identifies all or almost all of the students who should be in the gifted education program. However, a majority of educators also say that black, Hispanic, Native American, low-income, and emerging bilingual students are under-represented in their districts' gifted programs. Despite this widespread perception of under-representation, fewer than 1 in 3 educators say their district has made a big effort in the past five years to address this issue. Among districts that are making an effort, the most commonly-reported remedy is the adoption of new or additional screening assessments. Among those whose districts are not addressing under-representation, the most common reason is that this is not considered a priority by school or district educators.

Services Provided: Most educators say that gifted education is offered at every grade level. Pull-out programs are the most common delivery model. Content enrichment is the most frequently-reported service.

Staffing: Gifted education staffing levels range from a median of two full-time equivalent educators for districts with enrollments under 2,500 to 25 for those with 10,000 or more students. Well over half of educators report that gifted program staff are required to possess a gifted education credential. In fact, credentialed staff provide a majority of gifted education services, most respondents say. Most also say that general education teachers receive training on working with gifted students but only a minority report that the training is mandatory.

Results Vary by District Characteristics: Perceptions and approaches related to gifted education vary significantly depending upon the demographics, size, location, and locale of the respondents' districts. For example, rural educators are significantly less likely to perceive that English learners, blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and females are under-represented in gifted education even though there is no evidence that this is actually the case.

Introduction

For more than 150 years, public schools have defining and screening for giftedness in an effort to serve students who perform or show potential to perform at higher levels than others their age.

Almost as old as the practice of sorting and serving students based on perceived talent or potential is the concern that some student groups are more likely than others to qualify for the “gifted” label that can lead to enriched and expanded educational opportunities.

In the spring of 2019, the Education Week Research Center set out to explore some of these concerns by surveying more than 1,200 gifted and talented teachers and coordinators. The survey examined basic practices and policies related to gifted education screening, serving and staffing as well as assessing perceptions related to over and under-representation of specific groups including students of color, white students, students from higher and low-income families, emerging bilinguals, females, and students with disabilities.

The results suggest that equity-related challenges remain alive and well today even as America’s schools have grown ever more diverse.

SURVEY DETAILS

Survey Administered: March-April 2019, online

Respondents: K-12 gifted education teachers, coordinators and other personnel including:

- 799 teachers
- 187 district coordinators
- 179 school-level coordinators
- 4 state coordinators
- 115 other gifted and talented personnel

Total Respondents: 1,284

Total Questions: 31

The Gifted Education Landscape

Who Defines Giftedness?

Nearly every respondent (96 percent) reports some sort of definition of giftedness.

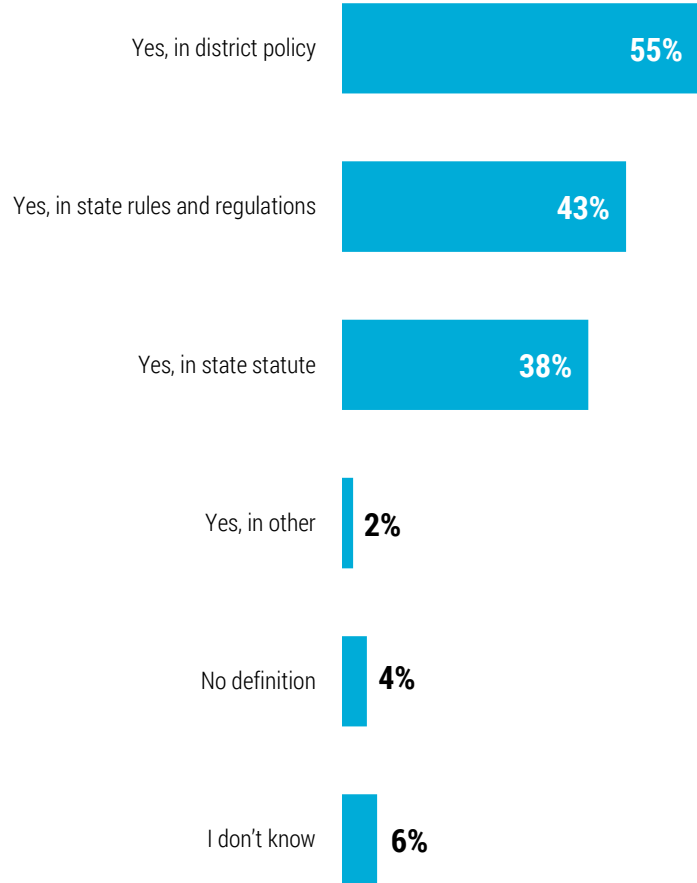
District policy is the most common place where this definition is found, followed by state statute and/or state rules or regulations.

“Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.”

Relatively few educators say that their districts’ definitions of giftedness are as broad as the U.S. Department of Education’s.

For example, relatively few educators say definitions account for factors such as low socio-economic status that have historically been associated with lower rates of participation in gifted education.

Does your district have a definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



How is Giftedness Defined?

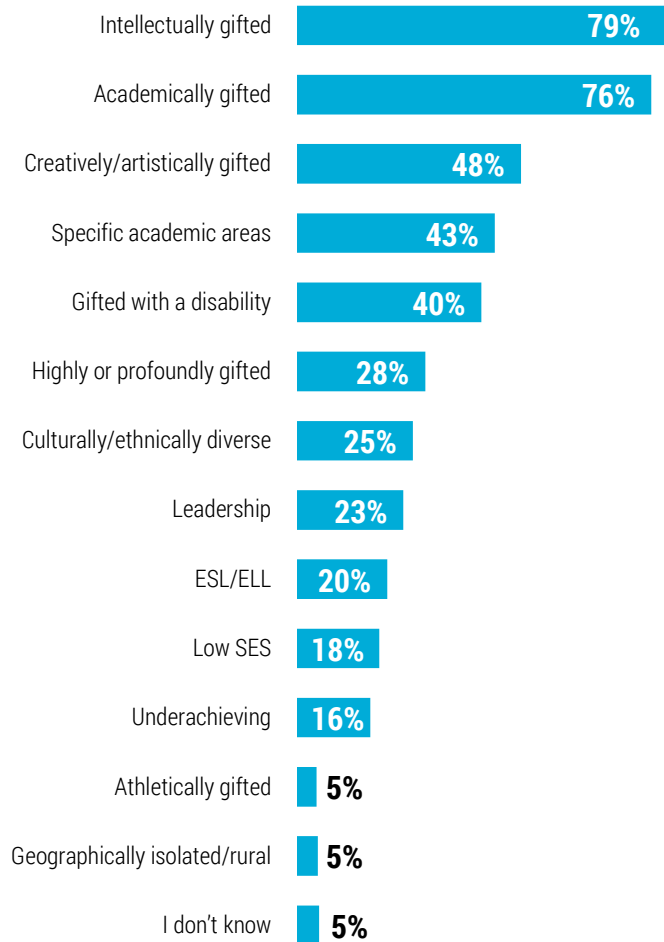
The U.S. Department of Education’s 1993 definition of giftedness is expansive. Gifted students, the agency explains, are:

“Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.”

Relatively few educators say that their districts’ definitions of giftedness are as broad as the U.S. Department of Education’s.

For example, relatively few educators say definitions account for factors such as low socio-economic status that have historically been associated with lower rates of participation in gifted education.

Which of these factors is addressed in your district’s definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



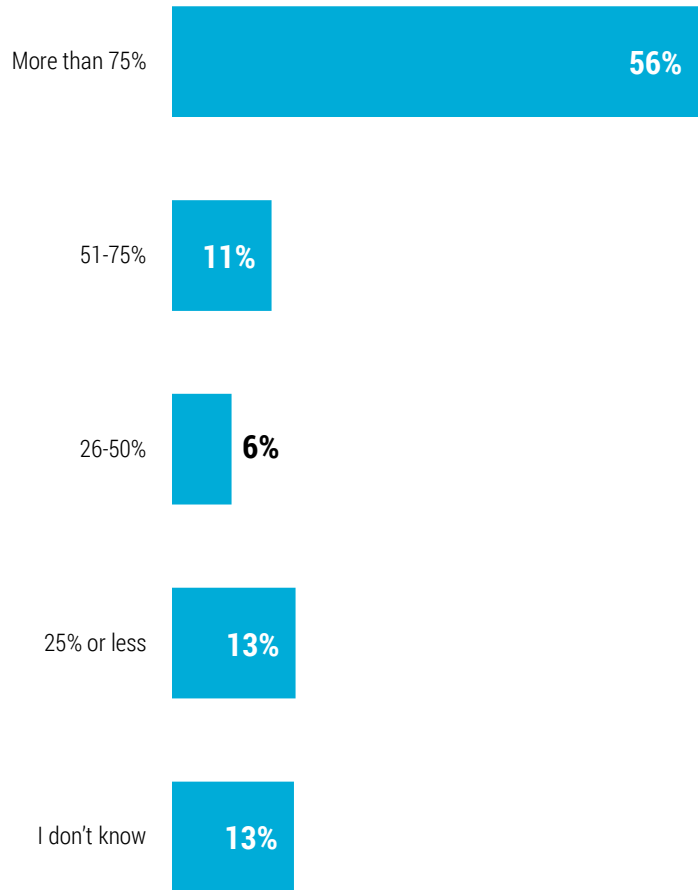
Percentage of Students Identified as Gifted

On average, 12 percent of district students are identified as gifted and/or talented, educators report.

About a quarter of educators say that 5 percent or fewer students are identified as gifted. An additional quarter say 15 percent or more students are designated gifted.

Most educators say that three quarters or more of the schools in their districts have identified at least one gifted student in the past year.

In the past year, what percentage of your district's schools identified at least one gifted/talented student?



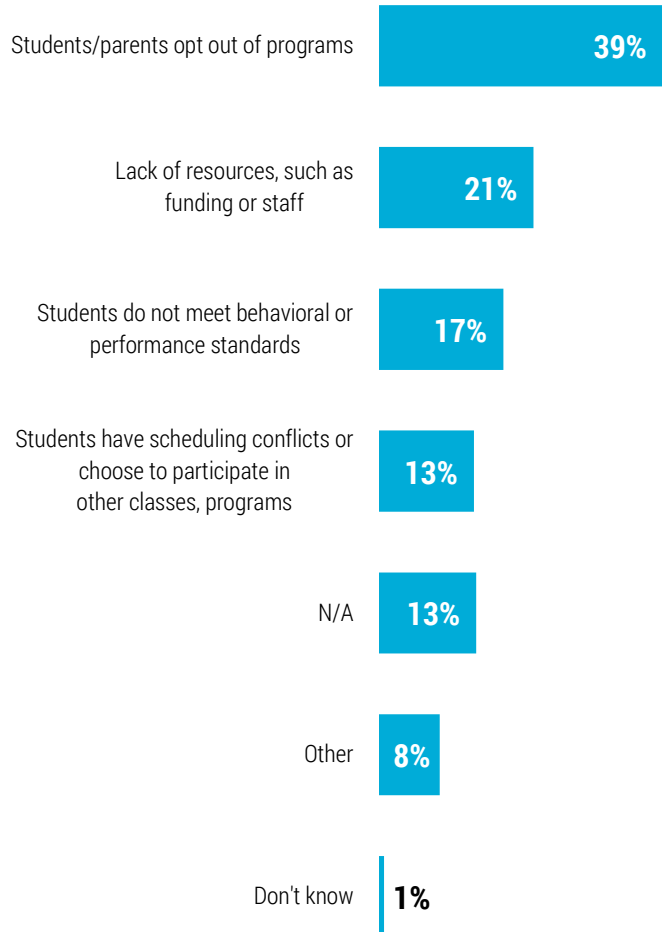
Percentage of Students Receiving Gifted Services

On average, educators report that 68 percent of students identified as gifted actually receive gifted services.

Educators also responded to an open-ended question asking why students identified as gifted might not receive gifted services.

The most commonly-reported reason is that students or parents opt out of the program. For example, one educator wrote that students may choose “not to participate in programs that may require extra effort or work.”

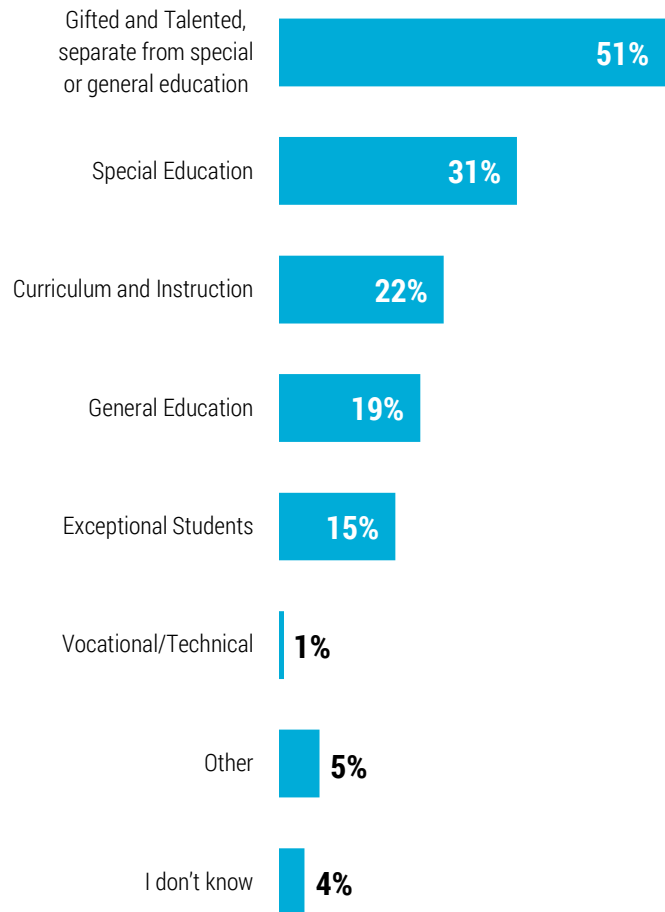
What are some common reasons why students who are identified as gifted in your district do not end up receiving gifted services?



Organizational Structure

The department in which a service is located can sometimes be a signal of its status in a school district. Slightly more than half of educators surveyed say that gifted and talented education is housed in its own department in their district. Just about 1 in 3 report that gifted education is located in the special education department. And slightly more than 1 in 5 say it's found in the curriculum and instruction division.

Under which departments/divisions does your district include gifted/talented education? Select all that apply.

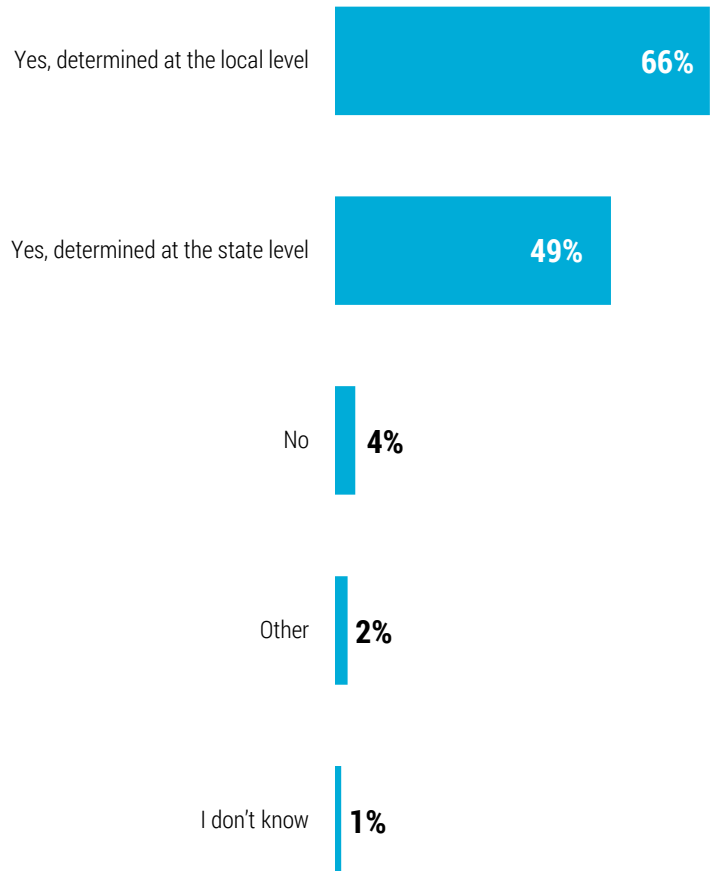


Screening

Who Sets Screening Criteria?

Ninety-six percent of educators say their districts' schools are required to use specific criteria or methods to identify gifted students. Most report that these criteria are determined at the local — not the state level.

Are schools required to use specific criteria/methods for identification of gifted students? Select all that apply.

