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Homogeneously Grouped Urban Gifted  
African-American and Caucasian  
Secondary Students: A Longitudinal Study

presented by

Elizabeth A. Rose

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in School Psychology

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**HOMOGENOUSLY GROUPED URBAN GIFTED AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND  
CAUCASIAN SECONDARY STUDENTS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

**Volume I**

**By**

**Elizabeth Ann Rose**

**A DISSERTATION  
Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**School Psychology**

**2001**



## **ABSTRACT**

### **HOMOGENEOUSLY GROUPED GIFTED INNER-CITY AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND CAUCASIAN SECONDARY STUDENTS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

By

Elizabeth A. Rose

The breadth of this longitudinal study provides rich information about the risks and unique experience of being a gifted urban and minority student. It addresses the gap in research concerning the characteristics and programming needs of this often under-identified and underserved group. The issue of appropriate and effective academic program format is examined for a group of 185 identified urban and minority-gifted students (110 of whom were African-American) placed in self-contained elementary and secondary gifted programs and followed throughout their school career. An 102 student general-education student comparison group included 62 African-Americans. The qualitative component includes 13 students chosen to be interviewed according to whether they remained or left the program, their gender, race, and household income.

The relationship of graduation outcomes to length of stay, poverty status, and placement in twelfth grade was analyzed, as well as the relationship of selected demographic, home, social and school variables, and pertinent stress factors, to the outcomes of remaining in the gifted program and graduating.

The school district implemented a very comprehensive identification procedure, which is described herein, successfully identifying gifted children in early elementary. The majority of students were identified for the gifted program before third grade, making the question of longitudinal effects of length of stay in a self-contained gifted program an appropriate inquiry about this group.

One of the most important results was the high graduation rate for the identified gifted students who remained in the gifted program. Their graduation rate of 98.6% makes them far more likely to graduate than both their gifted counterparts who left the program and their general-education peers. The graduation rate was 77% for gifted students who left the program to enroll in general education, a lower rate than the 79% graduation rate for general-education students. Therefore, remaining in the gifted program did increase a gifted student's chances of graduating from high school. This suggests that urban and minority gifted students are more at risk for academic failure within a general-education setting than within a gifted setting.

There was a focus on outcomes for those who lived in poor neighborhoods in early elementary, compared to those who lived in middle class neighborhoods. The gifted program did have greater holding power for African-American students compared to Caucasians, also differences between outcomes for African-American females and males were found. Reasons for these results such as social and peer-group pressures were explored within the quantitative and the qualitative components of the study.

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I dedicate this to the precious children, now young adults, of this study.  
I also dedicate this project to the memory of two little boys,  
my sons Peter and Andrew, now adults,  
who shared their childhood with this project.

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Above all, I must acknowledge the essential role of Dr. Harvey Clarizio in this work. He always encouraged my interest in the area of giftedness. His support gave me the courage to pursue a longitudinal study.

Dr. Betsy Becker believed in me and guided me to seek answers by looking down more than one path. Her role in my graduate education made me a stronger researcher and a better person. My appreciation goes to Dr. Walter Hapkiewicz and Dr. Patrick Dickson for their insights during the dissertation process.

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I am done now Grandma!

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AIRS</b>	<b>Assessment of Interpersonal Relations</b>
<b>ATP</b>	<b>Academically Talented Program</b>
<b>HHI</b>	<b>Household income</b>
<b>ITBS</b>	<b>Iowa Test of Basic Skills</b>
<b>MEAP</b>	<b>Michigan Educational Assessment Program</b>
<b>MSCS</b>	<b>Multidimensional Self-concept Scale</b>
<b>SQI</b>	<b>Structured Qualitative Interview</b>

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## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A rich body of literature considers the needs and the potential problems gifted Caucasian youngsters might encounter as a result of their giftedness (Adderholt-Elliott, 1991; Frey, 1991; Garner, 1991; Janos, 1991; Kerr, 1991b; Kidwell, et al., 1995; Manaster, 1994; Plucker and McIntire, 1996; Richert, 1991; Rimm, 1986; Roedell, 1984; Vallerand et al., 1994; Winner, 1997). Roedell (1984) has documented “vulnerabilities” which she found to be risk factors for gifted children in general. These include perfectionism, adult pressure, moral sensitivity, issues of self, alienation from peer groups, inappropriate placement, and social conflicts, gender identification, or age conflicts due to disparate development. Gifted students internalize pressures easily (Rimm, 1986). In addition, a gifted student’s identity and self-concept may be more linked to academic performance and grades than those of non-gifted peers (Rimm, 1986). However, scant research has considered the difference in the school experience of the minority gifted child (Ford, Harris, and Schuerger, 1993; Ford and Harris, 1996). Many factors bear on the school adjustment of gifted African-Americans. Five such factors may include resiliency versus underachievement factors, economic factors, gender, cultural influences and educational program administrative arrangements.

The intensive review of literature in Chapter Two reveals no large scale, long-term studies examining the effects of homogenous grouping of gifted African-American students with respect to a) graduation rates, b) the impact of



gender or economic status on various measures of academic accomplishment, c) retention, and d) attendance.

### **Format**

This dissertation includes this introduction, Chapter One, where the problem and resulting research questions are presented. Chapter Two is a review of the literature concerning the following for gifted students: the identification process, underachievement versus resiliency, economic factors, gender, cultural and racial influences, and educational program administrative placement. Chapter Three describes the methods for the quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative results and qualitative results are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five includes a discussion, implications and limitations.

Being African-American and gifted may be a totally different experience in comparison to being Caucasian and gifted in our society (Arroyo and Zigler, 1995; Cross, 1989; Exum and Colangelo, 1981). Being an African-American youth who has been identified as gifted is an experience that may be so different from the mainstream experience that our current theories about gifted education do not apply (Bireley and Genshaft, 1991; Exum, 1983; Ford, 1992a, 1992b; Ford, Harris, and Schuerger, 1993; Ford and Webb, 1994; Fordham, 1988; Frasier and Passow, 1994; Milner and Blyth, 1989).

Yet the information base provided by research is limited in providing a resource for planning appropriate educational interventions and programs for both African-American and for disadvantaged gifted youth (Bireley and Genshaft, 1991; Clark, 1993; Ford, 1996). Research has often confused the cultural



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issues of minority-gifted status with the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage. Moreover, there has been a failure to consider the effects of differing educational administrative placements upon the well-being and academic achievement of differing socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic groups of gifted students (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1995; Frasier and Passow, 1994; Graham, 1984, 1989; McAdoo, 1993; Seeley, 1993).

Some reviews of research suggest little interest in the situations of culturally different or disadvantaged gifted students (Torrance, 1998). This lack of interest in the plight of minority and poor gifted students, and lack of attention to factors contributing to both between-group and within-group differences has resulted in research findings lacking in clarity for gifted students, and especially for inner-city minority gifted students (Ford, 1990; Frasier, 1989; Frasier and Passow, 1994; Kitano, 1991). If appropriate, positive and successful educational program plans for majority and minority gifted students, as well as for disadvantaged gifted students, are to be put in place, such factors must be studied for best practices to be determined.

In fact, urban economically disadvantaged youth, especially African-Americans, are at risk for lack of success in the educational system (Finn, 1989; Finn and Rock, 1997; Ford, 1993; Gibbs, 1991; Milner and Blyth, 1989; Simmons et al., 1978). "Black children fare worse than white children on all outcomes" (Mayer, 1997, p. 154). Mayer (1997) suggests many more African-Americans live in poverty than Caucasians and a host of poor outcomes is associated with poverty, among these are higher absenteeism, a higher dropout rate, and poorer

scores on achievement tests throughout school. However, we do not know whether these trends hold for poor gifted urban African-American children in heterogeneous or self-contained gifted programs.

Research factoring out the role of poverty from issues of cultural and ethnic differences is scant (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1995; Seeley, 1993). The lack of such research demonstrates insensitivity to the vast impact poverty may have on a child's development (Berry, 1989). Finally, to effectively meet the needs of all gifted children research factoring the role of poverty in the achievement of all gifted children, regardless of gender, race or cultural background is needed. Research by Johnson, Miranda, Sherman and Weill (1991) suggests that we do not yet understand the extent of the impact poverty may have. The research on gifted poor children is scarce and inadequate at best. Is a gifted child impacted differently by growing up in an impoverished environment? Not only do the questions themselves need to be asked, these areas of inquiry necessitate research endeavors. Research considering the outcomes in differing educational settings for gifted African-American and Caucasian lower, middle and upper socio-economic strata students, including those from an urban environment, would be a considerable contribution to our knowledge base and would begin to allow for a research based approach to efficacious planning for this unique group of talented young people.

Recent research on the importance of peer influence upon academic achievement suggests that perhaps the peer group is more influential than previously thought (Dauber and Benhow, 1990; Efran and Greene, 1999;

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Fishbein, 1996; Harris, 1998). A term used in literature describing the phenomenon of low African-American academic achievement due to social rather than ability factors is termed “academic disidentification” (Ogbu, 1986). Are African-American males at the highest risk for disidentifying academically (Ford and Harris, 1992; Fordham, 1991; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Irvine, 1990; Kunjufu, 1985, 1986, 1988; Ogbu, 1988)? Do African-American females disidentify less academically, but experience higher risks for low esteem in other areas?

In addressing the issue of why African-American males disidentify, rather than other disadvantaged groups such as African-American females and Hispanic females in traditionally male fields, Ogbu (1988) suggests that successfully achieving, and therefore, identifying with academics, may be viewed as a means of ‘acting white’ by African-American males in particular. He strongly asserts that the factors that may lead African-American males to reject education at a higher rate than females need further study. Considering the plight of African-American males in relation to issues of academic identification, achievement and peer group pressure, it may be that gifted African-American males experience even more stress and anguish surrounding these issues. What does the research say about the needs of gifted African-American males? Not much! How could educational institutions possibly attempt to meet the needs of this group of high potential young people without first identifying those needs?

Would a self-contained gifted program provide a more protective environment with more opportunity for true peer interaction and positive

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identification with academic achievement for gifted African-American girls and boys, and for gifted urban students regardless of race or gender, as well?

Research considering the various concerns and effects of differing educational administrative placements for gifted males and females of varied ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds is seriously deficient at this time. Research is needed for answers to these questions, if interventions are to be well thought-out and appropriate.

The issues surrounding the education of urban, gifted students are complex. This work considers one aspect of these issues: the educational and ensuing social structures which may affect the dropout rates of urban gifted African-American and Caucasian students. Specifically, this project considers the academic achievement of a group of urban minority students who were identified as gifted, and placed in a self-contained gifted program for their core academic subjects during elementary and secondary schooling. Specifically, the effects of this particular ability-grouping upon outcomes of achievement and school completion were studied. As mentioned earlier, contributing factors to be considered include: resiliency, underachievement factors, economic factors, gender, cultural differences, and educational-program administrative arrangements.

This topic is relevant to the field of education in general, as well as to those who administer and provide support services to gifted programs. The issues raised by this study are especially pertinent for educators working in urban settings, in settings serving African-American students, or with students from low

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socioeconomic backgrounds. In truth, there is little research base from which to understand gifted African-American students regardless of socio-economic background. It would behoove the fields of education and psychology to better understand the issues and needs of this group of young people. The loss of talent to our society from this group of youth is great, and the social and emotional toll on these young people due to underachievement and deficits in addressing their unique needs may be even greater.

### **Statement of Problem**

The urban gifted African-American student might well be more vulnerable to poor academic outcome than his or her urban Caucasian counterpart. Placement in a self-contained gifted program, which provides the stimulation of gifted peer relationships, a peer culture valuing scholastic excellence, and opportunities for acceleration and enrichment may provide the gifted urban minority student with the social, emotional, and academic support necessary to insure success. Variables that may highlight resiliency or greater at-risk factors for this group of gifted students must be researched, so that appropriate intervention strategies may be developed. As a result, educational program planning which allows for the development of the true potential of gifted urban minority students may be provided.

### **Research Questions**

This study considered the school completion outcomes and attrition rates from the gifted program of a group of urban gifted African-American and Caucasian students who were enrolled in a self-contained gifted program from



elementary grades through their high-school junior and senior years. The elementary program is self-contained for all classes, while the secondary program is self-contained for core academic classes. The following two research questions were considered quantitatively:

Quantitative question #1:

**Do graduation outcomes depend on time enrolled in the gifted program, race, gender, and household income?**

Quantitative question #2:

**What are the differences in selected demographic, home, school, and social factors between gifted students who remain in a self-contained gifted placement through high school graduation, and those who do not, in comparison to their general-education peers?**

These selected factors included: 1) Demographic factors: race, gender; 2) Home factors: income level, family constellation; 3) Social factors: participation in extra-curricular or group programs in middle school and in high school, and transition-to-middle-school-concerns; 4) School factors: Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) math and science percentile scores, overall grade point averages, standardized achievement scores, elementary attendance, school changes. Next, a selected sample of gifted high school seniors was interviewed in an attempt to discern unique aspects of their experience highlighting resiliency factors or greater risk factors at play for urban gifted students. Students who remained in the gifted program through middle school

and high school are compared to those who left the gifted program. The third research question was considered in a qualitative approach:

Question #3:

**How do the overarching themes that emerge from the Structured Qualitative Interview, the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale and the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations relate to students' academic achievement and retention in the gifted program?**

In conclusion there is scant research considering the school experience of the minority-gifted child. A final synthesis of qualitative and quantitative results of this study considered factors that may bear on the school adjustment of gifted African-Americans.