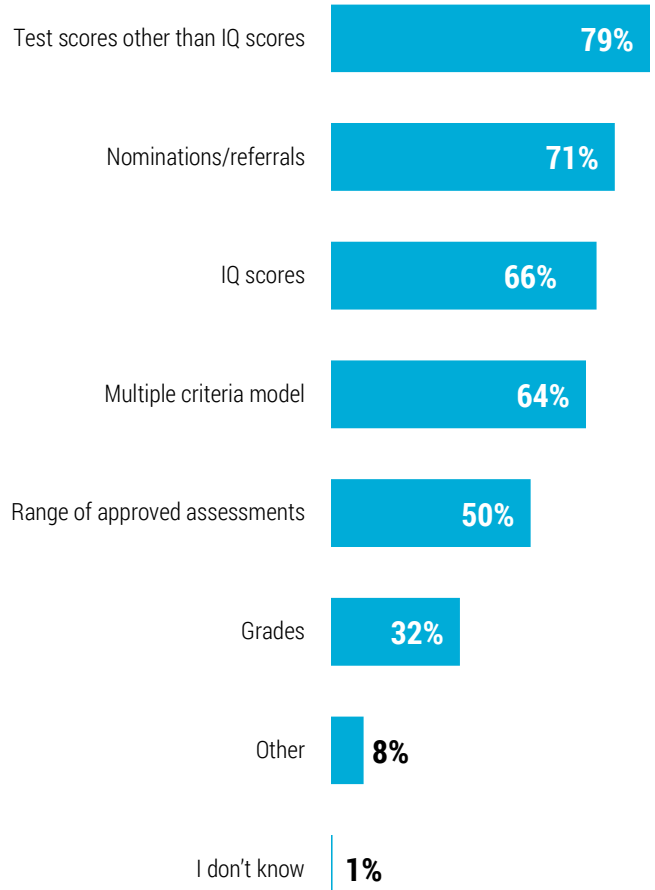


How are Students Screened?

Non-IQ tests are the most common method of screening gifted students, followed by nominations or referrals. IQ scores are the third most common factor — two thirds of educators report their use.

Most educators say their districts use multiple criteria to screen for giftedness.

Which of the following indicators does your district use when identifying gifted students? Select all that apply.



Which Tests Are Used to Screen Students?

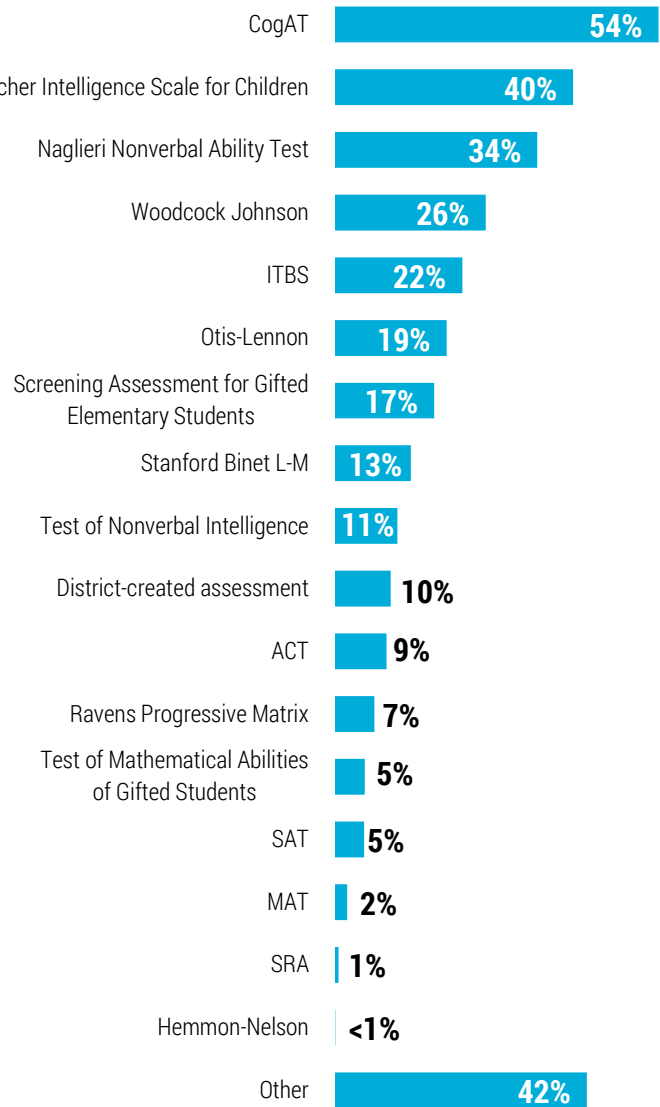
The Cognitive Abilities Test or CogAT is the assessment most frequently used to screen for gifted education.

The assessment, produced by Riverside Publishing, a Houghton Mifflin Company, assesses verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal reasoning.

Forty-two percent used an assessment other than the exams mentioned on the survey. Frequent write-in responses include:

- NWEA’s MAP exam
- Pearson’s Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test
- PAR’s Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales

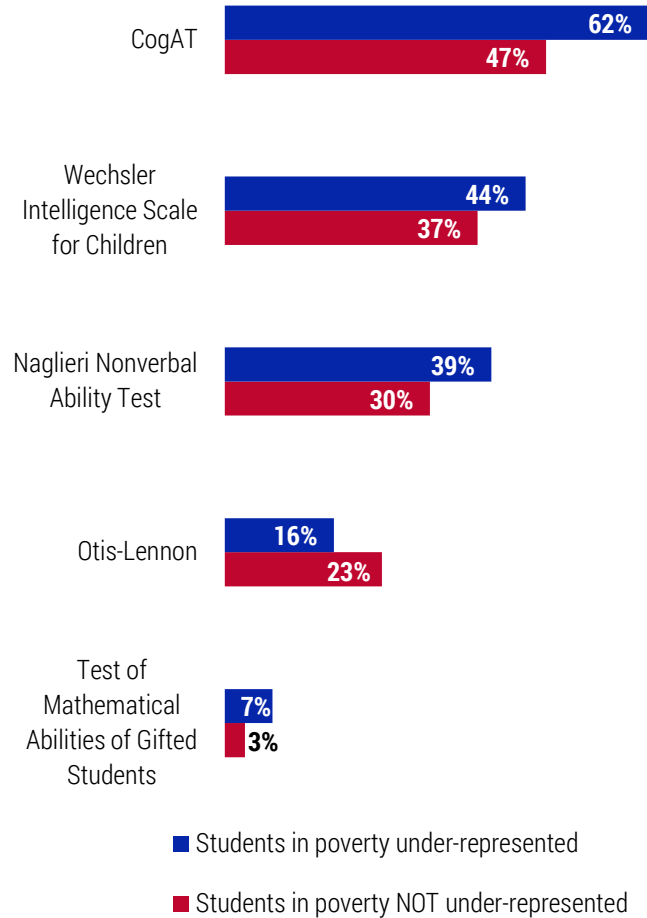
Which of the following assessments does your district use to identify gifted students? Select all that apply.



Screening in Districts in Which Low-Income Students are Under-represented

Several assessments are more frequently used in districts in which educators perceive that students from low-income families are under-represented in gifted education. These assessments include the CogAT, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, and the Test of Mathematical Abilities of Gifted Students. Compared to educators from districts where students from low-income families are not under-represented, educators from districts where students from low-income families are under-represented are less likely to report that the Otis-Lennon test is used to screen for giftedness. Because reports of over and under-representation are based on educators' perceptions, not on actual enrollment data, it's impossible to know how much, if at all, the use of certain assessments contributes to inequities.

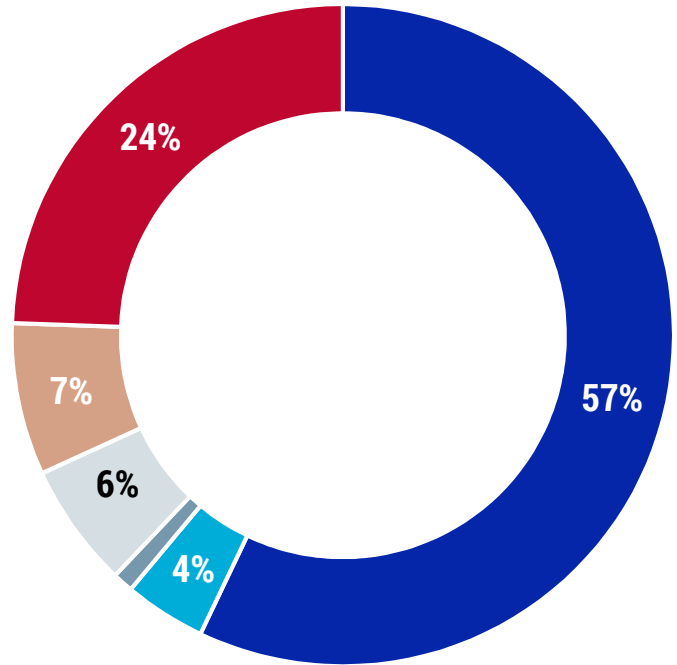
Which of the following assessments does your district use to identify gifted students? Select all that apply.



Who Pays for Screening?

Most educators (57 percent) say that the district always pays for the cost of testing students for gifted education. An additional 24 percent say there's no cost attached. Only a small minority (5 percent) say parents sometimes or always pay.

When there is a cost associated with screening students for gifted and talented education, how does your district pay for it?

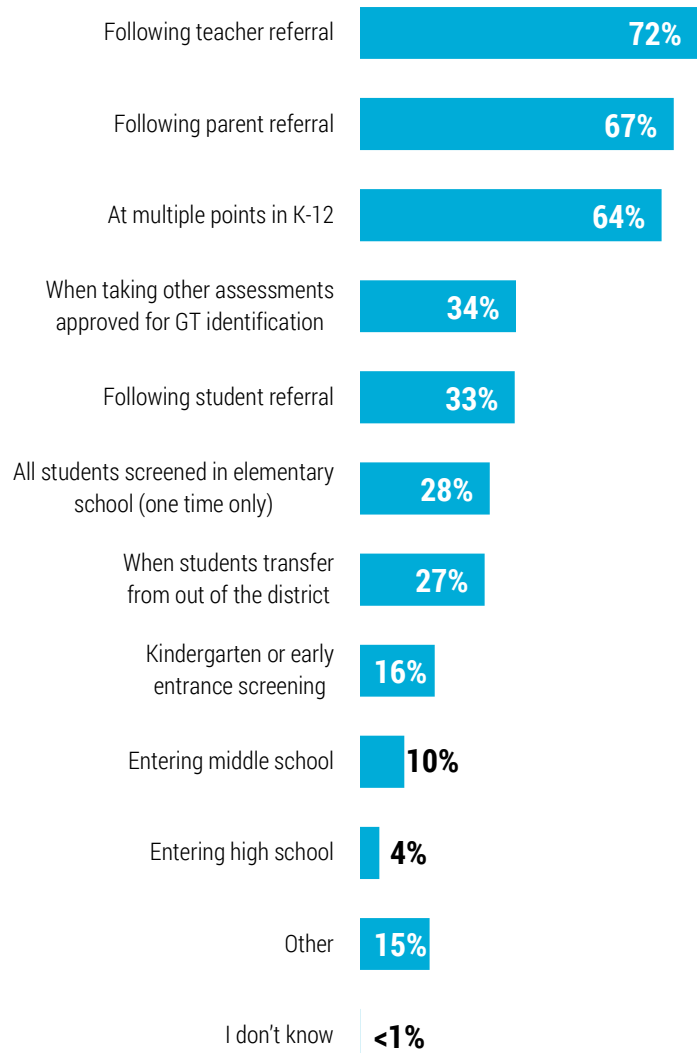


- The district always pays
- Sometimes parents pay, sometimes the district pays
- Parents always pay
- Other
- I don't know
- N/A-there is no cost associated with screening students for gifted and talented education

When are Students Screened?

Most educators say their districts screen students for gifted education after teacher and/or parent referral, and at multiple points during their K-12 careers.

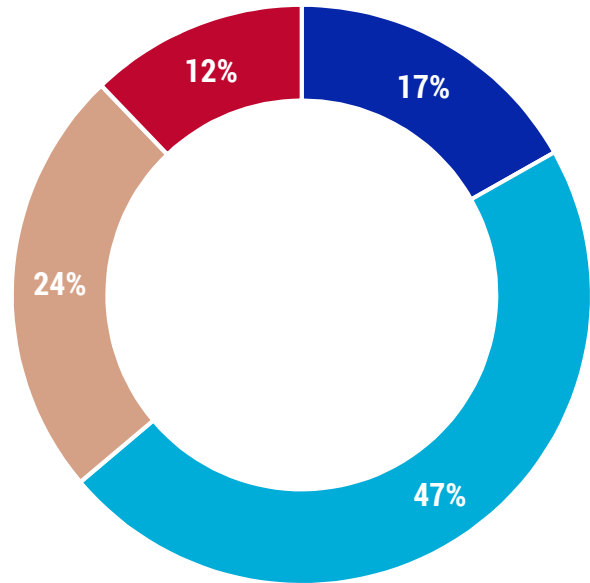
In your school district, when are students identified for gifted services? Select all that apply.



Do Educators Think Screening Works?

Most educators (64 percent) agree that their district's screening process identifies all or almost all of the students who should be in the gifted education program. However, of that 64 percent, just 17 percent completely agree. And a substantial minority (36 percent) disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My district's procedure for screening gifted and talented students identifies all or almost all the students who should be in the program:



■ Completely agree ■ Somewhat agree
■ Somewhat disagree ■ Completely disagree

Equity

How Did We Ask About Equity?

An ongoing challenge for schools is that some groups of students are more likely than others to be identified as gifted. The sections that follow report on the results of the following question:

“In some school districts, certain groups of students are overrepresented or underrepresented in gifted education compared to their share of the district as a whole. For example, if half the students in a hypothetical district are in elementary school, yet 75 percent of gifted students are elementary school students, then elementary students are over-represented in gifted education and secondary students are underrepresented. Considering their overall share of your school district’s enrollment, how would you describe the representation of the following groups of students in gifted education?”

For each of the 10 sub-groups included on the survey, educators were asked to select one of the following options:

- Over-represented in gifted education
- Under-represented in gifted education
- Neither over nor under-represented in gifted education
- N/A-We have very few/no students in this category in our school district

Respondents who selected the “N/A” option have been removed from the analysis reported here. It is important to note that these survey results reflect educators’ perceptions of over or under-representation.

It is certainly possible that the actual demographics of gifted education may contradict these perceptions. National data indicates that white and affluent students have been historically over-represented in gifted education while students of color and children from families living in poverty have been under-represented.

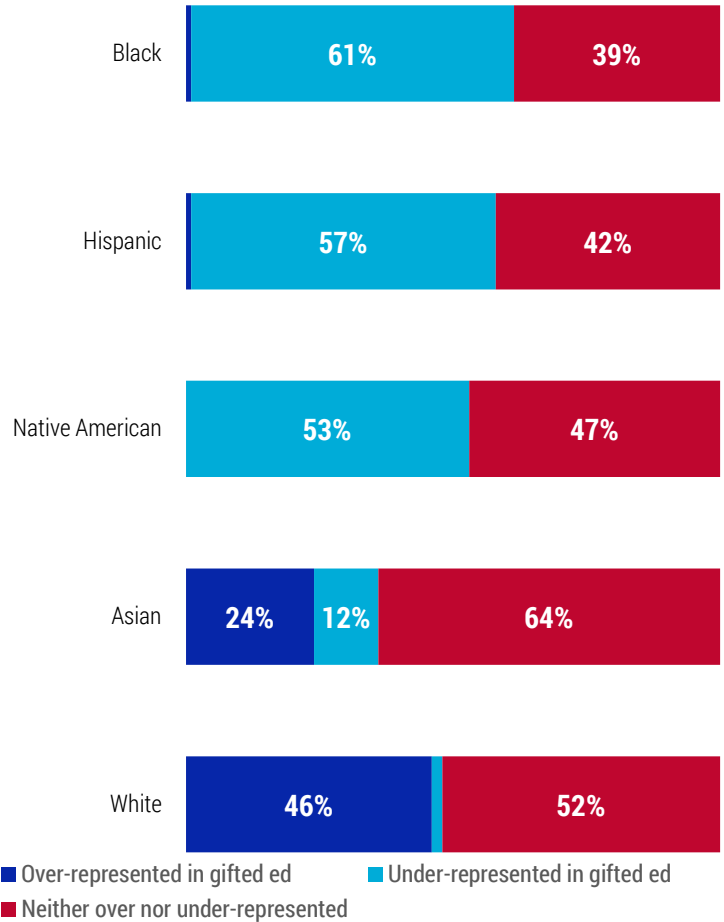
Ethnicity/Race

Most educators whose districts enroll black, Hispanic, or Native American students perceive that each of these groups is under-represented in gifted education.

Educators are more likely to perceive that black students are under-represented than to perceive that students of other ethnicities or races are under-represented.

Most say that Asians and whites are neither over nor under-represented. However, they are twice as likely to perceive that Asians are over-represented than to say they're under-represented. And they are more than 20 times more likely to say that whites are over-represented than to say whites are under-represented.

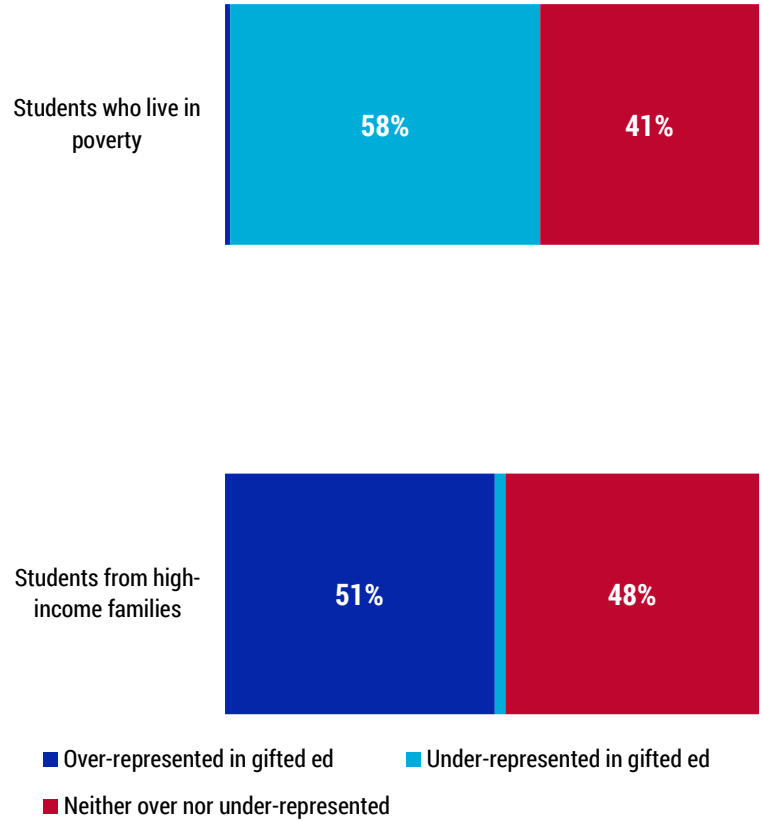
How would educators describe the representation of students of different races/ethnicities in gifted education in their districts?



Socio-economic Status

Most educators perceive that students who live in poverty are under-represented in gifted education. Just over half say students from high-income families are over-represented. Virtually no educators say that students living in poverty are over-represented or that students from high-income families are under-represented.

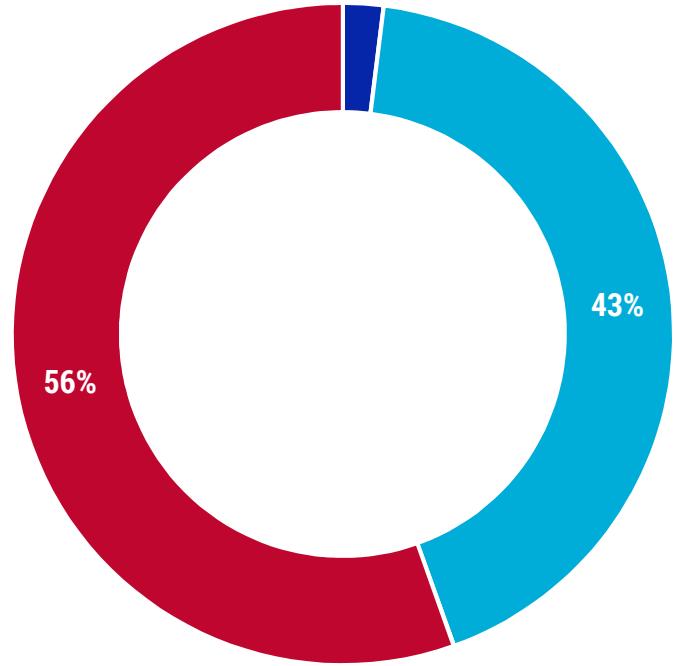
How would educators describe the representation of students of different socio-economic statuses in gifted education in their districts?



Students With Disabilities

Most educators say that students with Individualized Education Programs are neither over nor under-represented in gifted education. However, very few perceive that these students are over-represented.

How would educators describe the representation of students with Individualized Education Programs [IEPs] in gifted education in their districts?

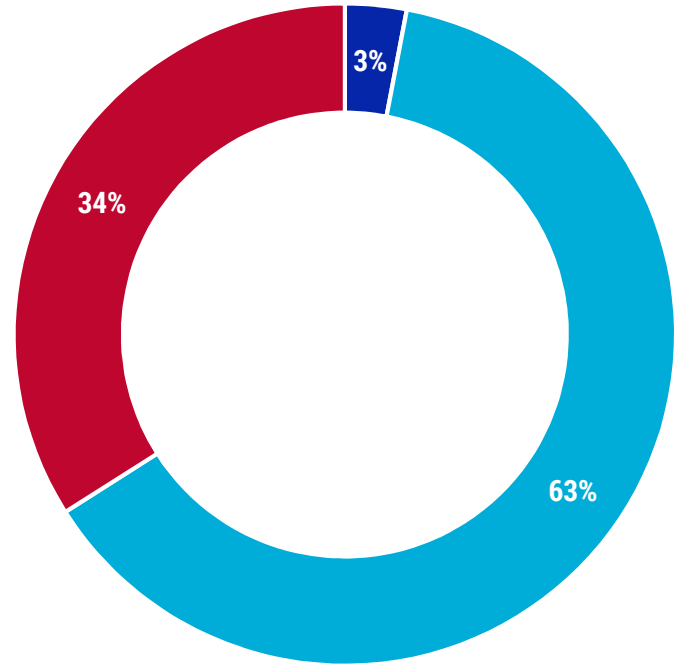


- Over-represented in gifted ed
- Under-represented in gifted ed
- Neither over nor under-represented

English Learners

The population of English learners is unevenly distributed across the United States, with some districts enrolling substantial numbers and many others enrolling none. Roughly 800 educators report that their districts do enroll students learning English. Of that 800, a majority (63 percent) perceive that English learners are under-represented in gifted education. Just 3 percent say they are over-represented.

How would educators describe the representation of English language learners in gifted education in their districts?

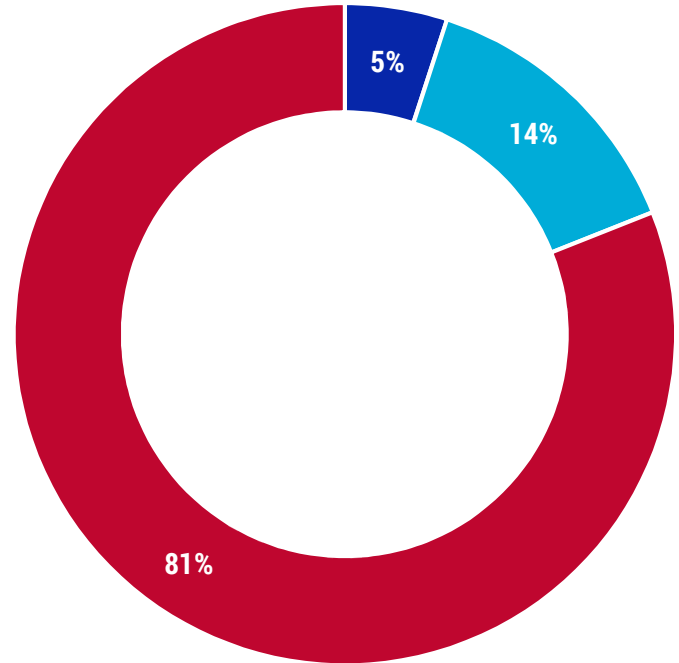


- Over-represented in gifted ed
- Under-represented in gifted ed
- Neither over nor under-represented

Females

The vast majority of educators perceive that females are neither over nor under-represented in gifted education in their districts. However, respondents are nearly three times as likely to say females are under-represented than to say that they are over-represented.

How would educators describe the representation of females in gifted education in their districts?



- Over-represented in gifted ed
- Under-represented in gifted ed
- Neither over nor under-represented

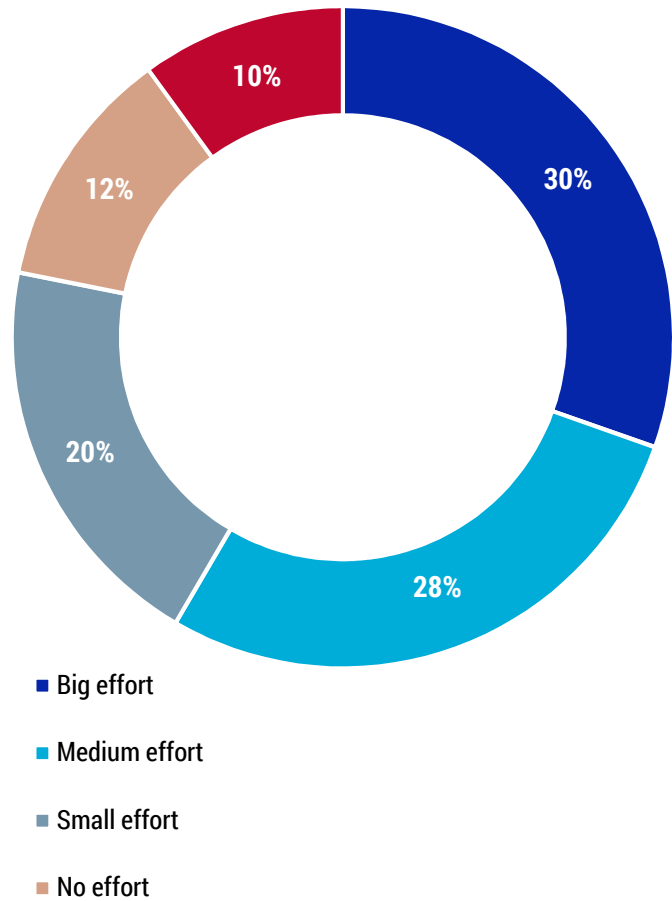
Are Districts Making an Effort to Address Under-representation in Gifted Education?

Ninety percent of gifted educators say that at least one group of students is under-represented in gifted education.

In districts that enroll members of these groups, the majority of gifted education teachers and coordinators say that blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, English learners, and students living in poverty are under-represented in gifted education.

Yet fewer than 1 in 3 educators say their districts have made a big effort in the past five years to address these disparities. That said, just 12 percent say the district has made no effort.

How much of an effort has your district made in the last five years to increase the odds that groups of students that are currently underrepresented in gifted education will be screened/identified as gifted?



Approaches to Reducing Disparities in Gifted Education

In responding to an open-ended question, educators explained the steps their districts had taken to increase the odds of identifying under-represented student groups as gifted.

Most report approaches related to screening: Adopting new or additional screening assessments is the most common approach, followed by screening all students and taking multiple criteria into account.

“ALL 1st grade students are now screened & tested for GT, which has improved our representation rates,” wrote one educator.

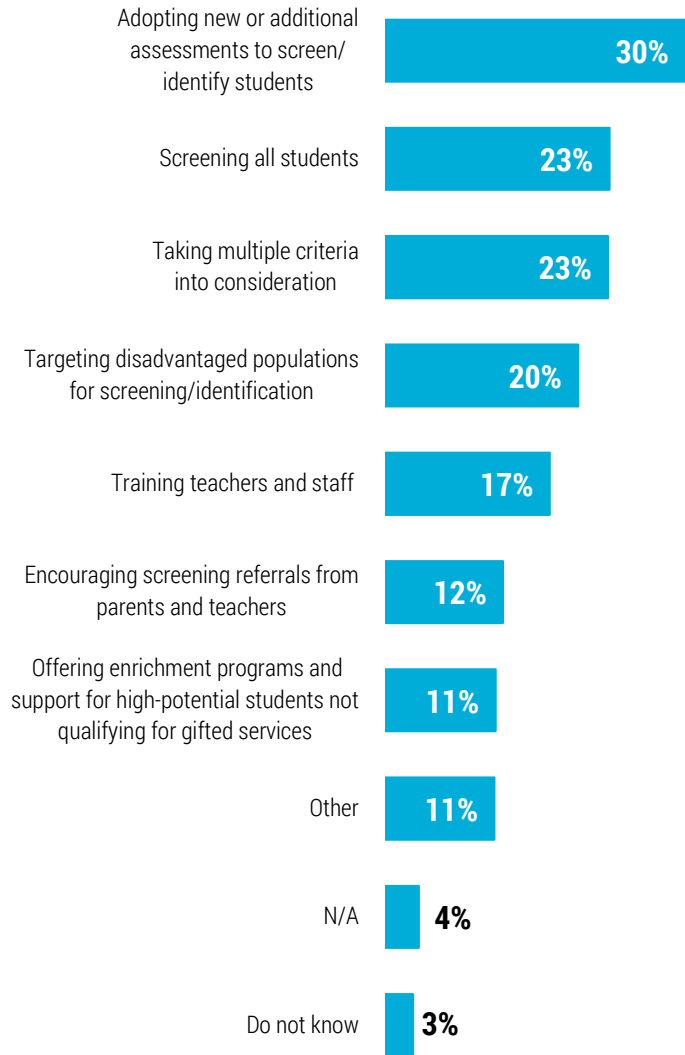
“We have implemented state required screening measures and selected assessments that historically ‘cast a wide net,’” wrote another.

Relatively few educators (11 percent) say their districts go beyond screening by offering additional enrichment or support to high-potential students who have not been identified as gifted.

However, one educator offered anecdotal evidence that this approach can be successful:

“To help our underrepresented students at my former school, I allowed “high potential” students to come to my Weekly TAG classes, which resulted in 35% of them qualifying for gifted services the following school year.”

What steps has your district taken to increase the odds that groups of students that are currently under-represented in gifted education will be screened/identified as gifted?



Reasons Why Districts Do Not Address Under-representation in Gifted Education

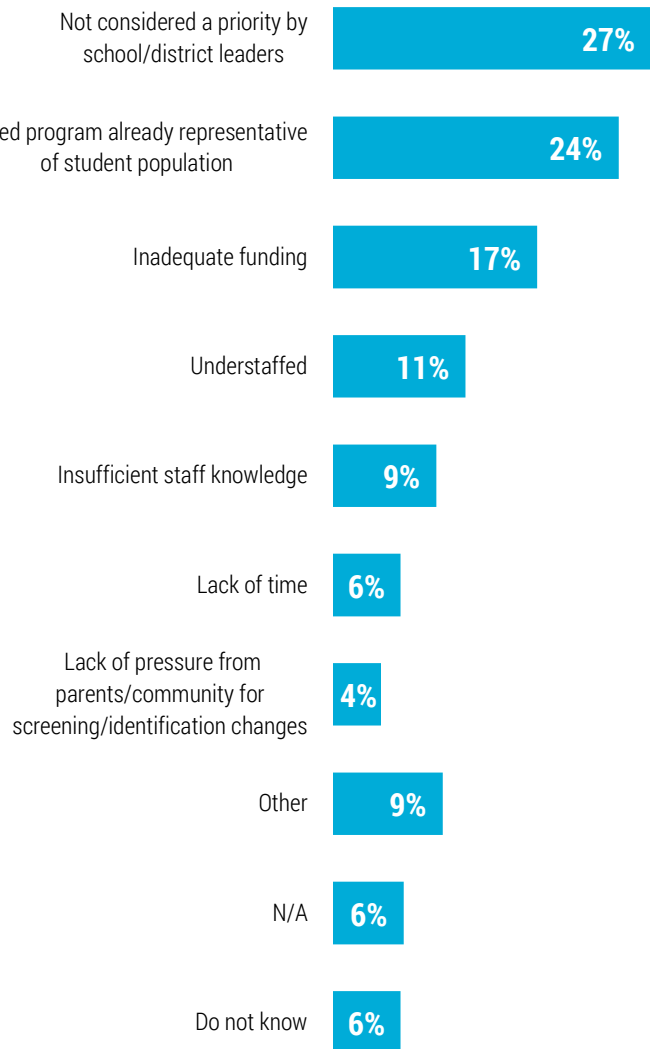
In districts where under-representation had not been addressed, an open-ended question asked educators to explain why.

The most common reason is that it is not a priority.

“School administrators do not consider Gifted and Talented programming, itself, to be a priority or are not focused on under-representation,” one respondent wrote.

Other common reasons include inadequate funding and the perception that gifted education is already representative of the student population.

Why do you think that your district has not made an effort in the past five years to increase the odds that groups of students that are currently under-represented in gifted education will be screened/identified as gifted?