The review of literature that follows in Chapter Two reviews related areas of gifted research: resiliency versus underachievement factors, economic factors, gender, cultural influences and educational program administrative arrangements.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

An extensive review of literature reveals no large-scale longitudinal studies of urban and minority gifted students. Therefore, this chapter is a review of pertinent literature in research areas relating to issues of giftedness, achievement, economics, gender, and cultural influences, in addition to educational program formats.

Although this study does not directly address the identification process for giftedness, it is relevant to the issue of program planning for gifted students; therefore, a review of research surrounding this topic is included. Factors relating to gifted, and to urban and minority resiliency and underachievement are considered. While it is shown that there is little in the way of research on the effects of poverty on gifted student experiences and outcomes, research on this topic for urban and minority students is reviewed. Next, research considering gender issues and giftedness, especially in relationship to achievement, are examined. The literature on minority-student issues, especially those of African-Americans is discussed. Finally, research concerning the effects of differing educational administrative placements for the gifted student is discussed. Therefore, the following areas of literature relevant to this research study will be reviewed in this chapter: 1) identification of gifted students, 2) underachievement

versus resiliency factors, 3) economic factors, 4) gender differences, 5) cultural influences that effect achievement, and 6) educational program administrative arrangements. Finally implications of the literature reviewed as it relates to this study will be discussed.

### Identification of Gifted Students

The issue of identification has perhaps received more attention than any other in the literature about gifted children, especially for minority populations (Ford, 1996). Although it is not a focus of this study, its implications for the field of giftedness and for services to the gifted student cannot be ignored. Therefore a brief review of this area of literature is important.

### Definitions of giftedness

There are many definitions of giftedness, or high intelligence. The traditional definition utilized by Terman (1925) defines the gifted as those who score in the upper two percentiles of an intelligence test, while Renzulli (1978) refers to the gifted as those who engage in creative production resulting from cluster traits, including above-average ability, task commitment, and creativity. Public Law (P.L.) 97-35 describes gifted children as giving “evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities” (Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, 1981, Section 582). A revised United States Office of Education definition of the gifted and talented student states that gifted children demonstrate “outstanding talent, perform” or “show

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 capacities in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor” (p. 26, as cited in Feldhusen, 1994, p. 232).

#### Under-Identification of Gifted Minority Students

The psychometric approach to identification may be appropriate for a certain group of gifted students who come from the majority population, take tests well, or who have backgrounds with enriched experiences and/or high academic achievement. However, the psychometric approach to identification may not be as successful or appropriate with other target populations. Groups for whom traditional identification processes may have been less successful include students who may not have exposure to the majority culture due to cultural or racial minority status, students with economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with limited English proficiency, students who regardless of background do not perform well on standardized tests, and finally, students with disabilities (Frasier and Passow, 1994).

In fact, it is well documented that minority and disadvantaged students are underrepresented and therefore, under-identified for gifted programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). There is considerable conflict about the manner in which traditional identification procedures have been carried out (Borland,

1997; Ford, 1996, 1998; Ford and Harris, 1990, 1991; Frasier, 1997; Maker, 1996; Scott, Deuel and Urbano 1996; Ogbu, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Torrance, 1998). Frasier and Passow (1994) sum up the controversy in the field surrounding the gifted identification process of minority and disadvantaged children as twofold: limited referrals and inappropriate tests.

Referral is the important first step in the identification process. This step may be troublesome for minority and disadvantaged students, because their teachers may have lower expectations for them; and also because there is a greater likelihood that they will attend more impoverished schools which have less opportunities for educational enrichment (Clark, 1993; Davis and Rimm, 1989; Ford, 1996, 1998; Frasier and Passow, 1994). Once a student is referred, the limitations of standardized tests, especially possible bias in intelligence and aptitude tests, may be a stumbling block in accurate identification (Harris and Ford, 1991). This disadvantage may be especially real for the student who is culturally and/or linguistically a minority, or disadvantaged socio-economically. In view of Coleman and Gallagher's (1992) findings from a review of the formal gifted identification procedures and policies in 49 states, standardized test bias is especially a concern. All used a form of standardized test in their identification process.

There are an on-going interests in, research on, and attempts to improve the identification of gifted children, especially for those children who have minority or disadvantaged backgrounds. Approaches which may resolve some of the issues raised by critics of the traditional identification process include:



broader theoretical conceptions of giftedness (Sternberg and Davidson, 1988), including consideration of a broader definition of intelligence which involves a more diverse domain related appraisal of ability (Gardner, 1983; Renzulli, 1978), and more dynamic assessment approaches (Feuerstein, Rand and Hoffman, 1979). In urban settings especially, using alternative procedures for identification (Frasier and Passow, 1994; Hiatt, 1991; Hilliard, 1976), such as checklists or reports from home, nominations by school and community figures in the child's life, or modified standardized-test cut-offs (Frasier, 1989) may be better practice methods. Such changes in gifted identification procedures may result in gifted programs more representative of the population of all young people in our country.

### **Underachievement Versus. Resiliency Factors**

#### **Definitions of Underachievement**

Underachievement has been defined as a "discrepancy between expected and actual performance" (Dowdall and Collangelo, 1982, p.180). Operational definitions of underachievement vary so greatly that substantial percentages of students are classified differently (i.e., sometimes as underachievers, sometimes not), depending upon the investigator. The statistical definition of regression from the mean is often used in the identification of learning disabilities.

Moreover, a regression formula, which considers the expected discrepancy between IQ and achievement, is sometimes used in the identification of underachievement in the gifted. Dowdall and Collangelo (1989) do not rely upon a statistical approach in their definition of underachievement of gifted students.

Instead, it is more theoretical due to its comparison of achievement measured by grades and teacher appraisal to ability as measured by standardized tests. It is beyond the scope of this study to fully define underachievement. However, it has been suggested that a broader perspective is needed for the study of underachievement, rather than by use of specific causal factors (Krause and Krause, 1981).

First of all, several researchers have asserted that underachievement is not a single phenomenon (Krause and Krause, 1981; Pirozzo, 1982; Rimm, 1986). Krause and Krause propose a multimodal theory to explain underachievement, and specifically recommend a longitudinal study to examine the phenomenon of underachievement in students from the time they begin school through their academic careers. If underachieving students are going to achieve successfully, schools are going to have to become places where “their work is what the process is about, rather than being essentially about their response to teachers” (Griffin, 1988, p. 23-24). Students must “become the causal agents in the school” which it may be asserted, characteristically, they are not. If what students do and student results are the subjects of study and the most significant elements in the school process, and not teaching, it is necessary to target what students do and to understand it better” (Griffin, 1988, p. 23-24). This could not be truer than for gifted inner-city students. It is imperative that research focuses on their behavior and experiences in order to develop a deeper understanding of their unique educational needs.

### Gifted Underachievement

The compelling results of Roberts, Ingram and Harris (1992) showing that without appropriate educational stimulation, gifted students regressed to “less than optimum levels of performance and capability” (p. 341), suggests that gifted students educational needs are unique. They appear to be at-risk for underachievement. Moreover, underachievement among gifted children in public schools is widespread (Rimm, 1988a). The argument has been made that regular teachers, general curricula and general-education school climates do not provide suitable educational environments for most gifted students (Whitmore, 1980; Myers, 1980, as cited in McCall, Evahn and Kratzer, 1992).

Many researchers have concluded that gifted underachievement may be a result of boredom and a lack of educational stimulation (Mallis, 1983; Pirozzo, 1982; Sahler, 1983 [all as cited in McCall, Evahn and Kratzer, 1992]). A great number of gifted students have not received an education commensurate with their abilities (Gallagher, 1982; Marland, 1972; VanTassel-Baska, 1987; Winner and von Karolyi, 1998). In fact, the plight of gifted students in the public schools, with respect to underachievement, may have been vastly understated (Sellin and Birch, 1981). As Park (1988) has suggested, experts in the field of gifted education are not seeking ‘better treatment’ for gifted students, only that their needs be met.

Most research with underachieving gifted students has been with those from the upper-middle classes (McCall, Evahn and Kratzer, 1992). However,

some research has found special factors that may account for underachievement in lower socioeconomic groups. These include poor quality schools, lower teacher expectations, lack of identification of giftedness and low family expectations and resources. Moreover, in summarizing their major findings from a broad sample of underachievers (including high IQ students), McCall, Evahn and Kratzer (1992) report finding twice as many male as female underachievers from all socio-economic statuses. In addition, no difference was found in racial distribution of underachievers, no differences were found for birth order, family size, size of the town of residence, or whether the students had working mothers or were from divorced families. While no study had considered race in such a systematic fashion prior to this study, McCall and colleagues sample was 2% African-American from the state of Washington, between the years of 1965 to 1980. In conclusion, McCall, Evahn and Kratzer note that “underachievers from less-educated families and racial minorities may not be perceived as underachievers by parents, counselors, or the students themselves; the perception may not be of low grades, but of unusually high test performance” (1992, p. 87). This gives credence to the idea that the underachievement of students from less-educated families and racial minorities fits the operational definition of underachievement posed by Dowdall and Collangelo (1982, p.180): a ‘discrepancy between expected and actual performance’.

The Cupertino Project (Whitmore, 1980) is considered a model program in the area of gifted education by some researchers (Supplee, 1990). It involved a self-contained class for highly gifted elementary students who were

underachieving. The theoretical basis for the project was that school-based problems contributed to the vulnerabilities of gifted underachievers. This project may be considered a model in the field because it addressed social, emotional and academic needs of gifted learners. It was student-centered in its orientation; and it also emphasized emotional health and self-motivation. Moreover, the follow-up studies completed two and five years later suggest significant program effects including improved attitudes and improved behavior. A unique component of the program was an emphasis on building a supportive peer community. The classroom emphasis was upon meeting the student's needs, with practices greatly encouraging peer support.

Tannenbaum (1983) and Janos and Robinson (1985) indicate that social and emotional development are accepted as being more highly correlated with mental age than with chronological age. Moreover, one is more likely to seek relationships with intellectual peers, which may be difficult, if not impossible for gifted children to achieve in a general-education setting. In fact, Cross, Coleman and Stewart (1993), in a study of the stigma 'of giftedness, found that among 1465 gifted students, more than half indicated they often do not feel free to be themselves in high school. Eighty-five percent indicated that only some or a few students are like them at school.

This lack of true peers suggests an academic risk factor for gifted students. Gross (1989) and others (Cross, Coleman and Stewart, 1993, Tannenbaum, 1983) have described this specific risk for underachievement experienced by gifted students as a result of high intellectual abilities. Gross

considers it 'a forced choice dilemma': The gifted student is often faced with the choice of satisfying a drive for academic excellence, and forfeiting intimate relationships with average learners, or "if the choice is intimacy, the gifted may be forced into a pattern of systematic and deliberate underachievement to retain membership in the social group" (1989, p. 189). Moreover, gifted children often downplay their superiority when interacting with average children. If this false image is internalized, the gifted child may be susceptible to underrating his/her ability and worth (Goldberg, 1981; Start, 1986 as cited in Gross, 1989). However, results indicate that self-concepts of gifted children may improve as a result of participation in totally or partially segregated settings (Coleman and Fults, 1982, 1985; Olszewski, 1987).

#### Underachievement: The Role of Peer Influence and Social Class Distinctions

Poussaint (1972) found that African-American children (not unlike Caucasian and Hispanic youth) have strong needs for achievement and approval. Moreover, Kuykendall (1992) asserts that these needs are often satisfied through the peer group and to a great extent, African-American youth "internalize their self-worth and 'place' within their peer group subculture" (p. 22). She adds that this social image in the context of peer relations is important to social development. However, even when peer relationships lead to negative behavior, they may remain intact due to the peer loyalty, appreciation, and support provided by the peers. Early peer-group orientation is an ordinary aspect of the lives of inner-city African-American children, and peer groups play an

important role in promoting the development and transition to adulthood (Taylor, 1991). The role of peer influence upon development and achievement of gifted majority-group students has long been considered a factor, albeit a minor one relative to home and family influences. However, recently a controversy has arisen over the importance of peers in development and achievement.

Harris (1998) argues that the socialization of youth hinges upon peer interaction rather than on what takes place at home. She proposes instead a group socialization theory, emphasizing that a child's identity is molded by peer and community influences. These take precedence over home influences once children move into other settings, such as school and community. Furthermore, in Efran's and Greene's critique (1999) of Harris' work (1998), it is emphasized that a unique aspect of the model is the role of competition between groups, such as the 'nerds' and the 'jocks', sorority sisters and independents and differing ethnic or racial groups. Each of these groups develops a separate identity. Moreover, except for students in isolated rural areas, most socialization takes place in these groups.