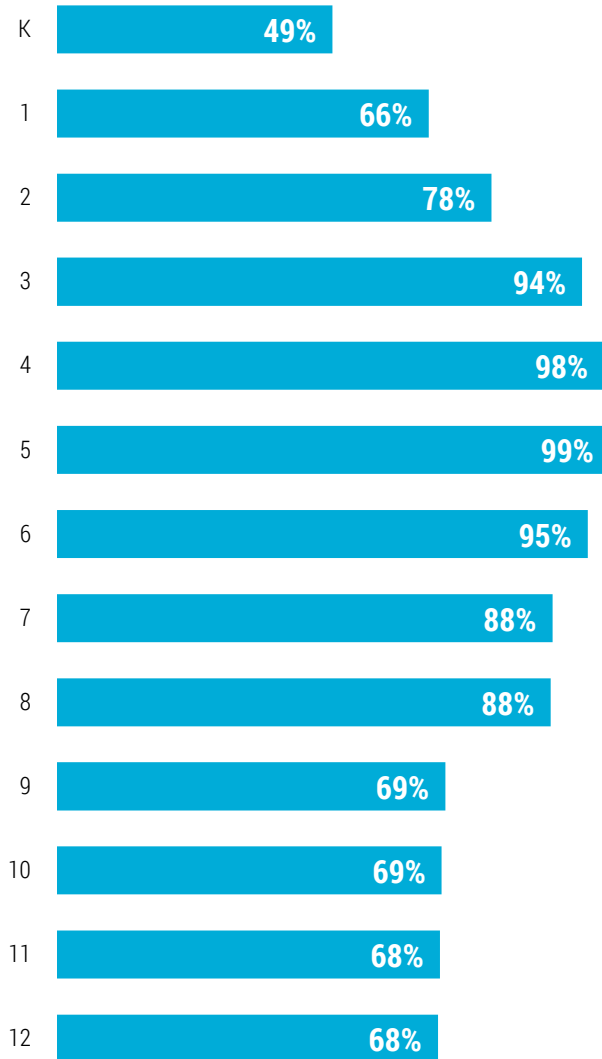


Gifted Education: Services Provided

Grade Levels Served by Gifted Education

Most gifted educators surveyed say their districts serve students in each grade level, from first-grade through senior year of high school. Just under half say Kindergarteners are served. With the exception of Kindergarten, gifted services are most universal in elementary school, with secondary schools serving students at lower rates. This may be because gifted students move into coursework such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs that do not necessarily fall under the auspices of gifted education.

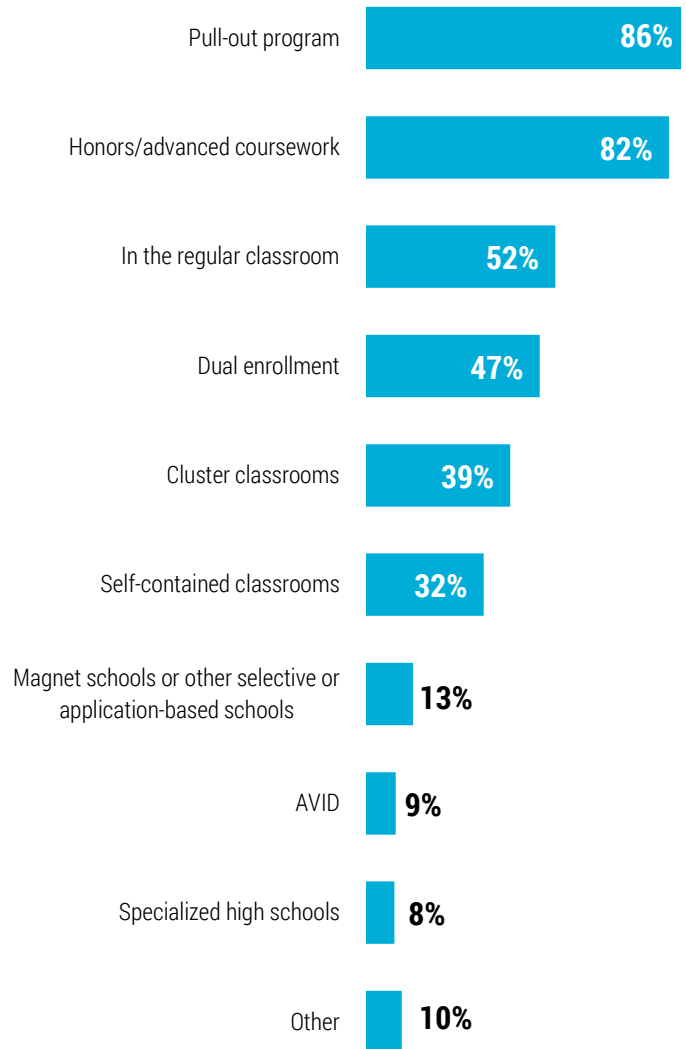
In what grades do gifted/talented students receive specialized services in your district? Select all that apply.



How is Gifted Education Delivered?

Gifted education is most commonly delivered via pull-out programs that remove students from the mainstream classroom for a certain amount of time per day or week, survey respondents say. A majority of educators say their districts deliver gifted education via honors or advanced coursework and/or in the regular classroom. Specialized schools are relatively uncommon. They are reported by less than 15 percent of respondents.

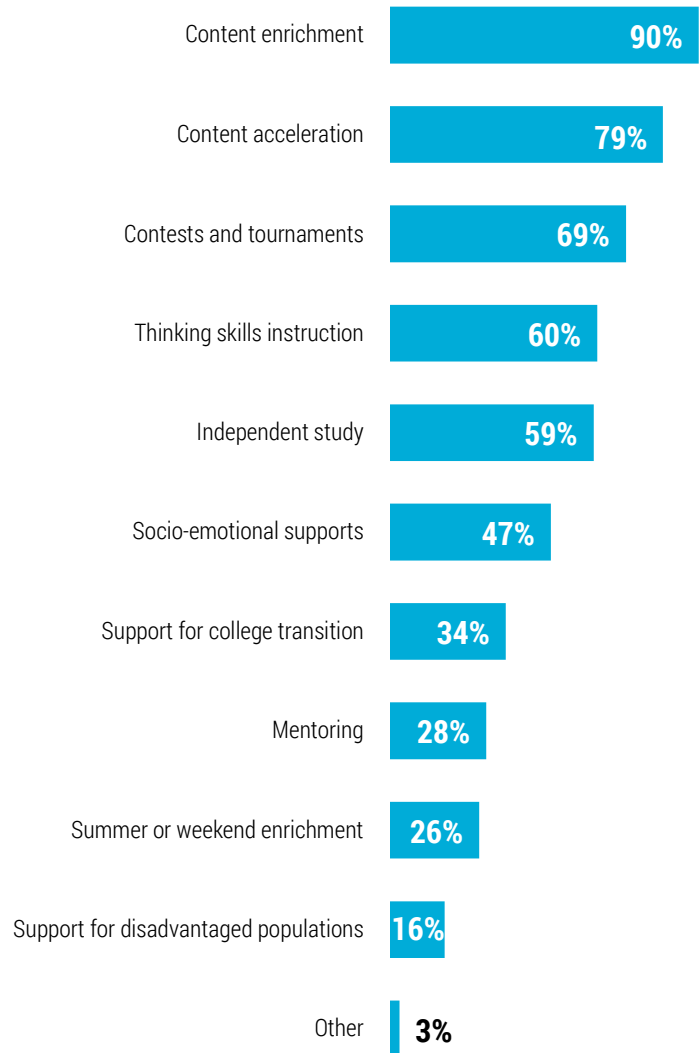
How do gifted/talented students receive services in your district? Select all that apply.



Which Gifted Services are Available?

Content enrichment is the most common service provided to students in gifted education, survey respondents say. This approach allows gifted students to dive more deeply into topics but does not necessarily advance them more quickly from one level to another. That approach, acceleration, is slightly less common than enrichment but it still reported by the vast majority of educators. Relatively less common is support for disadvantaged populations or summer or weekend enrichment.

In your school district, which gifted education services are available? Select all that apply.

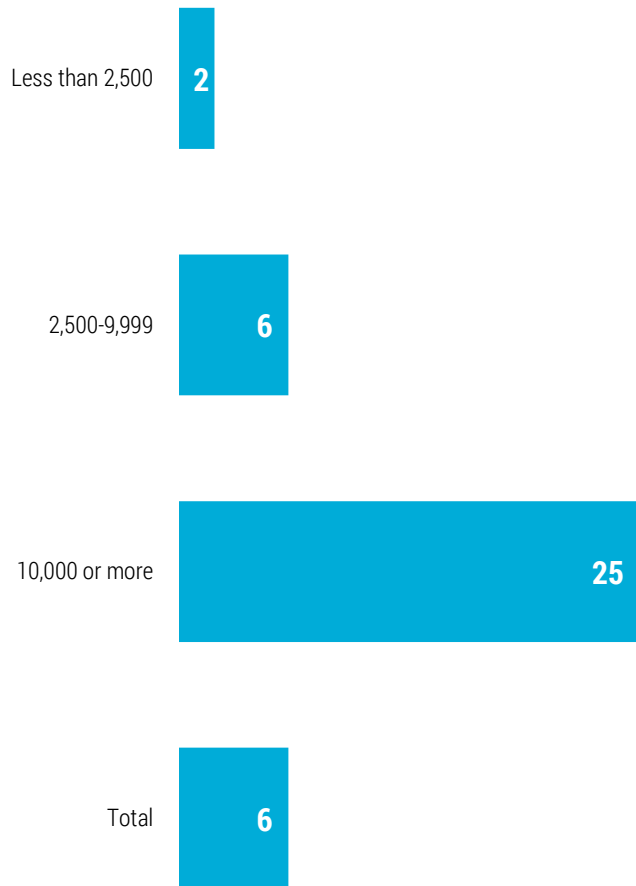


Staffing

Staffing Levels

Educators were asked how many full-time equivalent staff their districts devoted to gifted education. Six was the median response. However, the number varied widely from two for districts with fewer than 2,500 students to 25 with districts enrolling 10,000 or more children.

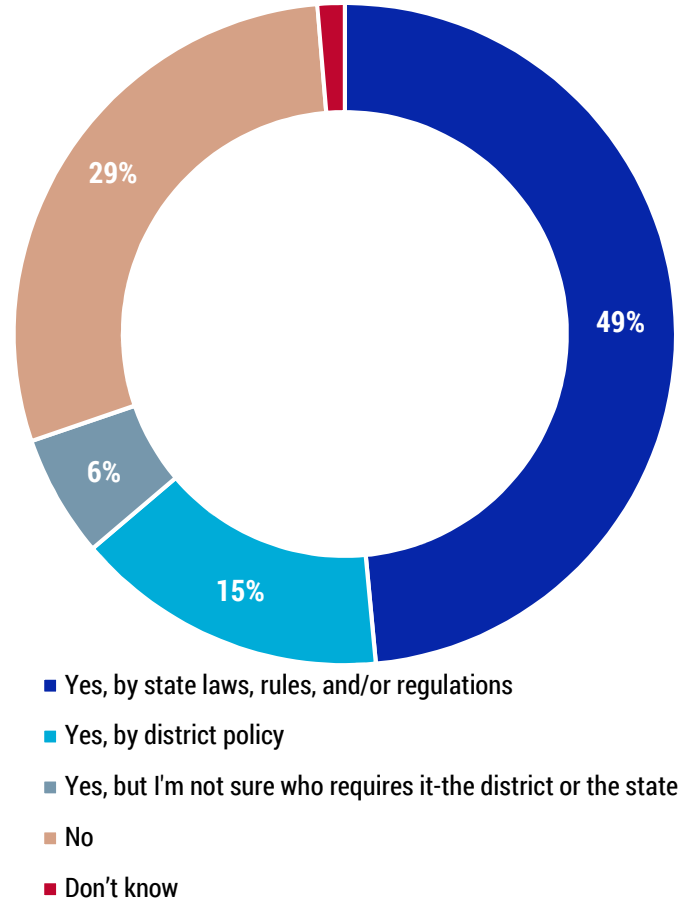
Median full-time equivalent gifted education staff employed by district



Credentialing

Well over half of educators say that a gifted credential is required to teach in the gifted program in their district. Less than 1 in 3 say no credential is required.

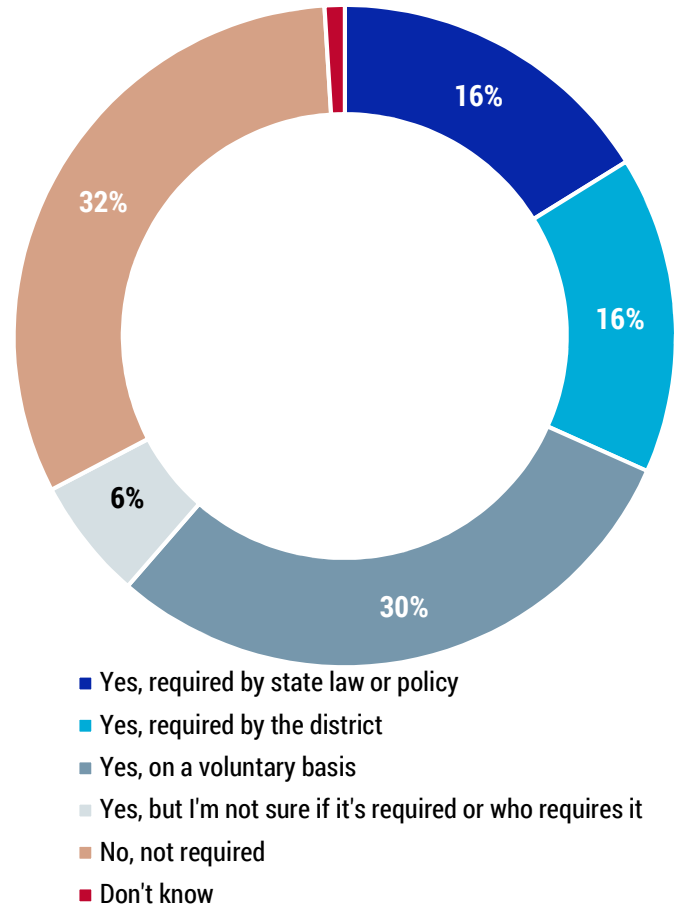
Are teachers in gifted/talented programs in your district required to have a credential/degree in gifted/talented education?



Training General Education Teachers to Work With Gifted Students

Most respondents say that general education teachers in their districts receive professional development on working with gifted students. But only a minority say the training is mandatory.

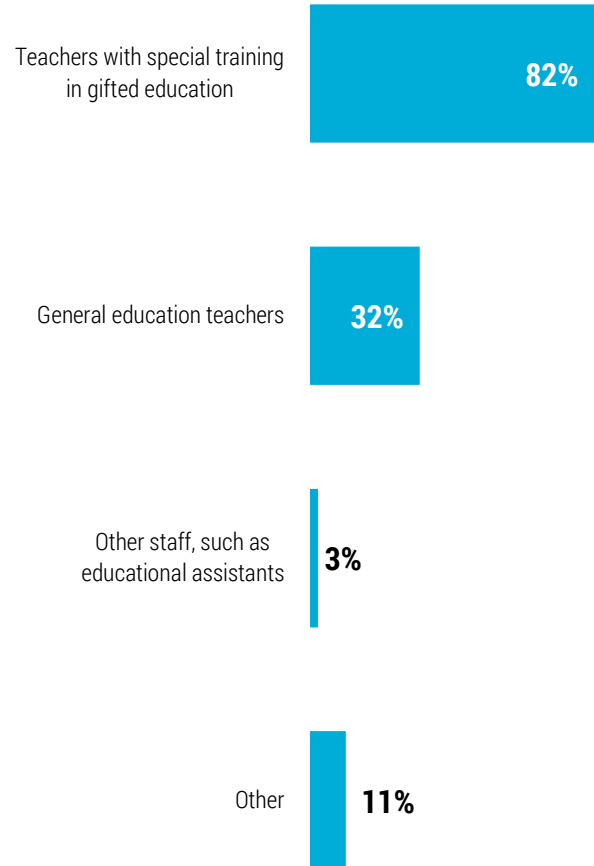
Do general education teachers in your district receive professional development on the needs of gifted/talented students?



Who Provides Gifted Services?

Most educators report that teachers with specialized training in gifted education deliver the majority of the gifted education services in their districts. Fewer than 1 in 3 say general education teachers provide most gifted services.

Who delivers most of the gifted education services to students in your school district? Select all that apply.



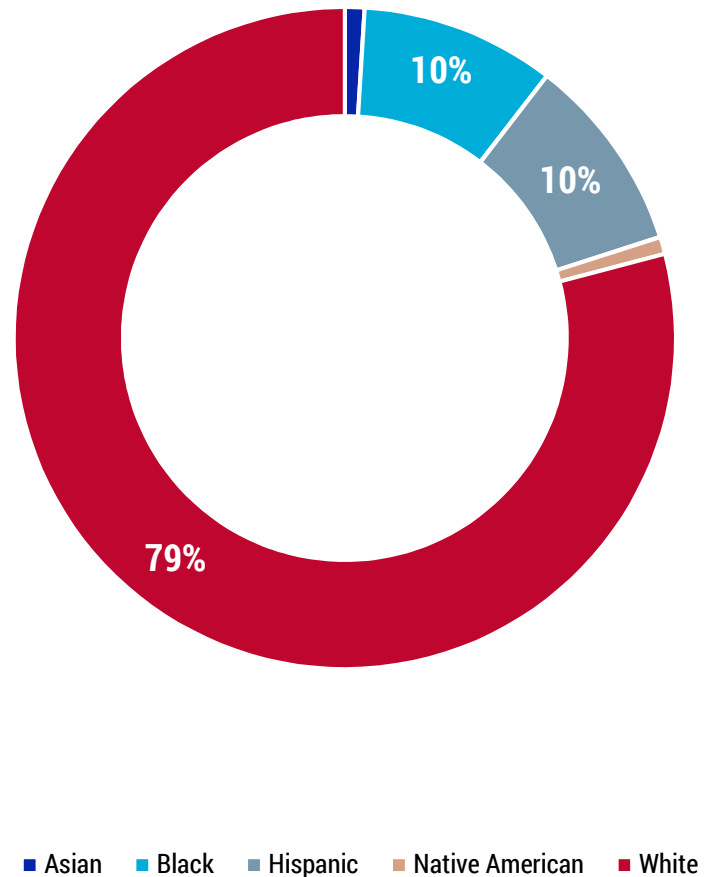
Snapshot: District Racial/Ethnic Demographics

Overview

Most survey respondents (79 percent) work in districts that are majority white.

Respondents from majority white districts are less likely to report that their gifted education program is housed in the exceptional students department — 12 percent versus 23 percent.

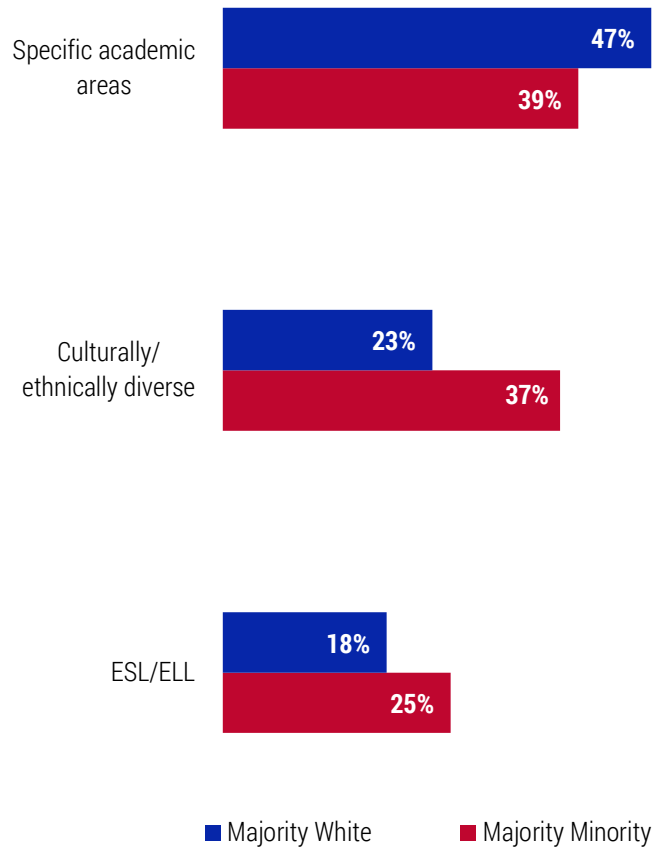
In my district, the single largest group of students is:



Defining Giftedness

Educators from “majority minority” districts are significantly more likely to report that their definition of gifted and talented includes cultural/ethnic diversity and/or English learner status. Their counterparts from majority-white districts are more likely to say the definition includes students who are gifted in specific academic areas.

Which of these factors is addressed in your district’s definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.

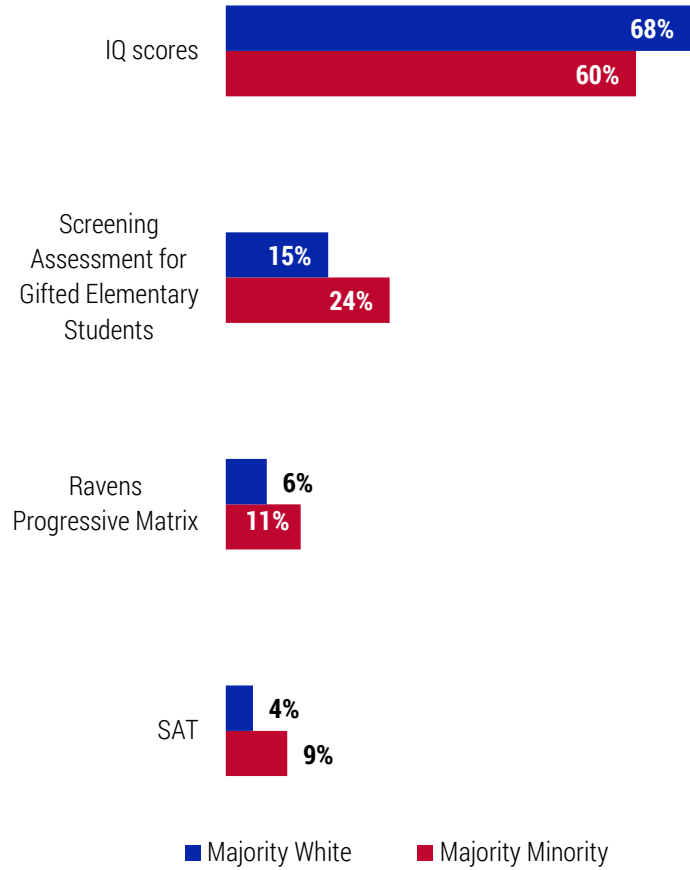


Screening

Compared to their peers from majority-white districts, educators from “majority minority” districts are significantly more likely to report that they offer kindergarten or early entrance screening for giftedness (24 percent versus 15 percent).

Respondents from “majority-minority” districts are also more likely to say they identify gifted students with the Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students, the Ravens Progressive Matrix and the SAT. Educators from majority-white districts are more likely to report that they use IQ scores.

Methods/tools used to identify students for gifted education

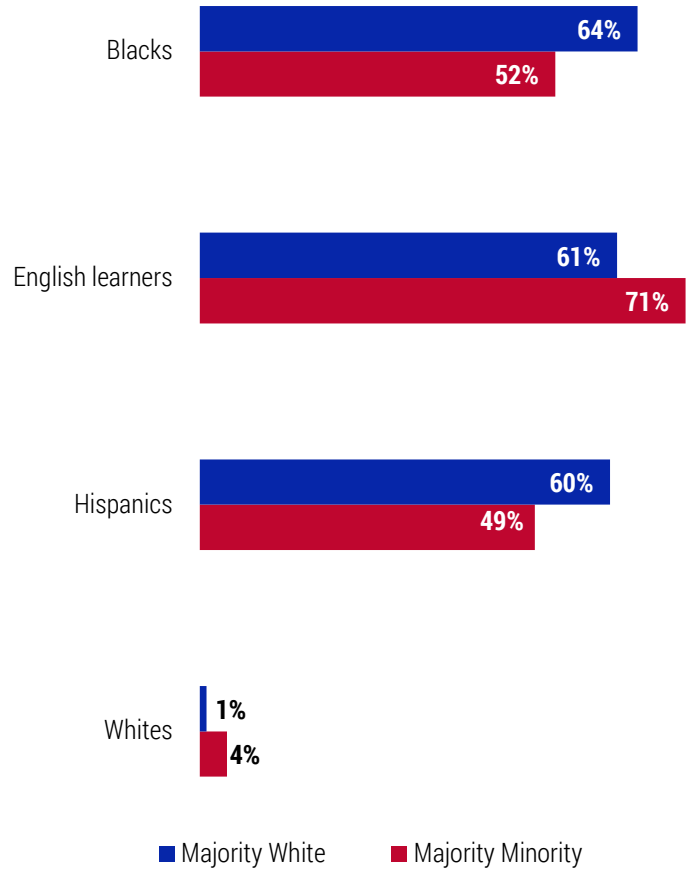


Equity

Educators from “majority minority” districts are significantly more likely to say that English learners and whites are under-represented in gifted education. Those from majority-white districts are more likely to report that Hispanics and blacks are under-represented in gifted education.

Respondents from “majority-minority” districts are more likely to perceive that their districts have made a major push to increase the odds that under-represented students will be identified/screened for gifted education. Forty-percent say the district has made a big effort as compared to 28 percent of those from majority-white districts.

Percent of educators who say these student groups are under-represented in gifted education

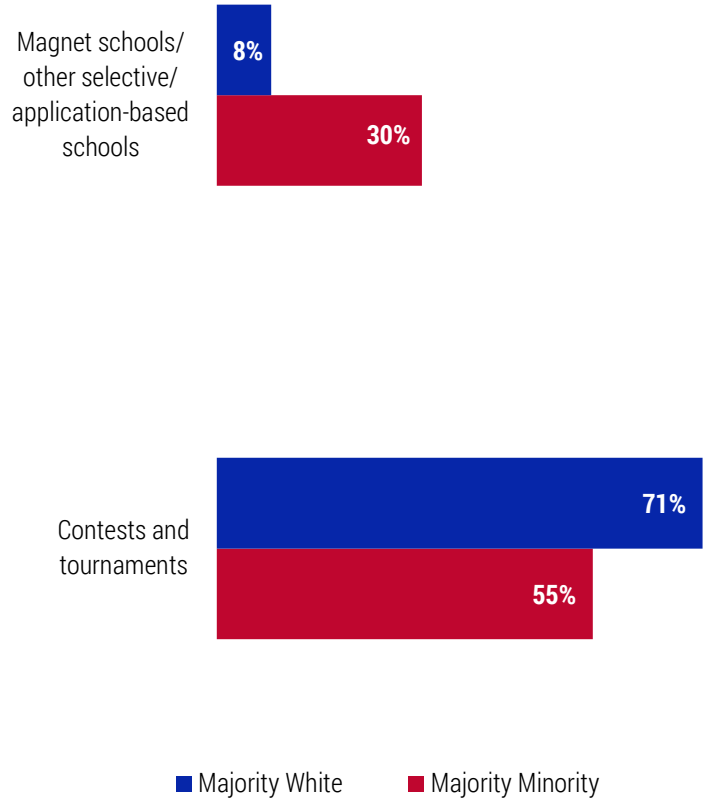


Services Provided

Compared to their peers from “majority-minority” districts, respondents from majority-white districts report that gifted education is offered at fewer grade levels (11 versus 10).

Survey results also suggest that contests and tournaments may be more common in majority white districts while magnet/selective schools are more prevalent in “majority-minority” districts.

Services and approaches to gifted education

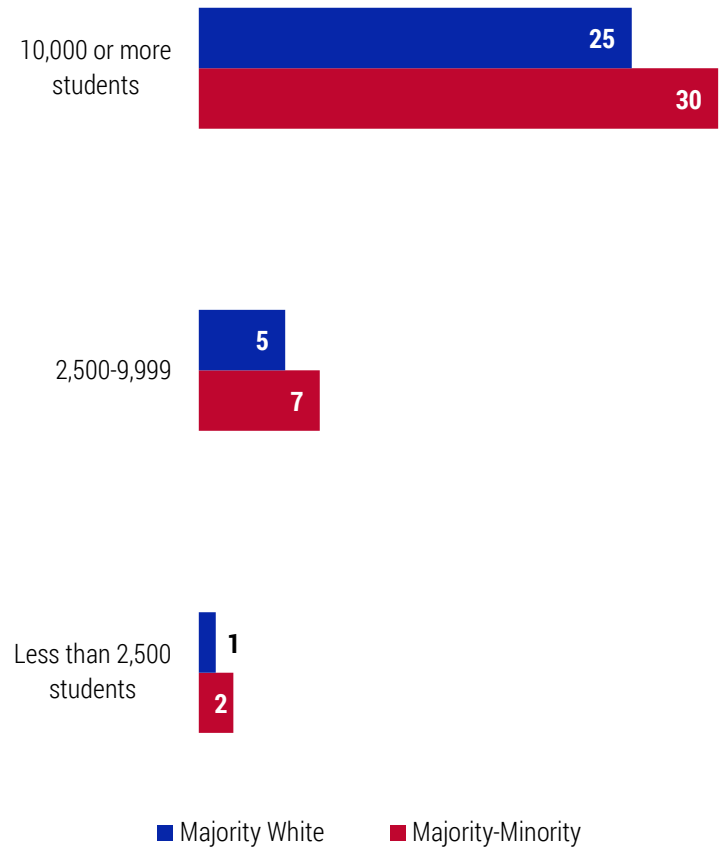


Staffing

Educators from “majority-minority” districts report significantly higher levels of staffing than do those from majority-white jurisdictions—12 versus 5 full-time equivalent educators. One reason is that survey respondents from “majority-minority” districts are also more likely to be from larger districts. However, even when district size is taken into account, “majority-minority” districts still have higher staffing levels.

Educators from “majority-minority” districts are also significantly more likely to say teachers in gifted and talented programs are required to have gifted and talented credentials. Eighty-nine percent of such educators say credentials are required as compared to 67 percent of respondents from majority-white districts.

Median number of full-time equivalent staff in district's gifted education program

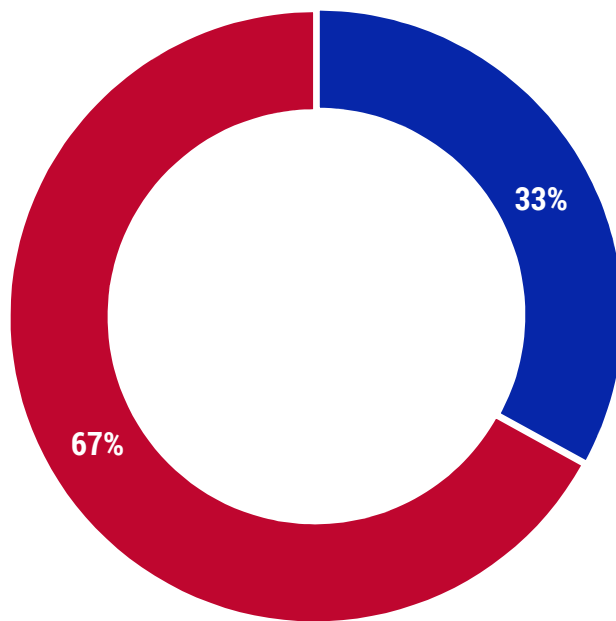


Snapshot: District Poverty Rate

Overview

Most of the educators who responded to the survey work in districts in which the majority of students come from low-income families.

Which of the following best describes the percentage of students from low-income families at your district?



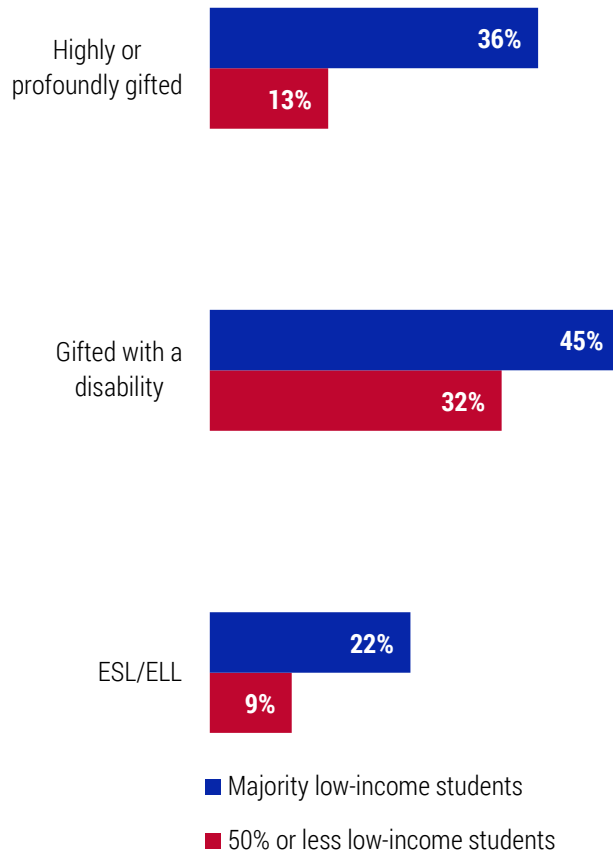
■ 50% or less low-income ■ Majority low-income students

Screening and Defining Giftedness

Educators who work in districts in which most of the students live in poverty are significantly more likely to say that definitions of gifted education include highly or profoundly gifted students, gifted students with disabilities, and/or emerging bilinguals.