Harris' (1998) points out that it is not parents, but peers who endorse cutting classes, not doing homework, joining gangs, etc. She hypothesizes that very strong 'in-group' identifications have a survival value; it is no surprise that children from every culture fear being labeled 'different'. The importance of being a part of the group has insured the welfare of the tribe, etc., because it has meant that succeeding generations would be committed enough to willingly defend other group members. Harris' answer to manipulating this process is for

parents to pick desirable neighborhoods and communities. This is often not possible for the lower-income family who has less choice or mobility. However, she points out that because they can intervene in this peer identification process at the group level, teachers sometimes have social leverage that parents do not. When considering the dilemma of many urban and minority-gifted students, placement with gifted peers may provide an opportunity for group identification with others who value intellectual pursuits and who will reinforce these endeavors when together.

Gifted youth, and minority-gifted youth especially, sometimes underachieve to avoid feelings of isolation from their peers (Frasier and Passow, 1994). The African-American student (Kunjufu, 1988; Osborne, 1997; Steele, 1992; Steele and Aronson, 1995; Taylor, 1991), and especially the gifted African-American student may be at risk for underachievement or for disidentifying academically due to peer issues (Ford, 1992; Fordham, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1988). A number of researchers recommend homogenous grouping for Caucasian gifted children, as well as for African-American gifted children, as a partial or possible solution to this dilemma (Coleman, 1995; Davis and Rimm, 1985; Ford, 1996; Gross, 1989; Shade, 1978; Winner, 1997). The importance and influence of gifted peers and peer support may well be overlooked when considering best practice in gifted education, for urban and minority gifted students. Research considering the social context of such settings is needed in the field, particularly research that is qualitative and quantitative in format



(Coleman, 1995). Research is especially needed on the evaluation of homogeneous settings for urban and minority gifted students.

A significant amount of research concerns the peer-group problems faced by gifted African-American students who successfully achieve academically (Ford and Harris, 1991, Ford, Harris and Schueberger, 1993, Fordham, 1988, Fordham and Ogbu, 1986, Frasier and Passow, 1994). Socially, African-American peers may very well discourage the time commitment, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to achieve academic success. Peer-group pressures against achievement may be very powerful and persuasive, taking different forms, including, name-calling, exclusion, ostracism, and even physical assault (Close, 1999; Ford and Harris, 1991; Ford, Harris and Schueger, 1993; Fordham, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Kitano, 1991; MacLeod, 1995; Scott, 1991). For the very capable African-American student a 'resistance' to striving for academic excellence may allow for avoidance of peer rejection and of emotional chaos. Fordham (1988) proposed that confusion over racial identity may cause African-American gifted students to underachieve in an attempt to not be considered as "acting White" by African-American peers. She asserted that in comparison, the strategy of a high-achieving African-American student might be to assume a "raceless persona", in which characteristics of the dominant culture are adopted and those of one's own are relinquished. Kunjufu (1988) reiterates that racelessness is a choice based upon the status of being excluded due to differences and achievements. Racelessness is chosen in preference to 'being White' (p. 96).

Other researchers have found some difference in the role of peer relationships and academic achievement between African-American males and females. Hare (1979) compared the self-perceptions of African-American males and female youth. His findings demonstrate that male self-image depended more upon non-academic factors, such as peer acceptance and social ability, while female self-image was more strongly related to academic achievement. Therefore, the importance of peer relationships in the achievement of African-American males and females remains to be explored.

Studies have shown lower correlations between academics and self-esteem for African-Americans (Demo and Parker, 1987; Simmons, Brown, Bush and Blyth, 1978). Steele (1992) suggests that the social dynamics of the school environment and of society itself may result in a process that causes African-Americans to disidentify with academics, that is to underachieve due to social pressures as a defense mechanism.

Lindstrom and Van Sant (1986) point out that upon reaching adolescence the minority gifted student may experience a pull between school staff, parents and peers. Less able peers may discourage them from succeeding by the dominant culture's rules. Gurin and Epps (1975) suggest that often an African-American student's efforts to define the dual goals of individual achievement and collective commitment can present a critical dilemma. Moreover, the sharing of collective identity has significant meaning, both socially and affectively. Therefore, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that for the minority community culture and for African-American students especially, academic achievement in

school may be a 'subtractive' process socially. Successful academic achievement may be perceived as lack of support for the minority cultural orientation, which evolved from a two-century history of denial to educational access and rewards, and which opposes or resists academic striving.

In addition, Close (1999) highlights the possible effects of this resistance to academic striving among African-Americans, in her description of an upper-middle class high school in Ohio, where African-Americans under perform when compared to Caucasian students. Shaker Heights, Ohio, is an integrated, affluent neighborhood. Wealth seems to be racially balanced and students from the community go to school in a racially balanced high school that Close indicates is consistently one of the Nation's best. Yet, at this school, where African-Americans make up about one half of the student body, on the average, they account for only ten percent of those at the top and 90 percent of those at the bottom.

"The achievement gap" [between African-American and Caucasian students] "is a chronic national problem" (Close, 1999, p. 36). According to a recent research study by the Applied Research Center, Oakland, CA, (as cited in Close, 1999), of the twenty-six states that have adopted senior graduation exams, "a disproportionate number of those who passed other requirements, but failed to graduate due to exam scores are students of color". The report concluded that students who attend inferior schools are punished by the exams. This explanation is based on documented inequities in educational institutions; however, testing does not explain the cause for this outcome in a school district

like Shaker Heights, Ohio. Close concludes, "that black schoolchildren are still wrestling with the ludicrous issue of whether academic achievement somehow makes them less black says volumes about the message of black-white difference that society continues to send" (p. 40).

Writers and researchers have expressed this pressure against academic and professional success, sensed by African-Americans from others in their community as well. McDermott terms the phenomenon as achieved failure (McDermott [as cited in Hale-Benson, 1989, p. 86]). " If they do succeed they may be resented by most other African Americans, if they do not, they will lose prestige among family, other successful African-Americans and Caucasians" (Petroni, [as cited in Kunjufu, 1988, p. 16]).

Steele (1988) poses the rationale that racial differences were minimized to achieve unit that served as a coping mechanism for racial prejudice. Therefore, racial identification unified African-Americans into a singular people at the cost of individuation. The denial of entry into the mainstream of American life resulting from racial discrimination, caused African-Americans to develop the concept of "fictive kinship": black American social identity in opposition to the white American social identity (Fordham, 1996; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). This phenomenon is reported by other authors and researchers as ethnic consolidation (DeVos, 1967), or a sense of peoplehood (Green, 1981).

Forham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that only African-Americans control the criteria for membership to fictive kinship, which is important because it is in contrast to the criteria for earning grades or for promotion within a job. Williams

(1981) indicates that fictive kinship sets a standard or an ideal by which each individual is judged. Membership is very important due to the group loyalty afforded the individual in situations involving conflict or competition with Caucasians. Forham and Ogbu (1986) argue that children learn early that group association is important enough that they may unconsciously tend to identify with their peer group and peer community's life chances and success potential. Membership in the fictive kinship means that you will never be left totally on your own in the face of racial conflict or bias. In fact, regardless of your past, a brother is a brother (Sargent, 1985, as cited in Fordham and Ogbu, 1986); a member of the fictive kinship will not be deserted.

Forham's (1996) ethnographic study of Capitol High School, in Washington, D.C., in Blacked Out, demonstrates that coping with the possibility of being alienated from the fictive kinship of African-Americans puts a heavy burden on high-achieving students. All students do not necessarily identify with the fictive kinship, but those that do must develop strategies to allow them to cross the cultural barrier to achievement. High-achievers do not brag about their grades, lest they be perceived as pursuing individual goals that will lead them outside the group. They may act preoccupied with accepted athletic activities, or they may make a habit of joking around, or perhaps even acquire protection from others in exchange for homework support. Regardless of their strategy, a great amount of energy may be directed towards concealing their academic interests. To the gifted African-American child the dilemma of high academic striving versus alienation from a supportive peer group or from fictive kin may be a great

burden. To what extent giftedness places an African-American boy or girl at greater risk for lack of achievement and stress must be further researched if schools are to be structured to meet these children's needs.

### Definition of Resilience

Resilience has been termed "the positive pole of the ubiquitous phenomenon of individual differences in people's responses to stress and adversity", or in other words, "individual variations in response to stress" (Rutter, 1990, p. 181, 183). The rationale for examining resiliency is to reveal processes of adaptation. The results of resiliency research and developmental psychopathology research represent two sides of the same coin.

Understanding resiliency began as a research initiative to aid in intervening against the development of psychopathology (Masten and Braswell, 1991). The search for protective factors among the offspring of psychiatric patients (Garmezy, 1981; Richters and Weintrub, 1990) gave rise to studies of high-risk offspring who were found to be doing well, and consequently defined as resilient children. This initial search has led to a field of research to identify methods to intervene in aiding healthy emotional and social functioning and school success.

Many students are high achievers despite exposure to known stress and risk factors (Masten, 1994; Masten and Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter, 1990). Risk and protective factors generated by research considering underachievement and resiliency among urban and minority gifted students remains to be outlined. A review of some pertinent aspects of education-resiliency research follows.

### Education Resiliency Research

An alternative to studying underachievers is to develop a profile of overachievers. Studying those who accomplish more than might be expected given their circumstances is a means of better understanding and working with underachievers (Griffin, 1988, p. 38). In fact, education-resiliency research presents evidence that the ability to adapt and to succeed in situations where individuals seem confined by circumstance offers valuable information for planning interventions for at-risk youth (Anderson, 1994; Baldwin, 1994; Freiberg, 1994; Gordon, 1994; Hauser, 1985; Masten, 1994; Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1994; Peng, 1994; Swanson and Spencer, 1991). Masten (1994) reports that research is limited on how resiliency occurs. Nevertheless, findings suggest that the ingredients of successful adaptation involve four components: reducing risk and vulnerability, reducing stressors, increasing available resources and mobilizing protective processes (Masten, p.15).

### School-Satisfaction Research

Resiliency research with school children in general has elucidated critical school and classroom variables influencing school satisfaction that could enhance retention rates. This research may be helpful in discerning critical school variables affecting gifted students. The critical variables influencing school satisfaction identified for students in general include, 1) supportive interested teacher behavior (Epstein, 1981a; Skinner, Wellborn and Connell, 1992), 2) caring, safe social climate (Anderson, 1982), 3) positive peer interactions (Epstein, 1981b; Phillips, 1993), 4) positive student and teacher

expectations for academic success (Connell, Spencer and Abner, 1994; Craven, Marsh and Debus, 1991), 5) parent interest and involvement (Connell et al., 1994), 6) frequent opportunities to participate in classroom decision-making (Epstein, 1981a), and 7) frequent engagement in meaningful, voluntary, appropriately challenging school-related tasks (Maton, 1990, Wong and Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Research is necessary to confirm the significance of these variables for gifted student populations.

When considering the components of school satisfaction, the unique characteristics of the gifted may suggest additional or different variables. However, in a study conducted by Ash and Huebner (1998), gifted and non-gifted middle school students' subjective reports of their life satisfaction revealed that "gifted students' evaluations of the quality of their school experiences accounted for greater portions of unique variance in the formulation of their overall or global life satisfaction reports than was the case for their non-gifted counterparts. The finding that gifted students weigh their perceptions of their school experiences more heavily in their global well-being assessments underscores the importance of school contextual variables for this sub-group of children. Perhaps educators of gifted students should lend greater attention to school climate variables when designing optimal educational environments for them. Although family relationships provided a significant source of overall well-being for the non-gifted children, the importance of school context for the gifted sample suggests a uniquely central role for teachers and other school personnel in the lives of these children (1998, p.319)."



Given the relative importance of school satisfaction in the gifted child's formulation of life satisfaction (Ash and Huebner, 1998), school experiences may be a more important protective factor for gifted and talented students than has been previously understood. Importantly, Roedell's research (1984) documented two "vulnerabilities" found to be school-related risk factors for gifted children: alienation from peer group and inappropriate placement. Positive peer interactions (Epstein, 1981b; Phillips, 1993) and frequent engagement in meaningful, voluntary, appropriately challenging school-related tasks (Maton, 1990; Roberts, Ingram and Harris, 1992; Wong and Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), both critical factors in a gifted student's school satisfaction, may not be met in the general-education classroom settings in which many urban and minority gifted children find themselves.

#### Resiliency Factors: African-American Students

A study at Howard University attempted to discern why some African-American children succeed despite deprivation, poverty and difficult home situations (originated by Woodward, as cited in Griffin, 1988). The four criteria established for middle school students to be included in the study were: one parent missing, poverty level income, below standard housing and above average academic achievement in school.

A preliminary finding was that children who did well academically under difficult circumstances scored above the median on self-acceptance and self-respect measures. Woodward cited the absence of self-pity, setting high

standards, believing in one's ability to control one's own fate, viewing your family as worthwhile and expressing the idea of being loved (as cited in Griffin, 1988, p. 6). This corroborates some of the findings from a longitudinal study of socially disadvantaged students followed from childhood in 1969, into adulthood, which found that self-confidence was the most crucial factor in academic and later career success (Kenkel and Gage, 1982).<sup>1</sup>

Research by Gurin and Epps (1975) involving African-American students from ten predominantly African-American colleges (some gifted students may be included in this group) also report that family and social background measures influenced a small amount of individual achievement. The common belief that absence of a father negatively influences the achievement of African-American students was not supported by the results of their study. They report that whether the student grew up in a single parent, dual parent, nuclear, or extended family, 'simply had no bearing on individual achievement' (p. 394).