Additionally, respondents from higher-poverty districts are significantly more likely to say they use the Stanford-Binet LM exam to screen for giftedness. Fourteen percent of educators from high-poverty districts say they use this assessment as compared to 2 percent of their peers from lower-poverty districts.

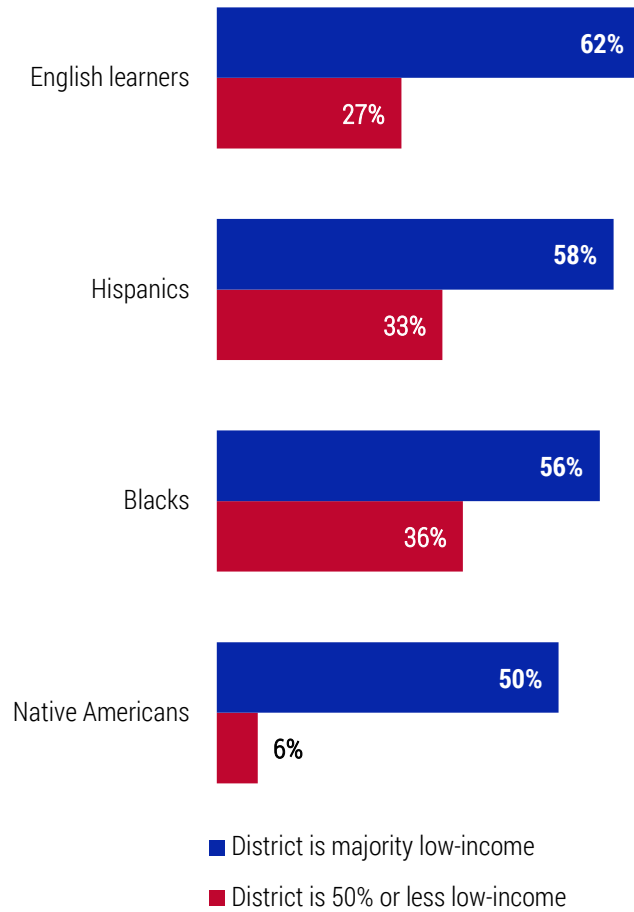
Which of these factors is addressed in your district's definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



Equity

Compared to those who work in lower-poverty districts, gifted education personnel in high-poverty school districts are more likely to perceive that Native American, black, and Hispanic students are under-represented in gifted education. They are also more likely to say that English learners are under-represented.

Percent of educators who say these student groups are under-represented in gifted education

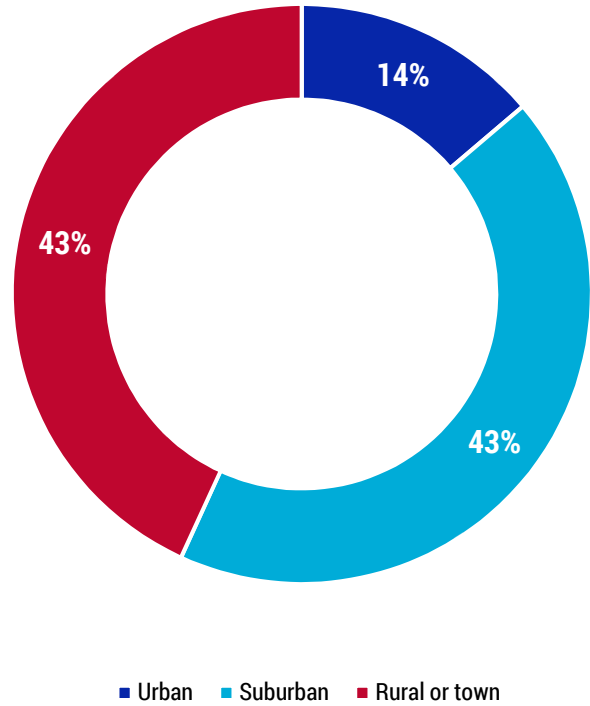


Snapshot: Locale

Overview

The educators who took the survey are equally likely to hail from rural/town or suburban locales.

Which of the following best describes the location of your school district?

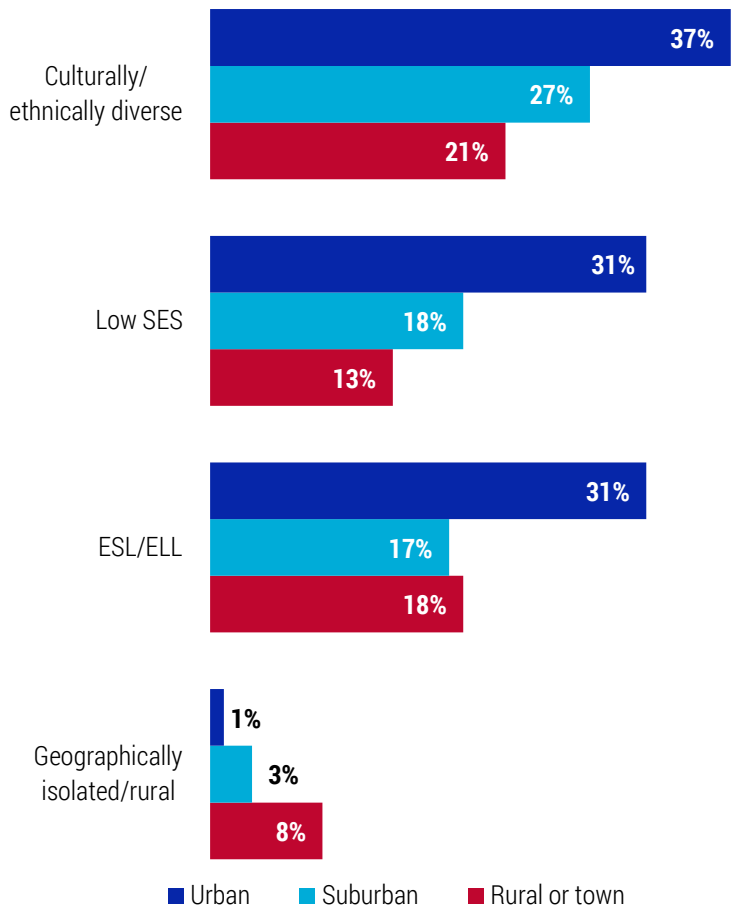


Defining Giftedness

Urban educators are significantly more likely to say that their district policies contain definitions of “gifted.” Sixty-eight percent of urban respondents say the district defines giftedness as compared to 57 percent of their rural counterparts and 53 percent of suburbanites.

Urban educators are significantly more likely to say that definitions of giftedness account for cultural or ethnic diversity, socio-economic status or English proficiency.

Which of these factors is addressed in your district’s definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



Screening

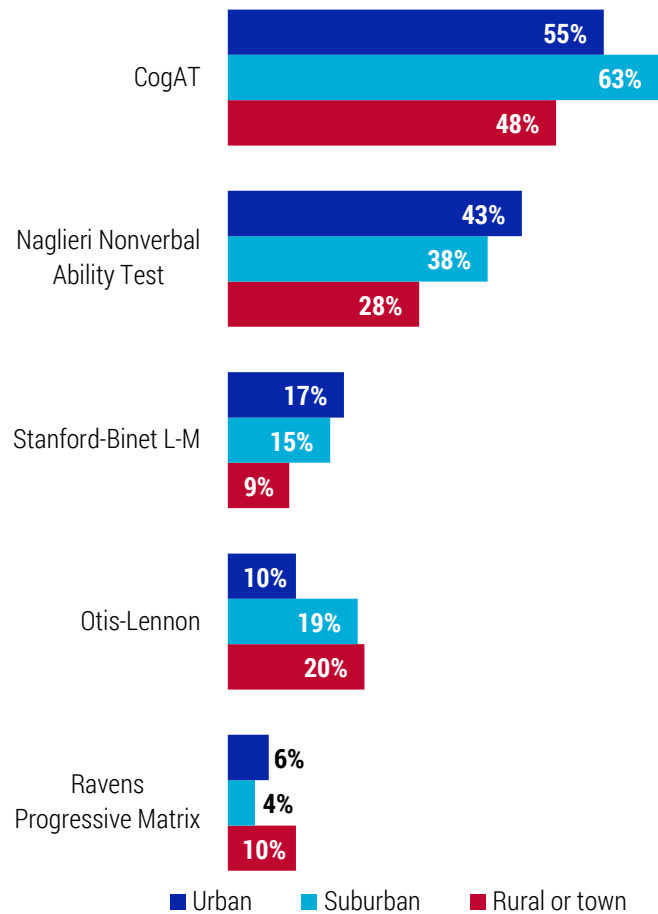
Rural educators say their districts identify a smaller share of students as gifted (11 percent) as compared to urban (13 percent) or suburban respondents (14 percent). Additionally, just 56 percent of rural educators say that three-quarters or more of their schools have identified at least one gifted student in the past year as compared to more than 70 percent of urban and suburban survey respondents. It's important to note that rural districts are more likely to be small, with only one or two schools.

Rural educators are significantly more likely than their urban or suburban counterparts to report that students are screened following teacher referral. Urban educators are more likely to say that their districts conduct kindergarten or early-entrance screening.

The use of screening assessments also varies by locale.

Rural educators are most likely to perceive that their screening processes identify all or almost all students who should be in gifted education. Sixty-seven percent of rural respondents say that screening works well as compared to 64 percent of suburbanites and 52 percent of urban respondents.

Which of the following assessments does your district use to identify gifted students? Select all that apply.

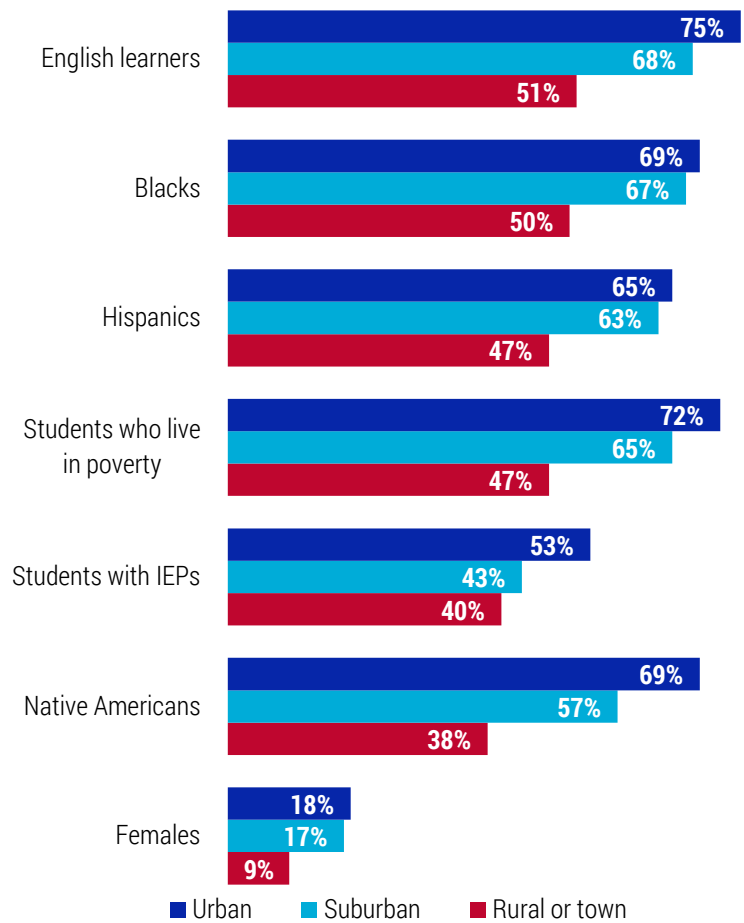


Equity

Rural educators are significantly less likely to perceive that multiple student groups are under-represented in gifted education. Educators whose districts enroll few or no students in the group in question (e.g., Hispanics) were removed from the analysis. So the results can't be attributed to the fact that rural jurisdictions simply don't enroll any students in these groups. It is important to note that these survey results are based on perceptions rather than on analyses of actual enrollment data.

Perhaps because they are less likely to perceive that it is a problem, rural educators are also significantly less likely to report that their district has made a big effort to increase the odds that under-represented students will be screened or identified for gifted education. Twenty-four percent of rural educators say their districts have made a big effort to remedy under-representation as compared to 31 percent of suburbanites and 47 percent of urban educators.

Percent of educators who say these student groups are under-represented in gifted education



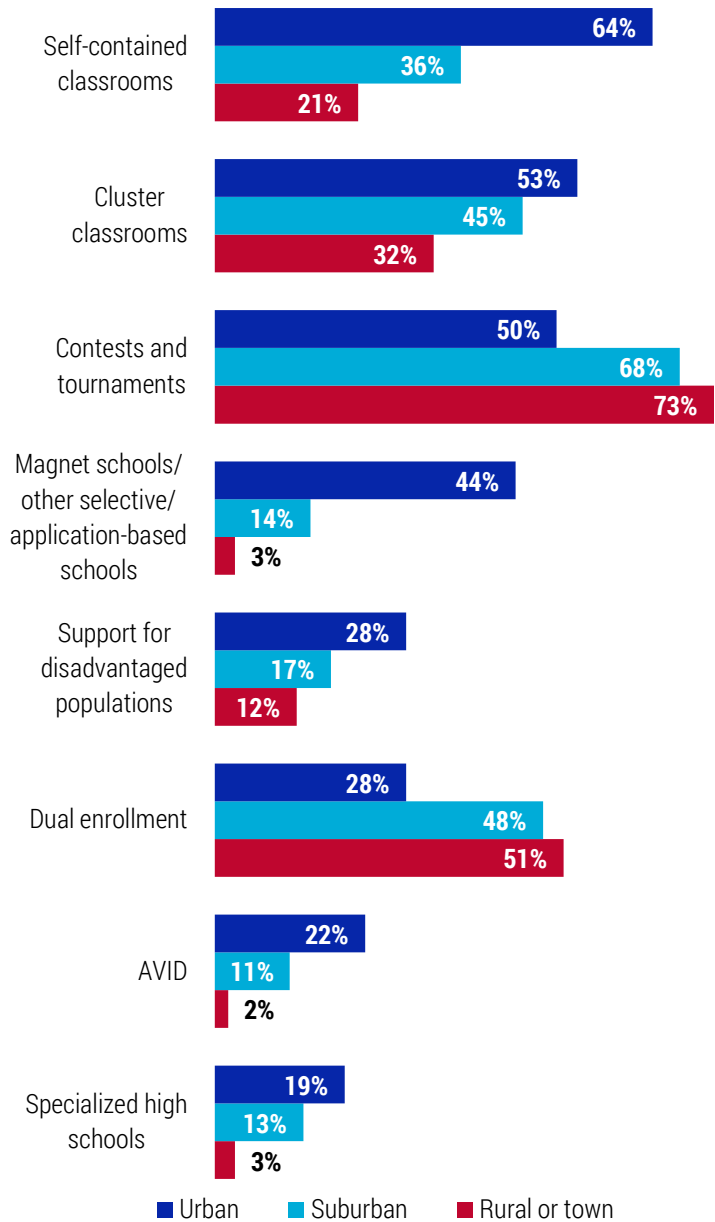
Services Provided

Survey results suggest that gifted students in rural districts may be exposed to a smaller variety of services and approaches. Compared to their urban and suburban peers, rural educators are significantly less likely to say their districts offer self-contained classrooms, cluster classrooms, magnet/selective schools, support for disadvantaged students, AVID, and/or specialized high schools.

That said, rural educators are significantly more likely to report that their districts serve gifted students with contests/tournaments and/or dual enrollment.

Rural and suburban educators alike say that gifted education is offered at fewer grade levels (an average of 10) compared to urban educators, who say it's offered at 12 grade levels.

Services and approaches to gifted education



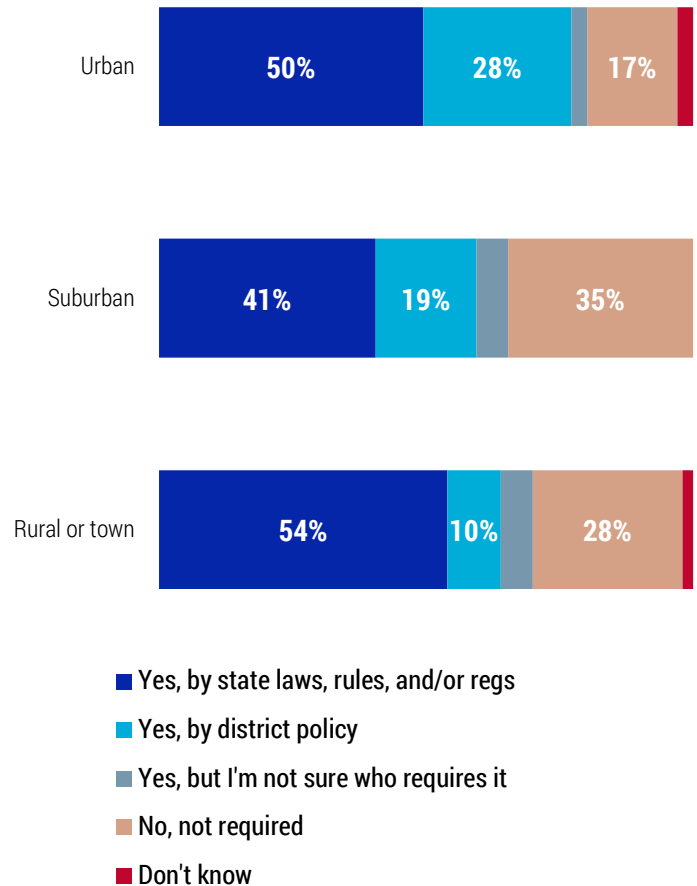
Staffing

Rural survey respondents report lower staffing levels than do their urban or suburban counterparts, a median of 2 full-time equivalent gifted educators as compared to 11 and 25, respectively. This is likely due in part to the fact that rural districts are more likely to be small. However, rural staffing levels are also lower for educators from districts with fewer than 2,500 students — 1 as compared to 3 for suburbanites and 6.5 for urban respondents. Again, size may be an issue: although it's not possible to say for certain based on survey results, small rural districts may be smaller than small urban or suburban districts.

When it comes to credentialing, suburban educators are significantly more likely than their urban or rural counterparts to report that gifted educators are not required to have certifications in gifted education.

Urban educators are significantly more likely to report that general education teachers do not receive training in working with gifted students. Forty-two percent of urban survey respondents say such training isn't provided as compared to 29 percent of suburbanites and 32 percent of those from rural areas.

Are teachers in gifted/talented programs in your district required to have a credential/degree in gifted/talented education?

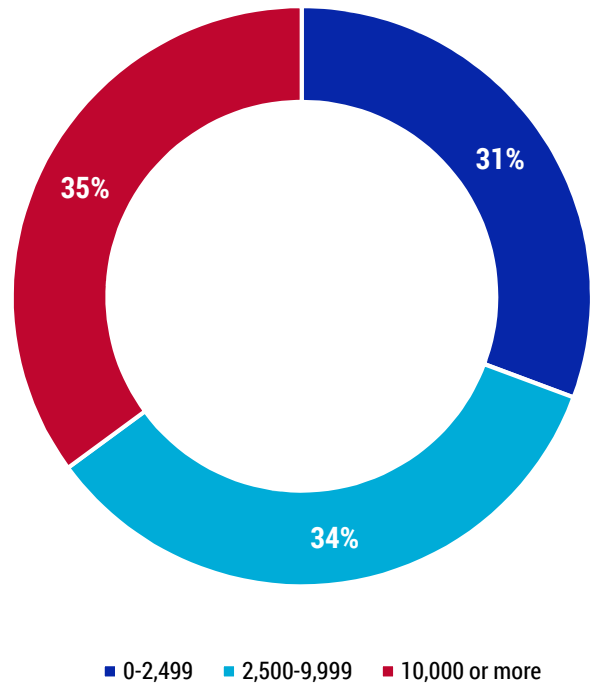


Snapshot: District Size

Overview

Survey respondents are fairly evenly split between bigger and smaller districts.

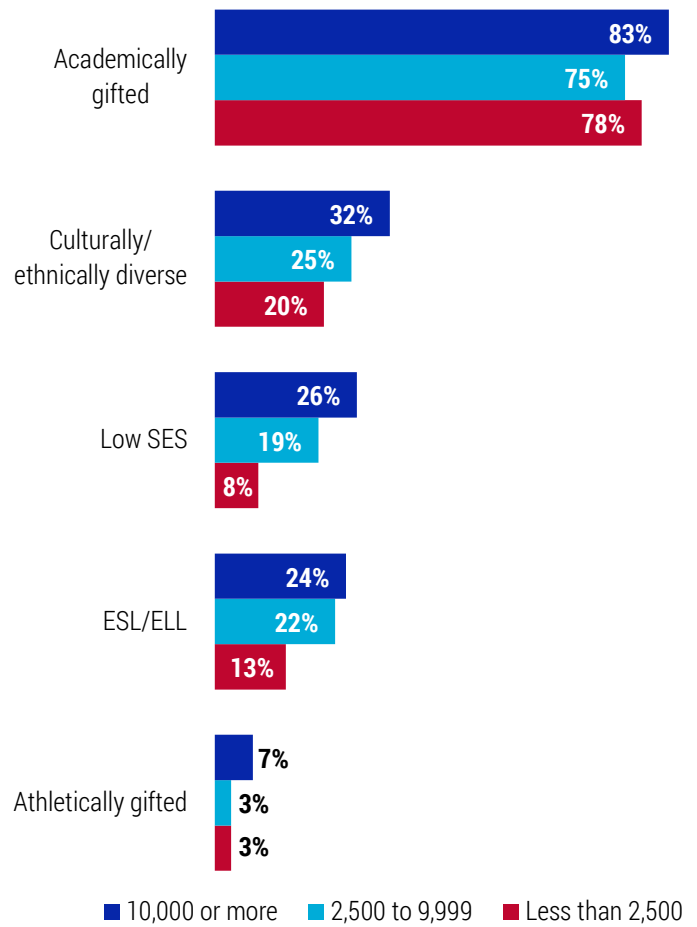
How many students does your school district serve?



Defining Giftedness

Educators from larger districts report more expansive definitions of gifted education. Their definitions are more likely to incorporate academic giftedness, culture/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English learner status, and athleticism.

Which of these factors is addressed in your district's definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



Screening

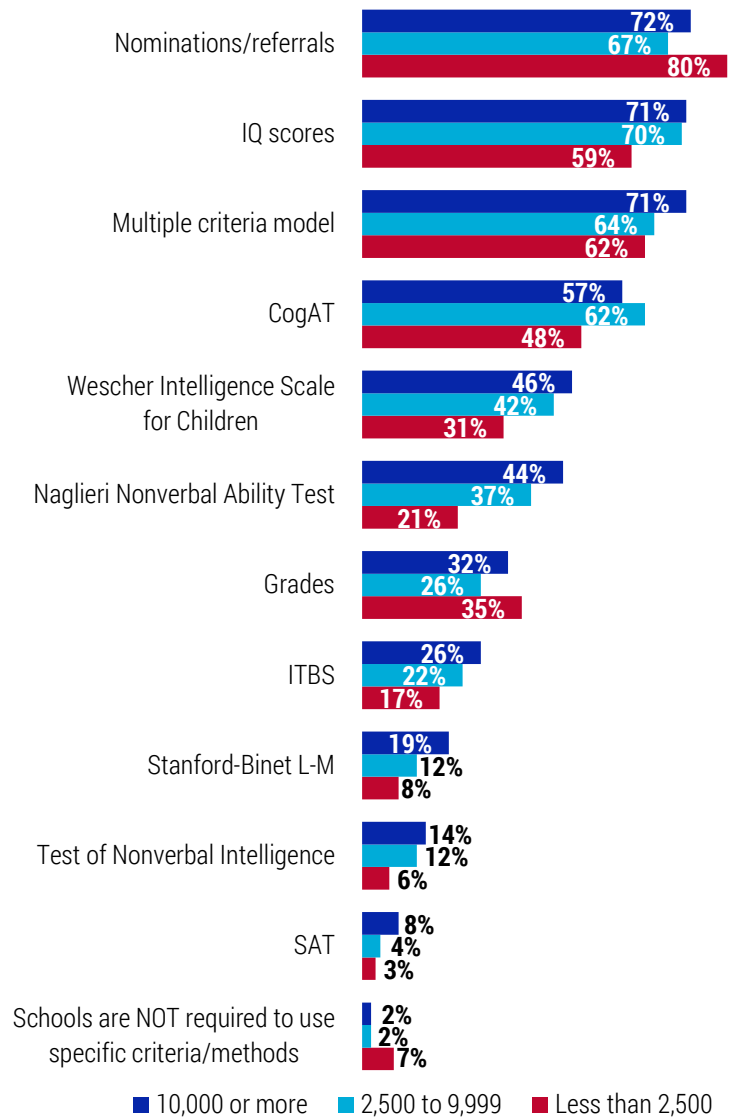
Educators from bigger and smaller districts report distinct approaches to screen students for gifted education. Respondents from larger districts with 10,000 or more students are more likely to use multiple types of assessments to screen for giftedness. Those from smaller districts with fewer than 2,500 students are more likely to say they use more holistic and subjective methods such as nominations/referrals and grades. They're also more likely to say schools aren't required to use specific criteria/methods for identification of gifted students.

Educators from smaller districts are also more likely to say the district always pays for testing: 61 percent say that this is the case as compared to 50 percent of those from districts with 10,000 or more students.

Do these differences make a difference? Maybe. Twenty-two percent educators from districts with fewer than 2,500 students strongly agree that their screening processes identify all or almost all students who should be in gifted education. By contrast, 14 percent of educators from the largest districts strongly agree.

Referral rates may be higher in larger districts: Seventy-four percent of educators from the largest districts say more than three quarters of schools identified at least gifted student in the last year as compared to half of those from districts with enrollments under 2,500.

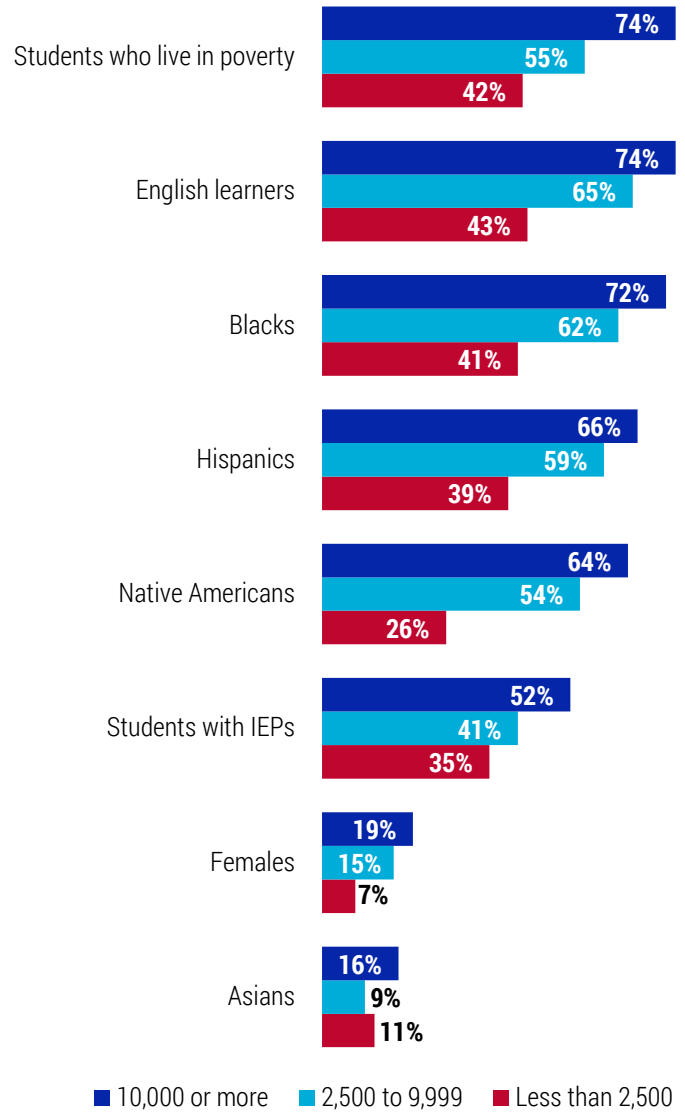
Methods/tools used to identify students for gifted education



Equity

Educators from the largest districts with 10,000 or more students are significantly more likely to say that multiple student groups are under-represented in gifted education including Asians, Hispanics, blacks, Native Americans, Females, students with disabilities, English learners, and children whose families live in poverty. Perhaps for this reason, they are nearly twice as likely to say their districts are making a big effort to increase the odds that under-represented students: Forty-percent of educators from the largest districts say they're making a big effort as compared to 21 percent of those from districts with enrollments under 2,500.

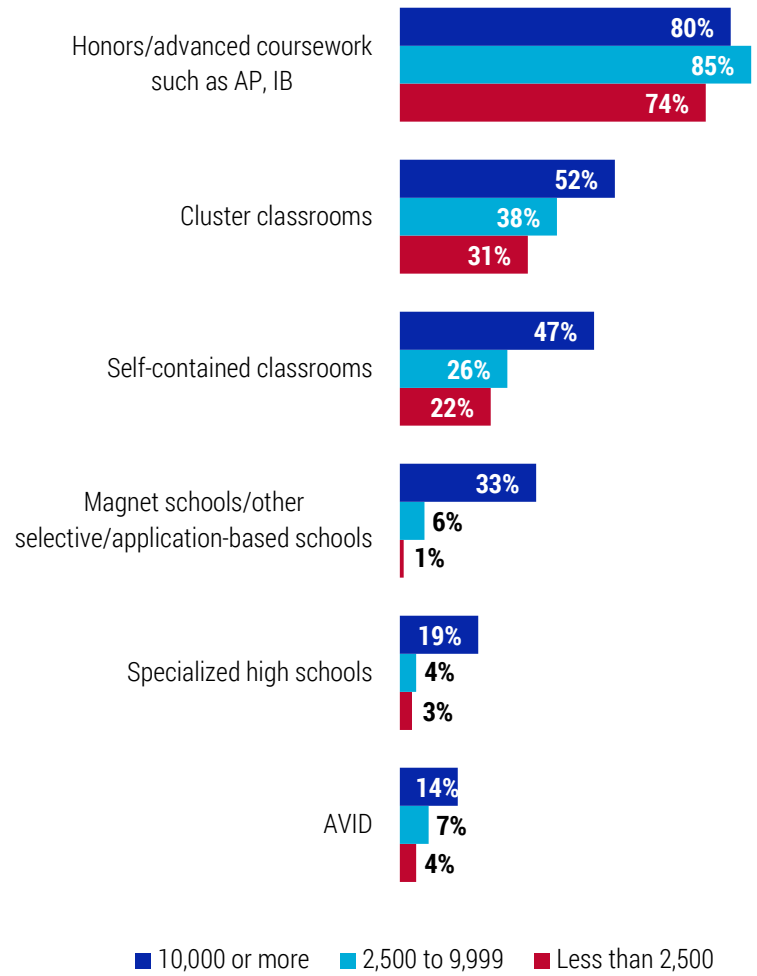
Percent of educators who say these student groups are under-represented in gifted education



Services Provided

Educators from larger districts are significantly more likely to say they embrace several different approaches to gifted education including honors/advanced coursework, cluster classrooms, self-contained classrooms, magnet/selective schools, specialized high schools, and AVID.

Services and approaches to gifted education



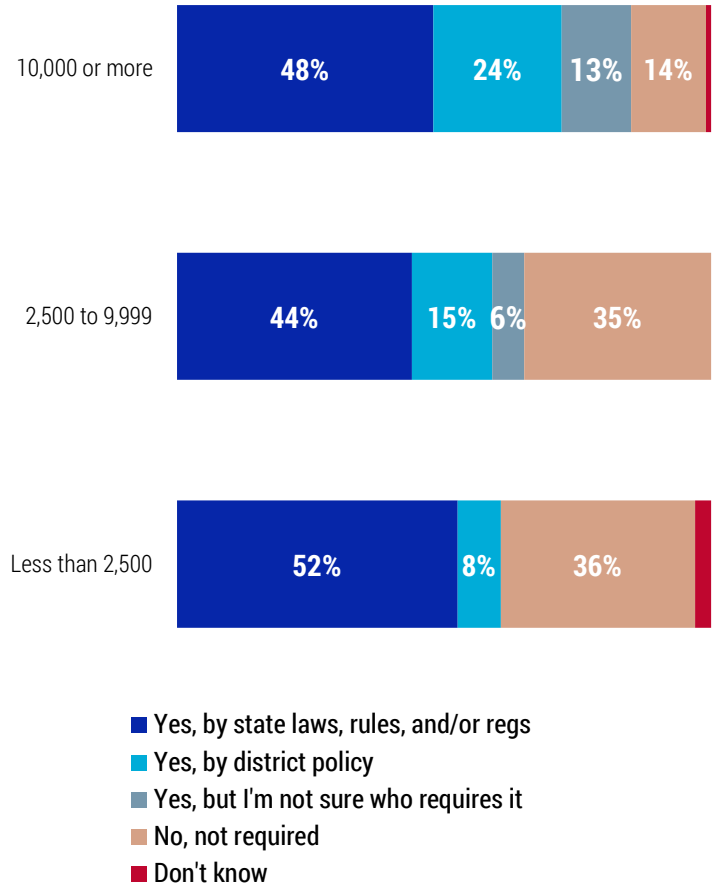
Staffing

Survey results suggest that teacher credentialing may be more stringent in larger districts.