Instead, only the students' 'educational and occupational aspirations, expectancies of success,' family income and rural residency correlated significantly with college success. These results call into question the role of family status and socialization in individual achievement. Instead they emphasize the role of opportunities, expectations and educational socialization.

Ford (1994) described 'resilient Black youth' as African-American achievers who possess the following characteristics: autonomy, competence, independence, self-sufficiency, internal locus of control, positive sense of self, feelings of empowerment, good coping skills, motivation and determination.

These qualities would come to mind for an achieving student, regardless of ethnic or cultural background. However, she also found the qualities of having a strong participation in religious affairs, positive school experiences, strong family values and positive peer relations as characteristics exhibited by achieving African-Americans. Baldwin (1994) also highlighted characteristics he associated with gifted African-Americans who are affected by cultural diversity, socioeconomic deprivation and/or geographic isolation. Among these include: persuasive speech, language full of imagery, alertness to movement, social intuition, sensitivity to inequities, feelings of community responsibility and finally, strong group affiliations, especially a strong loyalty to one's peer group.

Findings from resiliency research of minority students may be synthesized in terms of three different variables: 1) the psychological characteristics of resilient school-age students, 2) the characteristics of effective schools, and 3) the family and community features that contribute to collaboration of services (Peng, 1994, Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1994). Garmezy (1988) examines attributes of the resilient African-American child, while Werner and Smith (1982) consider attributes of the resilient African-American adolescent. Their research suggests that a triad of attributes characterizes this resilience. The triad includes 1) the child's dispositional attributes, 2) family cohesion and warmth and, 3) support figures in the environment and in the schools who serve as identification models.

Nevertheless, scant research considers the resiliency factors for successful African-American urban and minority students (Anderson, 1994), and

little, if any research considers resiliency factors for the successful African-American urban, inner-city gifted student. Longitudinal data in this area of research are especially needed.

### **Economic Factors**

One challenge of studying the effects of economic factors upon academic achievement is in separating socioeconomic from multicultural factors. Many African-American children grow up in a culture of poverty. Research confuses “the culture of poverty with racial and ethnic culture” (Evans, 1993, p. 282). Shade (1994) notes that comparing lower socioeconomic African-Americans to middle socioeconomic European Americans is common, but meaningless, because “the experiential and cultural backgrounds of the two groups are not comparable” (p. 185).

High unemployment, substandard housing, and low wages lead to the development of a culture of poverty, often characterized by ‘a self-contained social system’ (Lewis, as cited in Evans, 1993) developed to provide ‘identity and protection’. Lewis also suggests that minority members often feel distrust, inadequacy, and inferiority.

State of America’s Children Defense Fund reported in 1991 that 12.6 million children live below the poverty line. In fact, the poverty rate for children in the United States exceeds that of all other Western industrialized countries, except Australia (Smeeding and Rainwater, 1995; Smeeding, Torrey and Rein, 1988). The US Bureau of the Census (1992) reported that in 1991, 21% of all children younger than 18 years of age were poor (up from 15% in 1970). By

1993, the poverty rate for children in the U.S had risen to 22.7%, or nearly one out of every four children (Hernandez, 1997).

### Race and Poverty

Although Caucasians make up the majority of poor children, African-American children are vastly over-represented (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997). In the early 1980's 46 percent of African-American children lived below the poverty line, in contrast to 16% of Caucasian children. As of 1988, 22 percent of Caucasian children and 53 percent of African-American children lived in relative poverty, and by 1993 the percents had risen to 24 percent for Caucasians and 54 percent for African-Americans (Hernandez, 1997).

The overall proportion of children living with their mother and no father in the home was 23 percent by 1993 (Hernandez, 1997). While nearly 45 percent of Caucasian children will spend a portion of their childhood living in single-mother families, the rate for African-American children is 86 percent (Bumpass, 1984). These families headed by single women "are the poorest of all major demographic groups, regardless of how poverty is measured" (Garfinkel and McLanahan, 1986, p. 11).

In considering long-term poverty, again, the contrasts are remarkable. 24% of African-American children are likely to spend 10-14 years in poverty, on the average, while Caucasian children are likely to spend less than one year. Therefore African-American children are more likely to remain in poverty for many more years than are Caucasian children (Duncan, 1991; Mayer, 1997). Moreover, chronic poverty may pose greater threats to a child's development

than does short-term, or periodic poverty (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan and Mariato, 1997; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov, 1994; McLeod, and Shanahan, 1993; Smith et al., 1997).

Minority children are more likely to live in poverty. Developmental studies demonstrate that ethnic differences in both family and neighborhood differences account for a significant portion of the variance in academic measures and in behavior problems (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1993). Yet very few of these studies account for the factor of poverty separate from ethnicity. Ethnic differences alone in child outcomes may be overestimated (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1995). Seeley (1993) asserts that “the underachievement and higher dropout rate for minority group students is a function of poverty, not race or ethnicity” (p. 265). Moreover, Moore (as cited in Weill, 1998) was convinced that the greatest problem of teaching disadvantaged students resulted from low aspirations of the teachers, not those of parents and students. Brooks-Gunn et al. (1995) argue poverty may increase the number of risk factors contributing to poor academic outcomes. Poverty’s association with each risk factor may account for the links between risk factors and child outcomes reported in studies that did not control for poverty status.

It should not be surprising to anyone that there is a relationship between educational achievement and the social conditions faced by a group (Berry, 1989). In fact, the extent to which socioeconomic factors play a role in the underachievement of male and female gifted students in general and of African-Americans specifically remains to be studied.

## Neighborhoods and Poverty

Contrasting differences in enduring poverty are evident at the neighborhood level for African-American children, but not for Caucasians (Duncan et al., 1994). In fact, researchers are questioning whether poverty, especially that among African-Americans, “is qualitatively different than in earlier years” (Slaughter, 1988, p. 115). “It turns out that if you look at neighborhood poverty, minority young children are much likely to live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. And it turns out that of Black children in America, only 15 to 25 percent escape having their family be poor or living in a poor neighborhood.” (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1995, p.37-38). For an inner-city minority child the dynamic of living within a low socioeconomic strata may be intensified by the neighborhood culture of poverty.

One approach to locating the very poor is available through census data (Ellwood, 1988). The Bureau of Census has a designation for poverty areas. A census tract is a designated area with a ten-block radius. A poverty area is a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or more (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1971). According to the Bureau of Census, when tracts are established they are “designed to be homogeneous with respect to housing characteristics, economic status, and living conditions. Tracts generally have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents. These are relatively small areas.” (Ellwood, 1988, p. 192).

Previous reports (Wilson, 1987) have suggested the greatest prevalence among the poor occurs in inner city metropolitan areas. In his analyses (1987, 1991) of the changes in structure of inner city neighborhoods, he found that the

absence of poor neighbors or the presence of affluent neighbors affects on children; he terms this effect the model of 'collective socialization'. Moreover, he suggests that a 'contagion' model is at work, for example, peers engaging in certain problem behaviors increases the chances that the problem behaviors may spread.

Brooks-Gunn et al. (1993, 1995) suggest that the process of collective socialization may be operating in neighborhoods. They found that externalizing behaviors in five year olds were more likely in the presence of poor neighbors (1993), whereas the presence of affluent neighbors was associated with lower dropout rate and a lower rate of single teen births. This effect was found when controlling for ethnicity, maternal education and numbers of single parents (1995). Child psychopathology rates also are higher for inner-city youth and lower for those living in rural and small communities, suggesting that inner-city living may present children and their parents with multiple stressors, one being low income, which may have cumulative negative effects (Wolkind and Rutter, 1985).

The great majority of poor families are like other families, with no significant differences in behavior between poor and nonpoor according to Johnson, Miranda, Sherman, et al. (1991), yet there is more chaos and confusion in poorer neighborhoods. Ianni (1983) suggests that in such a neighborhood context of poverty, many poor youth are left 'to chart their own course or, much worse, to pick a route among the confusing signals put out by the family, the peer group, the school and the work place" (p. 36). The result can be an increasing



sense of 'futility, dissatisfaction and resistance to any formal structure" (Taylor, 1991, p. 139).

Johnson, Miranda, Sherman, et al. (1991) suggest that the urban poor may be 'mired in' the deepest poverty, isolation and suffering of any group, and that their plight must be addressed. Yet they caution that research must be carried out to ensure that help is tailored to their needs. They assert that help can "be targeted appropriately only if it is based on an understanding of the true circumstances of these children" (1991, p. 11).

### African-American Middle Class

African-American children are over-represented among the poor; however, many African-American children grow up in middle and upper economic strata. African-Americans do not constitute a homogeneous group (Harrison, Serafica and McAdoo, 1984; Hatchett and Jackson, 1993; McAdoo, 1993; Sanders-Phillips, 1989). Because they vary in terms of economic situation, cultural experiences and life situations, simple generalizations do not reflect the experience of many African-Americans.

Census figures show that approximately one third of the African-American population (eight million people) belongs to families with middle-income status (DeMott, 1995). Steady, well-paying jobs, adequate housing and plentiful opportunities characterize the setting for middle- and upper-income groups. Lewis suggests that these experiences result in socialization that is closer to that of the majority society. Moreover, according to Evans (1993), research suggests that individuals in the same socioeconomic strata have more in common with

each other than with individuals of the same ethnic or cultural group from differing socioeconomic strata.

The complication of confounding social class and race in comparative racial studies was addressed by Grahm (1984, 1989). In her review of almost two decades of research on the causal attributions of motivation, Grahm (1989) concluded that race and social class were confounded, making it difficult to discern to which factor reported differences were due. She reported that in a comparison to lower-SES African-Americans, middle-SES African-Americans “displayed a particularly adaptive pattern of attributions which was different from that of middle-SES Caucasians and lower-SES African-Americans” (1989, p. 63). A methodical approach to considering race and class effects has not been followed. Instead, only lower-SES African-Americans had been compared to middle-SES Caucasians. Grahm concludes that middle-class African-Americans have often been ignored altogether in the literature.

## **Gender**

Gender and the interaction of gender and race appear to be moderators of educational outcomes (Benjamin and Stewart, 1989; Conger et. al, 1992; Kindlon and Thompson, 1999; Milner and Blyth, 1989; Reyes and Hedeker, 1993; Rimm, 1999; Silverman, 1993; Simmons et al., 1978; Simmons and Blyth 1987). Gifted girls and gifted boys are relatively equal in number throughout the first decade of life (Silverman, 1986).

However, girls may have an advantage in the areas of verbal processing, grades and achievement tests throughout elementary years (Kerr, 1994). This

advantage seems to lessen as girls enter middle school (Rimm, 1998b; Simmons and Blyth, 1987), when confidence drops. By adulthood, when one considers those individuals who have achieved eminence in their respective fields, one might ask: where did all of the gifted girls go (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1991, 1992; Lubinski and Humphreys, 1990; Orenstein, 1994)? This pattern holds for females regardless of ethnic or cultural background (Fordham, 1991, 1996, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; LePage-Lee, 1997; Veenker and Veenker, 1998; Yong, 1992).

For gifted males, ethnic and cultural background is a moderator variable for achievement. African-American males, in particular, may be at risk for underachievement. Indeed there is evidence that being African-American, male and gifted may in fact be a risk factor rather than an advantage to academic success (Ford and Harris, 1992; Fordham, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Gibbs, 1991; Green, Fine and Tollefson, 1988; Osborne, 1997; Steele, 1992; Steele and Aronson, 1995). The literature relating to pertinent issues regarding academic outcomes of gifted females and of gifted males are reviewed below.

### Gifted Females

Few researchers have studied gifted females (Kerr, 1994, Veenker and Veenker, 1998). Inquiry about gifted females is necessary at two levels, giftedness in the general female population and giftedness within the racial and ethnic minority female populations. The literature does highlight some issues that may be unique to gifted females. Concerns related to self-image and perfectionism, such as eating disorders, plague gifted females at a significantly

higher rate than non-gifted males and females, or gifted males (Adderholt-Elliott, 1991; Garner, 1991). Moreover, gifted girls seem to prefer more androgynous activities and pursuits (Kerr, 1991a, 1994; Rogers and Gilligan, 1988) and are more like gifted boys in their interests, but may also be compelled to maintain enough similar behaviors to other girls to be accepted (Card et al., 1980; Kerr, 1994).

In fact, gifted girls often try to hide their abilities in an attempt to blend in with other students, because girls value social acceptance from their same-sex peers to such a great extent that they are at risk for underachievement in general-education settings (Silverman, 1991). According to Silverman, gifted girls are “overly socialized to fit in at the expense of their giftedness” (p. 122).

Yearly, fewer qualified females than qualified males enter fields of science, engineering and math (Betz, 1997). In fact, in a talent follow-up project of 100,000 gifted males and females scoring at or above the 99th percentile in math (Benbow, 1988), twenty-one percent of girls ended their education at high school, while only nine percent of boys stopped there. Eventually, later follow-up found that thirty-two percent of the highly gifted males received doctorates, as did only six percent of these highly gifted females (Lubinski and Humphreys, 1990).