For example, 92 percent of educators from districts with 10,000 or more students say that teachers with special training deliver most gifted education services as compared to 79 percent of those from districts with enrollments under 2,500.

Large district educators are also significantly more likely to say that teachers in gifted and talented programs are required to have a credential in that instructional area. Eighty-six percent of large-district educators say gifted credentials are required as compared to 64 percent of those from smaller districts with enrollments under 2,500.

Are teachers in gifted/talented programs in your district required to have a credential/degree in gifted/talented education?



Snapshot: Region

Overview

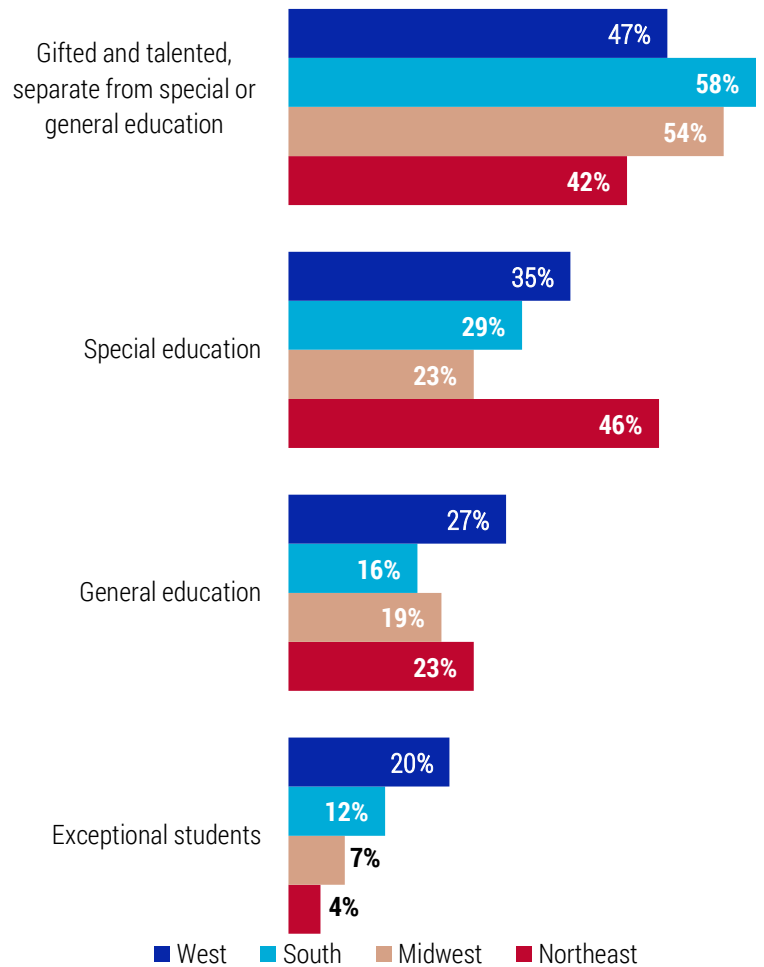
Survey respondents hail from every state in the nation except Delaware, Hawaii, Oregon, and Utah. In addition, no survey respondents work in the District of Columbia.

The share of respondents who work in each region is:

- The South: 44 percent
- The Midwest: 29 percent
- The Northeast: 14 percent
- The West: 14 percent

The organizational structure of gifted education varies by region. Western educators are more likely to report that gifted programs are located in the exceptional student or general education departments. Nearly half of Northeastern educators say gifted education is in the same department as special education as compared to 23 percent for Midwesterners, 29 percent of Southerners and 35 percent of Westerners. Southerners are most likely to say that gifted and talented education is housed in its own department.

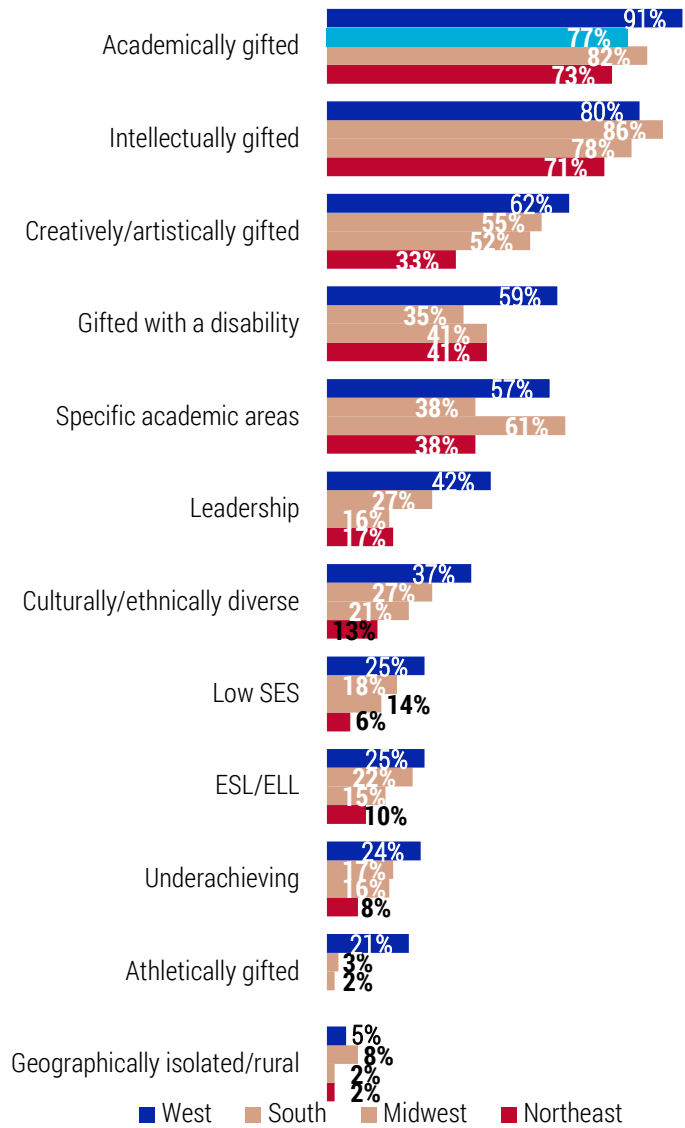
Under which departments/divisions does your district include gifted/talented education? Select all that apply.



Defining Giftedness

Compared to their peers elsewhere in the United States, Western educators report more expansive definitions of gifted education. Their definitions are more likely to incorporate athleticism, underachievement, English learner status, socio-economic status, culture/ethnicity, leadership skills, disability status, creative/artistic ability and academic giftedness.

Which of these factors is addressed in your district's definition of gifted/talented? Select all that apply.



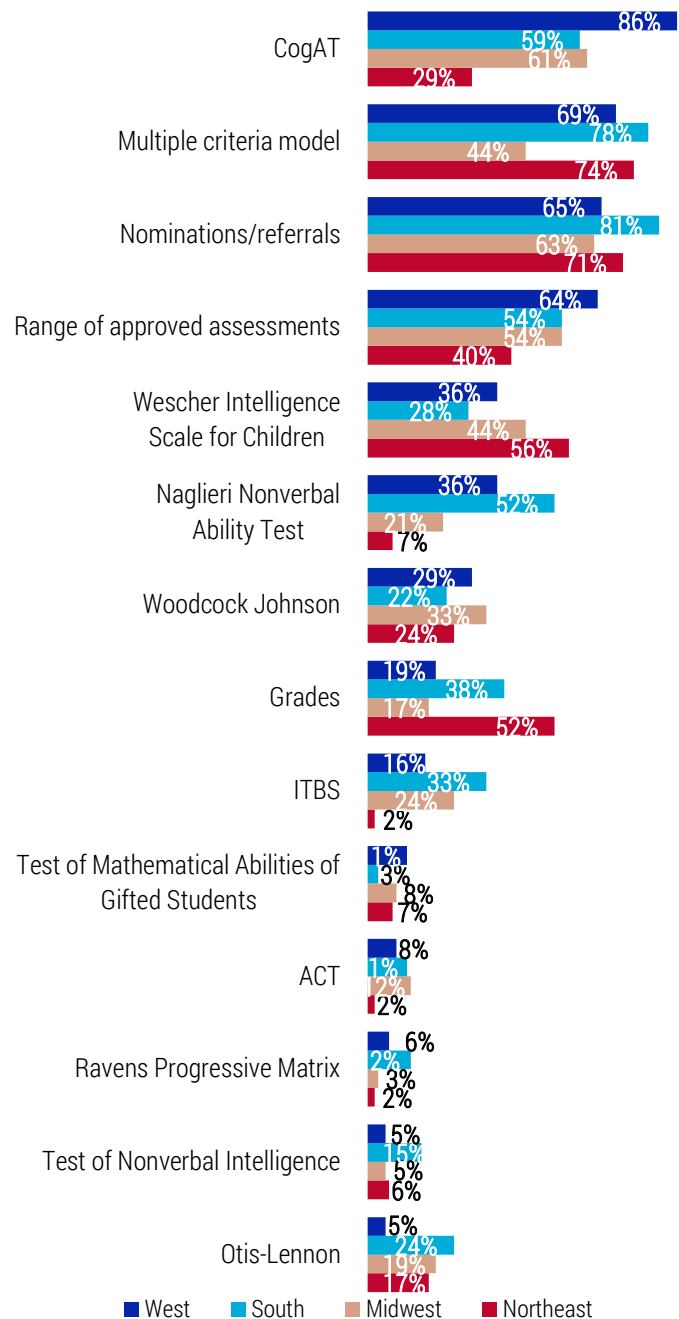
Screening

Gifted education screening methods vary considerably by region.

The timing of screening also varies. More common among Midwesterners and Westerners are middle school screening, kindergarten/early entrance screening, and screening that occurs when students take other assessments approved for gifted/talented identification. Universal elementary screening is more frequently reported by Southerners and Westerners. Southerners are also most likely to report that students are screened after student and/or parent referral.

These different screening methods appear to lead to different results: The typical (median) Northeasterner reports that 6 percent of district students are identified as gifted as compared to 10 percent elsewhere in the United States. Less than half of Northeasterners say that more than three quarters of schools in their district have identified at least one student as gifted in the past year. By contrast, more than half of their peers elsewhere in the United States say that more than three quarters of schools identified at least one gifted student.

Methods/tools used to identify students for gifted education

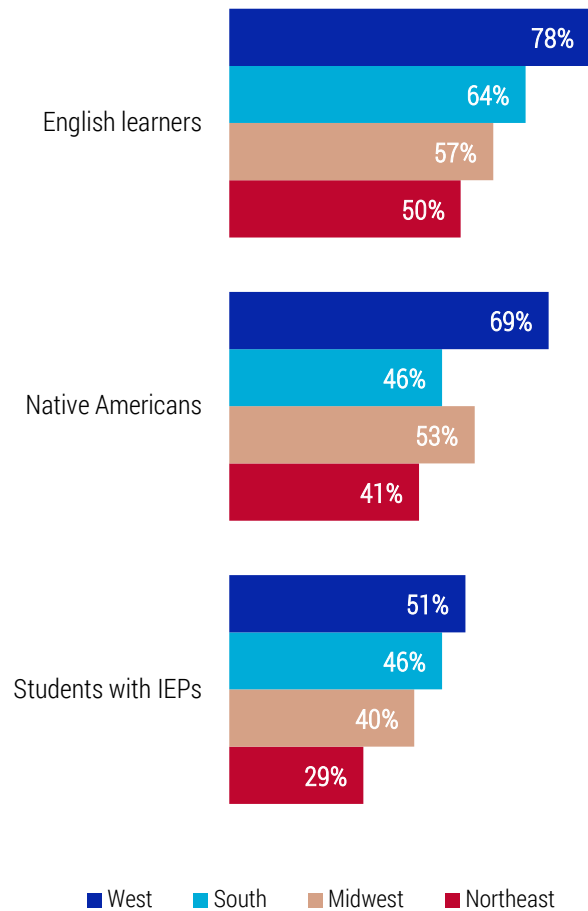


Equity

Compared to their colleagues elsewhere in the nation, Western educators are more likely to perceive that students with IEPs, Native Americans, and English learners are under-represented in gifted education. Additionally, 66 percent of Western educators say that students from high-income families are over-represented in gifted education as compared to 44 percent of Northeasterners, 46 percent of Midwesterners, and 49 percent of Southerners. And 64 percent of Westerners perceive that whites are over-represented as compared to 29 percent of Northeasterners, 43 percent of Midwesterners, and 49 percent of Southerners.

Southerners are most likely to say that their district has made a major push in the past five years to increase the odds that under-represented student groups are identified/screened for gifted education. Forty-one percent say their districts have made a big effort in this area as compared to 14 percent of Northeasterners, 19 percent of Midwesterners, and 36 percent of Westerners.

Percent of educators who say these student groups are under-represented in gifted education

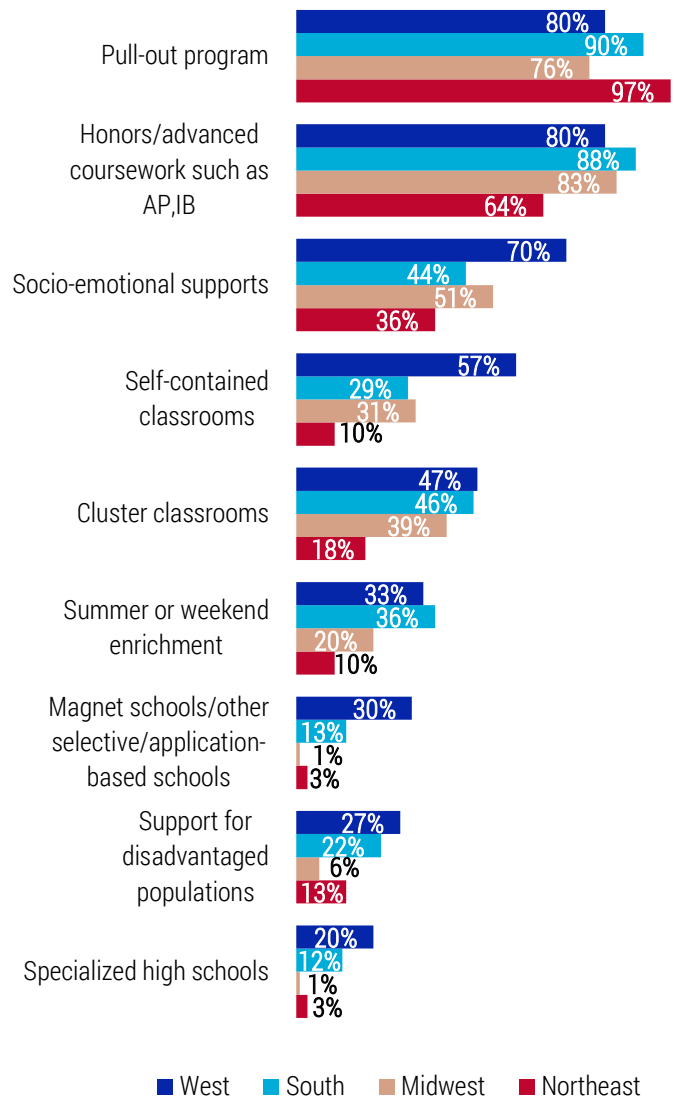


Services Provided

Northeastern educators are most likely to report that students who are identified as gifted are actually receiving gifted services. On average, Northeasterners say 74 percent of students identified as gifted are receiving gifted services. By contrast, the percentages are 60 percent for Midwesterners, 67 percent for Westerners, and 73 percent for Southerners.

Westerners are more likely to report that their districts offer gifted students several types of services including specialized high schools, selective/ magnet schools, support for disadvantaged students, cluster classrooms, self-contained classrooms, and social-emotional supports. Summer/weekend enrichment, honors/advanced coursework, and pull-out programs are more commonly reported by Southerners.

Services and approaches to gifted education



Staffing

Survey results suggest that, when it comes to gifted education, the Northeast has fewer training and credentialing requirements and opportunities. Compared to their peers elsewhere in the country, Northeasterners are least likely to report that teachers with specialized training in gifted education deliver most gifted education instruction. They are also least likely to say that gifted education teachers are required to have gifted education credentials, and or that general education teachers receive professional development on working with gifted students.

Northeasterners also report lower staffing levels. For example, in mid-sized districts with 2,500 to 9,999 students, the typical Northeasterner reports a total of four full-time equivalent gifted education staff. By contrast, those numbers are five for Midwesterners, seven for Southerners, and eight for Westerners.

Teacher training