A growing literature suggests that many bright and talented females become disinterested in academics in middle school and especially in high school. For those who persist and enter college, the height of interest demonstrated in the elementary years is not rekindled again until graduate school, if they make it that far (American Association of University Women

Educational Foundation, 1991, 1992; Orenstein, 1994). Is there reason to consider giftedness in a female as a disadvantage or as an educational risk factor?

### Females and Academic Outcomes

On the average, females receive higher grades than males; yet in middle school and high school some females begin to lose confidence in their abilities, even though grades remain high (AAUW, 1991). Girls receive significantly less attention from classroom teachers than do boys; and African-American girls have even fewer classroom interactions than do Caucasian girls, in spite of evidence that African-American girls attempt to initiate more interactions on a more frequent basis (AAUW, 1992).

As girls approach age eleven, they begin to lose confidence in their abilities, looks, and personalities (Cornell et al, 1991; Rogers and Gilligan, 1988; Simmons and Blyth, 1987; Simmons et. al, 1978). Studies evaluating the effect of the transition from elementary to middle school show that students in transition, especially girls, experience a drop in self-esteem (Barglow and Schaefer, 1979, Reyes and Hedecker, 1993). There is also evidence that high school-age females (especially Caucasian) from working-class families may be caught in a traditional system of roles and values characterized by marked subordination of women to men, which may ultimately serve to disempower them (Smith, 1987, Weis, 1988, 1991).

A body of literature suggests that female development is rooted in attachment and affiliation, while males are more grounded in separateness and

autonomy (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Sadker and Sadker emphasize that schools focus more upon boys' strengths. In contrast to a competitive system, a cooperative system where a student is listened to, understood and appreciated for his or her unique qualities and experiences may best meet the needs of minority female students.

For gifted females, it may be the very structure of public schools that puts them at risk for underachievement. A hierarchical educational system emphasizes power. LePage-Lees (1997) found that the norms and structures within a school system often discouraged the academic progress of female students, especially the progress of those students from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds. She argues that females seek to be heard, understood and respected, but power is not articulated by females as an important, nor ultimate goal. Females (especially from diverse backgrounds) often found authority intimidating, and did not necessarily want to join it as much as to have their ideas considered seriously. Females demonstrate more need to be valued, than to be powerful. Moreover, for females it was of particular importance to receive attention for unique qualities from their teachers (LePage-Lees, 1997). Females generally do better than males in school until puberty (Steinkamp and Maehr, 1984). Steinkamp and Maehr considered this phenomenon in terms of the more competitive, individualistic learning environment in the middle school, which may work against female strengths. The success of females in elementary school may relate to the more relational environment it provides. Females put emphasis upon relationships with their teachers (Riviera and Poplin, 1995).

LePage-Lee (1997) found female students paid much less attention to teaching styles than to the relationship established with the teacher. Also, females looked to female teachers for support, but in fact were often disappointed because “many females in authority acted like men to compete successfully” (LePage-Lee, 1997, p. 45).

### African-American Gifted Females

Most research on gifted females has been completed with Caucasian females. We do not know the extent to which the results reviewed hold true for African-American females.

Although researchers (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; LePage-Lees, 1997) suggest that all females must deal with the hierarchical patriarchal structure of society, Fordham (1993) insists that the African-American female is doubly affected. In the school setting, the double jeopardy of race and gender is experienced by African-American females. Gurin and Epps (1975) considered the expectancies and successes of African-American college students, and found that African-American women face inequities of both race and sex discrimination. African-American females are compelled to seek “being white” (Fordham, 1991, 1996, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986), and to be genderless, in an attempt to be successful academically (Fordham, 1993). In contrast, they may avoid educational endeavors seen as a goal of the dominant class. Assimilation of academic goals may be seen as necessitating relinquishing a part of themselves.

In developing a positive identity, African-American females may not feel valued. This conflict is exemplified in the ethnographic study The Habit of

Surviving (Scott, 1991), when the character Gwenn describes her pain growing up in a male-centered African-American culture. She viewed the 'male-centeredness' as an interference with her relationships as an adolescent and into adulthood. She explains that her choices for friendships were expected to be predominantly based upon how they benefited her in relationship to males, either relatives or perspective partners. She describes her mother's life as also revolving around the needs of men, a way of life from which Gwen found difficult to break free.

Banks and Grambs (1972) suggest that indeed an African-American female's identity is derived from her accepted roles and statuses within the family and the African-American community especially. However, her identity within American culture is left for her to create. Creating a positive identity is influenced by factors of poverty and 'double discrimination', and may lead to inner conflicts, which may be expressed as 'self-directed' or 'inner-directed' conflict. For the gifted African-American female, giftedness may represent a triple jeopardy.

The goals of African-American female college students, some of whom are gifted, from ten predominantly African-American colleges reflected lower aspirations on almost every educational and occupational measure, when compared to the aspirations of African-American considered (Gurin and Epps, 1975). Yong's (1992) review of previous literature suggests that there is evidence of various socio-cultural, environmental and intra-personal factors "that seriously hamper women and ethnically diverse individuals from pursuing mathematics and science-oriented careers" (p. 36). His findings suggest



“African-American female students did not have stereotypic gender role expectations regarding math as a male domain” (p. 139).

Therefore, another question waiting to be answered by research includes whether or not gifted African-American girls disidentify with academic achievement due to social pressures. Few studies have considered this question.

### African-American Males

Nationally, African-American males score lower on standardized tests are suspended or expelled at a higher rate, drop out at a rate higher and have a lower graduation rate than any other student group (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Governor’s Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males, 1990; U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In school, six percent of African-American males are punished compared to less than three percent of Caucasians (Dent, as cited in Duhon-Sells and Pitts, 1994), while African-American males are punished at four times the rate of African-American females (Slate, Perez, Waldrop and Justen, 1990). Moreover, African-American males represent 6% of the general population, but more than 40% of the prison population (Conciatore, as cited in Duhon-Sells and Pitts, 1994), and the primary cause of death among African-American males ages 15 to age 24 is homicide (Taylor, 1990).

### African-American males and Academic Outcomes

The concern about underachievement in African-American males has been viewed as a national crisis by some educators, who have alluded to “a

national conspiracy to destroy African-American males' self-images" (Kunjufu, 1985) and have made reference to them as an "endangered species", in crisis and at high risk for failure (Gibbs, 1988). More educators and researchers must address this concern of underachievement, especially, in relation to African-American male youth who are gifted. Little research has considered this group's risk for underachievement: could it be greater as a function of their giftedness?

In a review of studies of the school experience of African-American males, some commonalities arose. African-American males are more likely to be in the lowest track, to be socially and academically isolated in the classroom, to be sent out of the room for disciplinary action, are more often described as deviant or described in negative terms by staff, and are often inaccurately judged for level of academic ability (Taylor, 1991). In view of these insults to self-esteem, African-American males may look for validation within a peer group rather than at school. In fact, the overwhelming area of concern highlighted by Osborne's studies (1995, 1997) is the extreme disidentification with academics of African-American males from middle school through high school.

African-American males as a group "are particularly and perhaps uniquely vulnerable to disidentification. Osborne's (1995) analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Study data set (a nationally representative data sample, collected systematically and in a standardized manner over a four year period) supports Steele's (1992) implication that all children begin school identified with academics. The correlations between academic outcomes and self-esteem were found to continue decreasing from 8th to 12th grade, with most correlations

ending up not significantly different from zero, with African-American boys diverging from the other five groups between 8th and 12th grade” (Osborne, 1997, p. 733). However, Osborne also found that over time, African-American males “disidentified” with school more than did female African-Americans, or male and female Hispanics and Caucasians, arguing that African-American males in his study derived their sense of self-esteem largely from peers’ perceptions of them and of their athletic success. The importance of both Osborne’s 1995 and 1997 studies is that the large, representative sample afforded by the NELS data set makes these results generalizable.

Although correlations for self-esteem, athletics and popularity remained constant for all other groups, correlations shifted for African-American males, suggesting that they might be identifying more with other areas of functioning, which comprise self-concept, as they disidentify with academics. Osborne’s argues that the function of gender in the disidentification process suggests “it is likely there is a different social dynamic occurring within each of these groups that explains this difference, whether it be different levels of stigma, differential discrimination, peer group pressures, or other factors, this phenomenon needs to be addressed.” (1997, p. 733).

Osborne’s 1997 study of the NELS data sample also found a weak trend for African-American males to stay interested in science. His results indicate that science was the only subject where correlations for self-esteem and grades for African-American males remained significant and positive.

It has been suggested that “from an early age African-American females are given more emotional support than males, which may help explain why females adolescents are more resistant to peer pressure and influence than are black males” (Taylor, 1991, p. 144). Moreover, Taylor points out that the harsher punishment for African-American males coupled with less emotional support may further lead males to seek an increasing involvement with their peer group. He considers the peer group extremely important in the development and validation of identity for African-American boys. In fact, it may be important to the exclusion of other institutions, especially for some inner city African-American males.

Finally, father-absence in inner-city families means a lack of a same-gender role model and disciplinarian in the home (Taylor, 1991). This is consistent with Baumrind’s (1971) earlier claim that father absence affects the academic achievement of African-American male children to a greater extent than that of females. Davison (1993) further posits that the negative social stereotypes maligning African-American males may have implications for the relationship between African-American male identity and underachievement. Finally, as Mickelson (1984) points out middle class African-American females have traditionally had greater job and career opportunities in the segregated labor markets than African-American males, which may explain why today African-American females continue to achieve and attain at higher educational levels than their male counterparts. Moreover, traditionally, the rewards of education may have been less for African-American males than for African-American females or for Caucasians.

In summary, a greater understanding of differences in outcomes by gender for urban gifted African-American and Caucasian students is necessary for planning appropriate and effective programs. Gaps in such research will in part be addressed by my research.

## **Cultural Influences**

### **Educational Outcomes by Race**

The gap in educational achievement is clearly drawn along racial lines. The overall dropout rate for African-Americans in 1991 was 6.0 percent; for Caucasians, it was 3.2 percent. In 1996, it had risen to 6.7 percent for African-American students and to 4.1 percent for Caucasian students (Close, 1999). Moreover, in 1984, six times as many Caucasian students took advanced placement test exams as African-Americans. In 1996, three times as many Caucasians as African-Americans took advanced placement exams (Close, 1999). College attendance in 1997 was 13.7 percent for African-American males, while 34.1 percent for Caucasian males; for females the rate of college attendance was 18.5 percent for African-Americans, and for Caucasians 36.2 percent (Close, 1999).

Being the minority in a majority society takes its toll on African-American youth. Benson-Hale (1989) insists that African-American children do not enter school disadvantaged, but emerge disadvantaged due mainly to the structural inequality of school, including such factors as misidentification for special education programs and majority evaluation standards. Berube (1984) asserted

that the longer African-American students stay in school, the farther they fall behind the academic achievements of their Caucasian peers.

Finally, in the U.S. Civil Rights Commission's summary of employment (Mickelson, 1984), it was reported that at every level of training African-Americans (and Hispanics) experienced greater levels of under- or unemployment than Caucasian males. Most importantly, the greatest disparities were among workers with the most education. This illustrates the unequal returns that education may have for African-Americans in comparison to those for Caucasians, and also reinforces Ogbu's (1979) idea of a job ceiling for minorities.

Giftedness does not know racial boundaries, but the development of gifted potential may be going unrealized, given these disproportionate outcomes. The sparsity of appropriate developmental and educational models for gifted African-American students suggests an urgency to develop such models.

In Irvine and Foster's (1996) compelling literature review of the academic achievement of African-Americans in catholic schools, it is concluded that not only are catholic schools effective, they are more effective than public schools in attaining positive educational outcomes with African-American youth. Although, the school climate of order, discipline, high expectations, caring staff and high levels of parent involvement of catholic schools contributes to achievement, Irvine and Foster indicate "it is in the context of cultural separatism that the academic achievement of African Americans becomes meaningful" (p. 21). The historical tradition for "a separatist education", at the parish level, and "cultural

distinctiveness” for the many ethnic or minority groups served by catholic schools is cited for their long-term success with African-American students.

Research such as Irvine and Foster’s suggests that the issue of resiliency for African-American gifted students must address the issue of ethnicity and the effects of ethnic identity as an integral component. Fine (1987) defined the issue even more broadly in her study “Why Urban Adolescents Drop in and out of Public High School”, when she points out that considering the individual explanations for dropping-out is inadequate because it ‘blames the victim’ and does nothing to consider the structural or social explanations for high urban drop-out rates (p. 103). Indeed, as she suggests, there are many social and educational structural features which affect underachievement and dropout rates.

#### Academic Self-Image, Stress and, Disidentification

There is certainly consistent evidence that African-American students undergo self-image changes during the years spent within the school environment and as a result, may engage in academic disidentification. Two decades ago, Silberman (1972) found that 80% of African-American children in his study had positive self-images when they entered kindergarten, 20% still did by fifth grade, and only 5% by senior year. In 1985, Bell studied the progressively decreasing scores of African-Americans on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills within the District of Columbia. His results suggest that as African-American students get older, they experience more ‘hostilities imposed by the majority culture’. Kuykendall suggests, “such hostilities are often rooted in

the inability of teachers to augment the academic self-image of these youth (1992, p. 23).

Steele (1992) further posits that the performance gap between African-American and Caucasian Students is due to group differences in identification. The academic stereotypes encountered by African-American students causes anxiety and eventual withdrawal from schoolwork or “academic disidentification”. His argument is that although all students experience anxiety over possible failure in an academic setting, members of minority groups with attached stereotypes, experience greater anxiety. This anxiety is due to the concern that they may reinforce the negative group stereotype through their own personal failure. Steele suggests that all African-Americans are subject to disidentification, not only those who are achieving at a lower level. He points to the research demonstrating that African-Americans with the highest academic preparation as measured by the American College Test (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) drop out at rates significantly higher than Caucasians with comparable scores. For Steele, these statistics demonstrate that disidentification is a ‘group-level response to stigma’ rather than a result of poor performance. Steele suggests that this phenomenon may be true for other groups who experience stigmatization, including “lower-class whites, Hispanics, and women in male-dominated fields” (p. 75), but as yet has not been confirmed by research.

Similarly, Gougis (1986) points out that all African-Americans experience stress, as targets of racial prejudice. His studies demonstrate that race prejudice can have adverse effects upon academic performance, including increased



emotional stress, reduced motivation and, at times, reduced cognitive processing. He states that although stress may not occur in all learning situations, it has a 'cumulative effect' (p. 155). Steele and Aronson (1995) obtained results from the study of Stanford University undergraduates (high-achieving students) showing lower performance than Caucasians on academic tasks which were set up to be related to stigma, and therefore, more related to anxiety over failure, than were other tasks completed by both groups. The African-American students demonstrated performance deficits on the tasks for which the threat of reinforcing a negative racial stereotype is heightened, in other words, for which stigma vulnerability was enhanced, when compared to Caucasian students. However, if the same task were described as non-diagnostic, the performance of both groups was equivalent.

Therefore, value conflicts between minority and majority cultures, a possible lack of minority role models, and concerns associated with racial identity may complicate the issues of achievement, identity and personality development for some gifted inner-city African-American students (Boykin, 1986, Cross, 1989, Ford and Antoinette, 1997, Ford and Harris, 1993, 1995, Ford, Harris and Schuerger, 1993, Fordham, 1986, Skuy, et. al, 1990, Taylor, 1994, Winfield, 1991). Exum (1979, 1983) contends that most programs for the gifted inadequately address the needs of the gifted African-American, because the issue of racial identity development and its interference with psychological well-being is either unacknowledged or underestimated.

### Familial Cultural Influences on Achievement

Researchers have found that cultural influences and racial/ethnic family background may moderate outcomes on various levels (Fishbein, 1996) and that the basic patterns for mobility taken for granted in our society, may differ depending upon differences in these backgrounds (McAdoo, 1988). Rotheram-Borus and Phinney (1990) reported results that membership in different ethnic groups influences children's interpretation of the same experience.

Recently, studies of parental influence during adolescence have underscored the possibility that processes operative in White, middle-class families may not function the same way in different kinds of households. Such studies caution us to the need to take care in generalizing from one ecology to another (Hellinckx, 1997). Bowman and Howard's results (1985) are representative of a literature which increasingly suggests that 'compensatory cultural emphasis' by African-American parents serves as an important intervention, reinforcing earlier claims that parents and the African-American community buffer their children racially and socially (Barnes, 1972 [as cited in Spencer, 1988]).

For example, more than two decades ago, Baumrind (1972), who has long researched the effects of different parenting styles on child outcomes, studied a small sample of African-American children. In contrast to what she found with White middle-class families, she discovered that children whose parents were authoritarian rather than authoritative tended to be more competent.

Chess (1983) found definite parenting differences between African-American and Caucasian parenting, in terms of the development of an ethnic identity and insulation from racial discrimination. African-American parents emphasize the importance of academics. In fact, fifty percent of African-American students have parents who help them with homework at least three or more times per week, while the rate for Caucasian students is 35 percent (Close, 1999).

Baumrind's study suggested that "Authoritative parenting turned out to have a stronger relation to academic performance among European-American children than among African- or Asian-American children. ...In contrast, authoritative parenting exerted a less positive effect on the school achievement of African-American teenagers because the peer groups that they were most likely to join were least likely to promote academic success. The lesson from this work, then, is not simply one of contextual specificity, namely that developmental processes may operate differently in different ecological niches, but in the case of school achievement, that peers are critical moderators of parental influence (Hellinckx, 1997, p. 8-9).

Yet, the developmental and ecological complexity of different race/ethnic or socioeconomic, family structure or even geographic populations has not been thoroughly explored by research, especially for the gifted. In the past, gifted students of diverse cultural backgrounds have either been characterized as possessing anti-intellectual traits, lack of internal locus of control, difficulty delaying gratification, low academic motivation and low self-images (Frasier,

1980); or as presenting a need to be 'more cautious, controlled, less trusting and constricting in their approach to the environment' (Shade 1978).

In studying the culturally diverse gifted student, factors of economic advantage and environment have not been consistently controlled. In fact in 1967, Davidson and Greenberg (as cited in Frasier, 1980) examined personality variables of low and high achievers from lower economic backgrounds and found that the traits differentiating these groups were very similar to those differentiating middle class achievers and underachievers. The lesson to be learned remains the same: take caution in over-generalizing.

### **Educational Program Administrative Arrangements**

A final area of research that must be considered in conjunction with the topic of academic outcomes for urban and minority gifted is that of educational program administrative arrangements or, in other words, program design for gifted students. The array of choices for gifted-program format is confusing (Borland, 1989; Renzulli et al., 1995). Choices range from after school and weekend programs that provide opportunities for intermittent intellectual challenge and socialization, to full-time self-contained academic programs.

Tannenbaum (1983) makes a distinction between 'provisions' for the gifted, which may be optional, fragmented, temporary or brief and supplemental versus 'programs', which are permanent educational offerings, with explicit goals and sequential content (p. 515). Borland points out that one of the major problems in program planning for the gifted is "the lack of standards in the field" (p. 45). He argues for a "diagnostic-prescriptive approach to program planning"

(p. 47), wherein the specific needs of the specific population of gifted students involved are considered and addressed.

Borland emphasizes the importance of planning 'defensible' programs and curriculum, which he defines as "differentiated in response to the characteristics of the gifted children as specified in the program's definition of its target population" (p. 173). Given the lack of information concerning the unique needs and appropriate gifted program interventions for the urban gifted student, inquiry into this area of research is needed.

#### Ability-Grouping for Gifted Students

The proponents of ability-grouping, acceleration, and inclusion have long been at odds within the field of gifted education (Cocking, 1990, Coleman, 1995, Dettemer, 1991, Feldhusen, 1991, 1994, Feldhusen and Moon, 1992, Ford, 1995, Johnson, 1984, Kulik and Kulik, 1992, Maker, 1989, Margolin, 1996, Plucker and McIntire, 1996, Renzulli, 1987a, 1987b, Sicola, 1990, Tannenbaum, 1990, Van Tassel-Baska, 1987a, 1987b, 1992, Winner, 1997, Winner and von Karolyi, 1998). The Department of Education's definition of the gifted and talented student implies that the academic needs of the gifted student may differ from the needs of his/her general-education counterpart. "Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience or environment require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools" (1993, p. 26).

Research suggests that ability-grouping increases a gifted student's opportunity to reach his or her true potential and reduces the risk for social, emotional and academic problems. Yet, "Most regular education teachers make little, if any provisions for gifted or talented students" (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 232). Moreover, most talented students in the United States fail to reach their potential and when compared to top students from other industrialized countries, and also rank lower in levels of achievement at the end of their secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

The report concludes that all children should progress through challenging material at their own pace, with grouping provided based upon need. It points to the necessity of challenging gifted students at a level much higher than the average student would find appropriate, at a pace, level of complexity, challenge and depth at which average students would experience frustration. Feldhusen (1989) points out that this level of instruction and programming may rarely be provided in regular classrooms.

Fielder, Lange and Winebrenner (1992) present the widely held myth that gifted students will make it on their own and that ability-grouping will not result in improved learning. In contrast, Torrance (1998) states gifted children, especially "economically disadvantaged and culturally different gifted students", who go unidentified will "surrender" their gifted behaviors, such as their high creativity by third grade. Evans (1993) asserts school environments that do not meet their academic needs put gifted children at risk by increasing their tendency to

misbehave. This may set up a cycle of lowered grades as a result, regardless of the child's ability (Seeley 1993).

Evans poses a deficit model of achievement as it is applied to gifted children and the public school system, which begins with lack of identification of the child's giftedness. It then involves lack of encouragement or adequate curriculum necessary to develop the child's gifts. Finally, the child becomes at risk for behavior problems, which leads to special-education referrals. Evans suggests that the schools who do not identify giftedness "among young children, culturally different students, gifted girls, or special populations, are under-serving" these groups, and therefore, these students "underachieve in relation to their potential" (1993, p. 264).

Every American student should be able to learn at a rate and level commensurate with his/her abilities and skills. Yet much instruction for gifted students is about what they have already learned, or at such a slow pace that they are apathetic. Special classes grouped by ability are needed for gifted students. As early as 1979, Tremaine found that gifted students placed in a program by ability with other gifted students reaped better outcomes socially and academically than their gifted peers who were not placed in gifted inclusion programs. Roberts, Ingram and Harris (1992) reported that allowing identified gifted students to meet with one another in classes, where 'being smart was okay' yielded very significant results in higher level thinking skills, especially when compared to the results of the same experience for regular or average ability students, where measured gains were not significant. They also report

that gifted students (in the non-treatment group) made less growth in higher level thinking skills when they were in a regular school program. In fact, research strongly suggests that for highly gifted Caucasian students, ability-grouping paired with opportunities for individual acceleration insures a better academic and social outcome (Dauber and Benbow, 1990, Davis and Rimm, 1985, Dettemer, 1991, Feilder, Lange and Winebrenner, 1993, Frey, 1991, Gallagher, 1985, Gross, 1989, Janos, 1990, Moon and Feldhusen, 1992, Olszewski, Kulieke and Willis, 1987, Richert, 1991, Roberts, Ingram and Harris, 1992, Roedell, 1984, Rogers, 1993, Stanley, 1991, Whitmore, 1980). Nevertheless, the trend for inclusion, or part-time pullout enrichment programs for the gifted, has become more popular recently and perhaps may be considered the popular 'winner' in such debates (Maker, 1989, Winner, 1997, Winner and von Karolyi, 1998).

#### The Question of Ability-Grouping For The Urban and Minority-Gifted

The African-American gifted child may be hurt the most by the assumption that their abilities will allow them to do better than other children even without special programming (Marland, 1972). African-American students, in general, as discussed earlier, are more at risk for school failure, underachievement and lack of full development of their potential (Close, 1999, Irvine, 1990). Research available on this special group of gifted students suggests that the gifted minority inner-city poor child may face even more risk (Renzuilli et al., 1995). That risk includes not developing their academic potential due to choices posed by their environments, and a risk of using their gifts in a manner that may be detrimental to their future and to society's (VanTassel-Baska, Patton, and Prillaman, 1989).



It remains unclear whether African-American and Caucasian urban gifted students may be more at risk for academic underachievement by virtue of placement in the regular school environment, and may be better served in an ability grouped gifted program format (Ford and Harris, 1992; Fordham, 1996; Maker, 1989; Rimm, 1986; Patton et al., 1990). Cline (1998) emphasizes the most important aspect of grouping gifted student as the opportunity it provides for peer challenge and feelings of being in step in terms of social development with like peers.

In Borland's (1989) review of gifted program formats and their advantages, he points out that a full-time gifted program, self-contained for core academic subjects, sometimes called school-within-a-school, allows students to spend a significant portion of their school day with students who are peers in both age and ability. "This allows for a high level of peer support, and students are less likely to feel as if they are outcasts or oddities among their classmates" (p. 126). He suggests this program format has benefits especially at the secondary level, because it lends itself to advanced preparation commensurate with ability for college. This format also readily allows for academic acceleration.

This 'school-within-a-school' gifted program approach is recommended for minorities by other researchers, as well (Quality Education For Minorities Project, 1990). Therefore, the relevance of program format takes on a greater importance when academic, social and emotional outcomes for the African-American or Caucasian urban-gifted student are considered.

### Arguments Against Ability-Grouping For The Gifted

A reform movement has been underway to abolish ability-grouping for the gifted (Davis and Rimm, 1993, Reis et al., 1992 [as cited in Davis and Rimm, 1993], Renzulli, 1991), or 'tracking', as termed by its critics. Many in the field of gifted education have interpreted the 'de-tracking movement' as a call to end gifted programming, which inevitably involves grouping (Davis and Rimm, 1993). The most common target is homogenous grouping, but the movement advocates doing away not only with accelerated classes, but also sometimes special classes and the programs themselves. In Perils of Reform, Hunt (1991) cites the anti-ability-group movement as an example of educational reforms gone amiss. As a reform movement, he argues that it is having the opposite effect for one group of students: the gifted. In fact this anti-ability-group movement has been referred to as a "national hysteria" (Davis and Rimm, 1993). As a result, a substantial literature has grown which opposes 'tracking', or ability-grouping (Cocking, 1990; Goodlad, 1984; Goodland and Oakes, 1988; Kuykendall, 1992; MacLeod, 1995; Mahiri, 1998; Margolin, 1996; Oakes, 1985; Supplee, 1990).

Arguments against ability-grouping claim that other students will be deprived of good role models (Schofield, 1997), or that gifted students learn to deal better with the chance factors in life when mainstreamed (Supplee, 1990). A lead opponent of ability-grouping has been Oakes (1985, 1988), who in Keeping Track (1985) claims that ability-grouping is ineffective, and that students learn less and lose self-esteem and motivation. She argues that it is

discriminatory due to the overrepresentation of minorities in the lower tracks. She also claims that it is unfair in principal because it denies access to more in-depth academic content and opportunities based on ability.

#### Rebutals by Proponents of Ability-Grouping For The Gifted

Contrary to Oakes' opinion, a substantial body of research indicates achievement is not lowered by ability-grouping (Kulik, 1992, Kulik and Kulik, 1991, 1992, Rogers, 1991, Stanley, 1991). In fact, when Kulik (Kulik, 1992, Kulik and Kulik, 1991, 1992) reviewed 51 controlled studies of ability-grouping, the resulting meta-analyses showed effect sizes that favor ability-grouping for gifted students as well as for non-gifted students. Although Kulik (1992) found that gifted students placed in the highest ability groups outperformed those of similar ability placed in mixed groups, perhaps the most important conclusion of this analysis is the achievement of the low-ability students was not harmed by homogenous grouping.

Rogers (1991) analyzed the results of thirteen syntheses of research (including that of the Kuliks). Her findings confirmed theirs, in that tracking did not make a significant academic difference either positively or negatively for low and middle achievers, but significant academic gains were made for those gifted students enrolled in full-time gifted classes. Stanley (1991) found extremely significant math gains in ability grouped gifted and talented students. Rogers suggests that the higher achievement of gifted students in special gifted classes is due to a combination of high-ability and 'willingness' to excel when in a classroom with other high-ability students.

The issue of ability-grouping and its effect upon self-esteem (Oakes, 1985) has been raised as a strong argument against ability-grouping, yet researchers such as Feldhusen (1989) and Kulik (1991) found that less able learners in mixed ability classes suffered from lower self-esteem. Perhaps the daily comparisons and failures in a mixed classroom have a more devastating effect than grouping by ability. In contrast, low and medium ability students tended to have higher self-esteem when ability grouped than when grouped heterogeneously (Kulik, 1991). In fact, Fiedler-Brand, Lange and Winebrenner (1990) attained feedback from middle and low ability students suggesting that they had more opportunities for confidence and self-esteem building within the general-education classroom when the gifted students were absent.

#### The Cooperative Learning Debate and The Gifted

Some experts in education recommend cooperative learning as the 'primary' instructional method for all core academic subjects (Slavin, Madden and Stevens, 1990) for all students (e.g., Augustine, Gruber and Hanson, 1990, Slavin, 1990, 1991). Yet research on the gifted does not support this recommendation. Rogers (1991) recommends that cooperative learning in mixed-ability-groupings should be used 'sparingly' for gifted students. Li and Adamson (1992) found that gifted male and female students preferred individual styles of learning to cooperative learning for all subjects. Davis and Rimm (1993) assert that some drawbacks to cooperative learning for the gifted student include missed opportunities for acceleration that matches ability, and assuming the role of tutor and doing a majority of the work. For the gifted student, cooperative

learning often means that he or she is faced with the situation of teaching others, rather than being challenged to develop their own abilities and talents.

Cooperative learning also provides the gifted student with unnecessary repetition. Gifted students need less, not more, competition than others. Despite a strong push within education for equity over excellence (Davis and Rimm, 1993), which explains the immense popularity of cooperative learning, many researchers in the field of gifted education (e.g., Mills and Durden, 1992; Renzulli, 1991) are convinced that other educational approaches should be explored. For example, approaches such as acceleration and the stimulation of working with other gifted students are more appropriate in meeting the unique needs of the gifted student.

#### Self-Contained Classrooms as Instructional Settings For The Gifted

In considering the most appropriate educational administrative program setting for the African-American gifted student, the role of peer pressure in the youth culture of African-Americans is an important factor (Fordham, 1991). Kunjufu stated that the peer group has become the institution that is perhaps the greatest competitor to the family (1984, p.19). When peer pressure and its role in academic disidentification, are considered (Fordham, 1996, Fordham and Ogbu, 1986), the most appropriate classroom setting for meeting the African-American gifted student's needs may be a self-contained setting for core academic courses. This setting would allow for interaction with intellectual peers, which should reduce academic pressures to conform that may be greater in a general-education classroom setting.

The effect of peer pressure upon gifted females seems to lead to their willingness to hide their giftedness to 'fit in' socially (Silverman, 1991). Beyond this effect of peer pressure upon gifted females, the double jeopardy experienced by African-American females in relation to racial and gender issues (Fordham, 1988), may create more risk for their underachievement in a general-education classroom. Therefore, it would seem that a self-contained gifted program for core academic subjects might best meet the needs of the female gifted population, as well.

Finally, given the risk of lack of opportunity and for lack of reinforcement for educational and intellectual pursuits provided in an environment of poverty (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1993, 1995, Slaughter, 1988), the positive peer culture and support provided in a self-contained core academic secondary setting might also reduce the risk for underachievement for the poor gifted student, especially for the poor gifted minority student.

### Lessons of Desegregation For Gifted Classrooms

As one further considers what the ideal classroom for an inner-city African-American or Caucasian gifted student might look like, it is valuable to heed the lessons regarding the impact of desegregation. Desegregation research suggests that African-American students in desegregated schools are less likely to dropout than the segregated students at a rate reduced by one fourth (Crain and Weisman, 1972). Researchers agree (Schofield, 1997), that one of the most comprehensive studies of the effects of desegregation completed to date was done by the National Institute of Education (Cook et al.,

1984). This meta-analysis of a representative group of studies suggests the greatest gains made for African-Americans in desegregated versus segregated settings were in reading. In addition, the results suggest the earlier the desegregation, especially when occurring at kindergarten through third grade, the greater the impact. Moreover, Schofield's (1997) investigation suggests positive impacts later in life of being educated in a desegregated environment. Such an experience appears to have a modest, but positive effect upon postsecondary job choices, postsecondary educational pursuits, and later earnings. Schofield indicates that desegregation has not demonstrated a negative effect upon the academic achievement of Caucasian students. In fact there is evidence that it has a far-reaching positive impact upon inter-group relations and attitudes for African-Americans and Caucasians (Braddock and McPartland, 1987; Schofield, 1997).

Schofield (1997) suggests that ability-grouping may lead to academic re-segregation in otherwise desegregated schools. She argues that existing tendencies towards discrimination and stereotyping may be magnified by such groupings. She encourages the adoption of policies that undercut tendencies for students to self-group racially homogeneously. Nevertheless, for Schofield (1997) and Orfield (1975), the decision not to track does not necessarily solve the problem of resegregation.

The Children's Defense Fund (1985) found that African-American students are three times more likely than their Caucasian peers to be identified as educably mentally impaired and only one third as likely to be identified and

placed in a gifted and talented program. In fact, poorer minorities who have had less opportunity to develop their potential may demonstrate weaker academic work than their more affluent peers. For urban and minority male and female gifted students, ability-grouping may be the most efficacious way in which to meet students' individual academic needs, especially if the identification procedure involves more than just score cut-offs, but includes measures of multiple domains, and takes into account the cultural, ethnic and economic differences among students (Borland, 1997; Ford, 1996, 1998; Ford and Harris, 1990, 1991; Frasier, 1997; Maker, 1996; Scott, Deuel and Urbano 1996; Ogbu, 1994; Silverman, 1993; Torrance, 1998). Additionally, ability-grouping for the gifted may be considered the best practice if the resulting program is racially balanced (Ford, 1995).

Wilson-Jones (1989) finds it strange gifted students are rarely mentioned in reports on excellence and the reform movement in education. She states that special learners deserve special arrangements (p. 32), and points out that the public school system must ensure that poor and minority gifted and talented students are properly identified and that their unique learning needs are met. Gifted programs involving non-traditional and multi-factor identification procedures, resulting in racially balanced classrooms may provide the advantages of meeting individual academic and social needs, as well as retaining the advantages of desegregation for majority and minority students.

Berry (1989) emphasized that programs for African-American students must be built on equity and excellence, (within a framework of cultural



understanding, p.292). As the College Board (1985) asserts in its report Equity and Equality: The Educational Status of Black Americans equity and equality differ. They argue that schools must first provide justice; parity will follow. If our society dares to be genuine, the school reform movement will be used to create a system of education to educate all children, including gifted minorities, in the name of excellence (Quality Education For Minorities Project, 1990, Willie, 1982).

### Implications of Research for The Design of This Study

The foregoing review of literature illustrates omissions in research surrounding key issues of urban-gifted and minority-gifted students. Foremost, the field is replete with research concerning appropriate identification processes for urban, minority-gifted students, yet there is sparse research on effective programs for minority and disadvantaged gifted students. According to a researcher who has reviewed the literature for minority and disadvantaged gifted students (Ford, 1998), and to one who has pursued such studies (Borland, 1997), the lack of access to formally identified sample groups of minority and disadvantaged gifted students, is due to inadequate identification procedures.

The urban and minority gifted students considered in this study were identified through a formal process which includes many of the alternate and dynamic aspects of evaluation processes recommended by researchers (Ford, 1988). (This process is more fully described in Appendix A and in Chapter Three.) Moreover, this study attempts to address the issue of lack of research on urban and minority-gifted students.

The identification process incorporated the following recommendations cited by researchers as 'best practice'.for the identification of minority gifted students:

1) a broader definition of intelligence that involves a more diverse domain of ability (Gardner, 1983; Renzulli, 1978),

2) more dynamic assessment approaches (Feuerstein, Rand and Hoffman, 1979) especially,

3) using alternative procedures for identification (Frasier and Passow, 1994; Hiatt, 1991; Hilliard, 1976), such as, information gathered from home, school and community sources in the child's life, and finally;

4) modifying the existing standardized score cuts for selection into the gifted program (Frasier, 1989).

More attention is needed to issues of appropriate programming for minority or disadvantaged gifted youth who seem most at risk for identification. This area has been neglected in the literature. In view of the emphasis on the importance of planning defensible programs for the gifted of specific target populations (Borland ,1989), this research explores the self-contained classroom program placement. This placement of urban and minority-gifted students with like peers is supported by some ability-grouping research, resiliency research, and research of academic, emotional and social concerns of the gifted student. Self-contained classroom placement for urban and minority gifted students will be evaluated quantitatively for its effectiveness in retaining gifted students in terms

of both graduation and academic achievement, and evaluated qualitatively for its satisfaction of social and emotional needs.

Finally, differentiated responses to special target groups of gifted students is not possible without information about their unique needs. As the review of literature suggests, research is lacking on the needs of urban and minority-gifted students. To build an adequate base from which to determine best practices, a better understanding of the experience of the gifted urban and minority-gifted student is needed. This research will provide information about African-American males and females as well as about urban and low income gifted students. The importance of underachievement and academic disidentification, especially among African-American males and females, but also for urban, low-income gifted students will be considered. In addition, the roles of certain risk and resiliency factors, such as placement with like peers, neighborhood and household income, school attendance and family constellation, will be considered. In conclusion, this study will address gaps in our knowledge about urban and minority-gifted students.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODS**

#### **Chapter Organization**

This chapter includes an introduction and description of the study's design. Next quantitative and qualitative methods includes: subjects, procedures, instrumentation and data analyses. The two quantitative research questions are:

1) Do graduation outcomes depend on time enrolled in the gifted program, race, gender, and household income? and 2.) What are the differences in selected demographic, home, school and social factors between gifted students who remain in a gifted self-contained placement through high school and those who do not, in comparison to their general-education peers? The qualitative research question is: How do the overarching themes that emerge from the Structured Qualitative Interview, the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale and the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations relate to students' academic achievement and retention in the gifted program?

#### **Design of The Study**

This study is a non-random longitudinal design, with quantitative and qualitative components. Fifth and sixth grade gifted students identified and placed in a homogeneously grouped, full-time, self-contained gifted program

were asked to participate. There was a comparison group of sixth-grade general-education students.

In addition, a sample of students from the original sixth-grade gifted group were chosen to complete questionnaires and to be interviewed as part of the qualitative component of the study. The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to enhance the quantitative data.

## **Quantitative Methods**

### **Subjects**

A large urban school district in a mid-sized, midwestern city enrolled 27,593 when the fifth and sixth grade subjects were recruited. At that time, the racial make-up of the school district was approximately 70% African-American students and 30% other students, including Caucasian, Hispanic and other cultural and ethnic student groups.

The focal subjects were one hundred and eighty-five urban (185) gifted students followed until their senior year, who were enrolled in a gifted program where students were homogeneously grouped for all subjects in elementary school and for all academic subjects in middle school and high school. In addition, a comparison group included one hundred and two (102) grade-mate general-education peers in four classrooms from the same school population, matched by school to the gifted students were considered. Table 1 contains counts and percentages of subjects by race, gender and educational program:

**Table 1****Numbers of Gifted and General-Education Students by Race**

Race	Gender	Gifted		General Education		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African-American	Female	65	35%	35	34%	100	35%
	Male	45	24%	27	26%	72	25%
Total African American		110	59%	62	60%	172	60%
Caucasian	Female	38	21%	17	17%	55	19%
	Male	37	20%	23	23%	61	21%
Total Caucasian		75	41%	40	40%	115	40%
Total		185	100%	102	100%	287	100%

**Gifted Students**

The criteria for the 185 gifted students to be included in the study were 1) the student had been identified as gifted as a result of a highly refined selection process, and had enrolled in one of eight fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms chosen from the gifted program during a two year period (1992-1993), and 2) parent and student permission was given (See Appendix B). Eight self-contained classrooms of only gifted students were included in the study: two fifth-grade and two sixth-grade gifted classrooms were chosen from each of two schools.

Numbers of gifted subjects by race, grade and gender is shown in Table 2:

**Table 2**

**Numbers of Gifted Students by Race, Grade and Gender**

Race	Juniors			Seniors			Total
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
African-American	30	18	48	35	27	62	110
Caucasian	18	16	34	20	21	41	75
Total	48	34	82	55	48	103	185

Two grades of gifted students, fifth-grade and sixth grade were chosen in an effort to gain a larger sample of gifted students. Both were followed through their senior year in high school. This sample of fifth and sixth grade gifted students, was considered when measuring descriptive statistics of the gifted students and in outcome measurements that compared gifted students to general-education students (who were followed through their senior year in high school, as well).

The urban school district studied has been committed to providing educational settings for gifted students since 1957. Initially, the district's gifted program involved an enrichment pull-out program. However, for approximately the past twenty-five years the school district's gifted program has included a full-time self-contained kindergarten through sixth grade program located in two buildings for elementary students identified as gifted. It also included a gifted middle-school program that was self-contained for core academic subjects for grades seven and eight, housed at two middle-school sites. Finally, it included a gifted high-school program that was self-contained for core academic subjects.

A formal selection process conducted by the district's Gifted Selection Committee continued from kindergarten through ninth grade. Identified gifted students could continue in the accelerated magnet programs during grades ten through twelve in high school. The ninth-grade through twelfth-grade portion of the program differed in some respects. 1) In tenth grade the program was deemed an accelerated fine arts and math/science magnet program based in two different high school buildings, scheduled in a way that allowed access to both through busing provided during the school day. The gifted students identified by the earlier selection committee process remained together in the high school magnet programs. 2) At tenth grade enrollment in these magnet programs was open to all students if their counselors deemed such a placement appropriate. The elementary through high school gifted program attracted students from the entire urban school district.

Despite dwindling revenue and tax base, the existence of the program was not threatened with discriminatory cuts. At times the program suffered the fate of all of the district's programs -- with cuts in supplies, field trips, etc.-- but the district consistently provided this program for those students who demonstrated eligibility. The attitude of the administrator of the program and of the selection committee members was that the needs of the gifted student are unique and may be best addressed in this format. No 'special funds' were set aside. In addition to the small stipend of state dollars for gifted and talented programming, the majority of the cost was absorbed by the general-education budget. Among the characteristics that set this program apart from the regular



education program were: 1) a gifted selection process including, but not limited to parent input, teacher input, achievement and IQ test scores used to identify students, 2) reading curriculum was two grade level beyond and math was one grade level beyond that of general-education curriculum, 3) topics were explored more in-depth in subjects such as science and social studies than in the general-education curriculum, and 4) gifted students were given the opportunity to relate to gifted peers.

### Selection Process for The Gifted Program

The screening processes for the elementary, middle-school, and ninth-grade programs were similar and are described in detail below. (See Appendix A for a description of policy guidelines in the identification of these gifted students.) The high-school accelerated magnet program was more flexible in its enrollment criteria after ninth grade. Students previously identified as gifted through the selection-committee screening process would naturally be placed in the school district's accelerated coursework programs of fine arts and math/science. Indeed, in tenth grade and beyond, most of the classes in the accelerated magnet program included mainly the earlier-identified gifted students. However, in the tenth grade, general-education students who had demonstrated well-above-average academic performance, who desired the challenge provided by the gifted program, and who had the permission of their high-school counselor, could enroll in the accelerated magnet fine arts or math/science programs, in which the previously identified gifted students were enrolled. In other words, the tenth- through twelfth-grade component of the gifted program allowed for self-

selection. The group of students followed for this study were in the gifted program prior to making the transition to middle school. Therefore, all students in this study were identified as gifted through the gifted selection process.

The design of the selection process relied quite strongly upon Renzuilli's definition of giftedness (Renzuilli, 1978, 1987b, 1991). Therefore, the gifted program, or the academically talented program, as it was later referred, was for students who demonstrated outstanding academic success, and/or high intellectual potential, leadership ability, as well as those who exhibited creativity, curiosity, divergent thinking and motivation.

Students were initially referred for eligibility to the gifted program by parents, peers, teachers, pastors, or principals. The selection process had become highly refined, evolving as a result of many years of committee work, including community, parent, administrative, and teacher input, as well as reviews of research on the identification of gifted students, and consultation from Dr. Linda Silverman, a nationally known gifted-education consultant. While many school districts may rely upon only single test scores or grades for identification of gifted students, placement in this urban school district's gifted program was contingent upon multiple criteria, including, achievement test scores, and/or intellectual assessments, teacher recommendation and parent observation. The goal of the selection committee was to try to the best of their ability to ensure that every student identified was gifted.

The volunteer selection committee included teachers of the gifted, administrators, school psychologists and members of the community. The

selection process was 'blind'. A group of 8 to 12 members from a possible pool of about 20 to 25 met as a group on a bi-monthly or as-needed basis. The gifted program had a rolling enrollment process. The committee members reviewed cases and voted on eligibility on the merits of the case, without knowledge of a student's name, race, gender, parents' or teachers' names, home address, home school (neighborhood school) and residential area. Instead, each student was assigned an identification number.

Each member of the selection committee individually reviewed the academic record, parent questionnaire, and teacher questionnaire information. Each member then would recommend whether the student should be placed in the gifted program that could occur in any grade kindergarten through eighth grade. For preschoolers, the committee evaluated information from parents, pre-school teachers, or baby-sitters, as well as scores on intelligence measures, or developmental assessments, when available. If it were deemed necessary to gather more information in order to make a decision about the eligibility of a particular child, the committee could ask for additional information, such as an interview of the child by a gifted consulting teacher or an evaluation by a district school psychologist. After the selection committee made its recommendations for eligibility, the school district would attempt to balance the gifted class for each grade by gender and race. Therefore, placement in the gifted program was subject to available space, which varied by grade. At times, there was a waiting list for some grade levels.

The student gifted program enrollment was 3.2% of the entire school district student population the year the gifted sample of students for this study was selected. Table 3 describes the kindergarten through ninth grade gifted program student make-up by grade level and race.

**Table 3**

**Kindergarten through Ninth Grade Gifted Program Enrollment**

Grade	African-American	Hispanic	Native American	Caucasian	Total
K	13	1	1	20	35
1	26	4	0	37	67
2	30	2	1	27	70
3	38	2	3	60	103
4	57	1	0	58	116
5	50	2	0	52	103
6	43	3	0	40	86
7	50	3	0	49	102
8	56	4	0	60	120
9	46	2	1	38	87
Total	409	24	6	441	889
%gifted population	46.5%	2.7%	0.7%	50.1%	100%
% total population	67.6%	2.5%	0.3%	29.6%	100%

### Gifted Academic Programming

Students in the gifted program were academically accelerated. Class instruction was presented at one year above grade level in mathematics and two years above grade level in reading. Occasional exceptions to this occurred when a student was achieving far beyond the accelerated level, and in the case of a new student. For new students adjustments in instruction would be made to bring him/her up to the instructional level of the class. Kindergartners were taught to read as part of the gifted kindergarten curriculum. The Distar approach to reading (Direct Instruction Strategies for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading, Becker and Skillman, 1979) was utilized at this level with good results, since most full time gifted students in this district enter first grade reading close to, if not above a second grade level.

At the time when students were selected for this study, there were two sites for each level: elementary, middle school and high school. The elementary schools were both located in inner-city neighborhoods, in separate sections of the city. One elementary gifted program school site was situated in the upstairs addition of an older renovated building. The other elementary school site was an unrenovated older building, where the gifted program was also situated by itself on the second floor.

The middle school programs were situated in two middle school buildings. One was housed in a newer wing of the large older school, while the other was located in the upstairs of an older building. Students attending all gifted programs

came from neighborhood schools, across the city. An attempt was made to balance the programs for race and gender. Placement was made based upon space availability.

#### General Education Students

The general-education students who attended the same schools as the gifted students were part of a 'home school', or neighborhood program made up of students from the immediately surrounding inner-city neighborhoods. They would not have been matched in terms of socio-economic factors to the students enrolled in the gifted program, who came from all areas of the city. Therefore the general-education classrooms were matched to the experimental gifted group from other schools.

Two schools were chosen to match those with gifted enrollees by virtue of 1) a similar overall economic make-up as measured by the level of subsidized hot lunches, and 2) due to commensurate levels of parent involvement or parent-choice. Therefore, the general-education subjects were enrolled in one of four sixth-grade classrooms within the same school district and the same school year as the sixth grade gifted students. Four classrooms of general-education students, two classrooms from two different schools, were included in the study. Table 4 shows the general-education subjects by race, grade and gender.

**Table 4****Comparison Group: General-Education Students**

Race	Sixth Graders		Total
	Females	Males	
African-American	35	27	62
Caucasian	17	23	40
Total	52	50	102

The first school whose general-education sixth grade classrooms were chosen for comparison was an elementary school with a computer magnet program in a stable, predominantly Caucasian neighborhood. Although neighborhood children could attend it as their 'home school', its magnet status allowed for students from all across the city to attend the school upon acceptance by application. This matched the self-selection made by some parents whose children were in the gifted program. The student racial make-up included a greater percentage of Caucasians, although the racial make-up was Caucasian and African-American.

The second general-education school chosen for comparison was a 'home school' from a stable predominantly African-American neighborhood. The school had a reputation for a stable student population, having less transience than many schools in the district. The student racial make-up included a greater percentage of African-Americans, although the racial make-up was Caucasian and African-American.

### Quantitative Instrumentation

Data were gathered from students' cumulative records and from a Transition Survey measuring concerns about making the transition to middle school. The Transition to Middle School Survey, a Likert scale survey, was created for this study (Appendix C). A standardized survey instrument was not used, because current standardized instruments available do not focus specifically upon the concerns sixth graders have prior to making the transition to middle school. The term 'concern' refers to the students' fears, apprehensions and worries about making the transition to middle school.

The issues addressed by the survey were gathered from earlier groups of sixth-grade students from the same schools. Information used to compose the survey was gathered from four classrooms of gifted sixth-grade students, who answered open-ended essay questions regarding their concerns about going to middle school. Also, questions were used that had been asked by members of four classrooms of general-education sixth graders, attending the same general-education schools as those in the study, prior to attending transition intervention programs. Questions about specific concerns, with 'one' representing "I am very concerned" and 'five' representing "I am not concerned at all" were rated on a one-to-five scale.

### Quantitative Procedures

The school district involved in the study has long been committed to providing an appropriate academic program for all students, including the gifted. The administrators in both the test and measurement office and the learning



improvement office expressed support for research to evaluate the gifted program. This study was designed with input from these administrators. A two-year process of discussion and planning was completed prior to obtaining parental/student permission. The administrative offices of the Superintendent, the Office of Tests and Measurement, and the Learning Improvement and Pupil Personnel Office gave permission and support to implement this study, at the school district level.

Consent for students to participate in the quantitative component of the study was obtained from parents and students. Consent was obtained in conjunction with permission for the Transition to Middle School component of the study, which involved a daylong program after the Transition Survey, was completed. Letters of consent were sent home with students and returned to homeroom teachers. Consent forms are included in Appendix B.

#### Transition Survey Administration

Sixth grade students, in the two gifted programs and two general-education programs, were given Transition surveys to fill out in class during the spring of their sixth-grade year. This was done in the context of a prelude to a transition program, which they attended approximately one week later. There was no discussion about middle school prior to the completion of the survey.

The researcher (a female school psychologist) passed out the survey to all groups. The teachers were also present in the classrooms. The students were told that the survey would be used to better understand what they thought about the upcoming move to middle school, and to understand concerns they might

have surrounding the change. They were told to take as long as necessary to complete the survey, and to turn it in to the school psychologist when completed. They were asked to complete the survey individually, without discussion among themselves. After all surveys had been completed, the students were engaged in a discussion about the upcoming transition program, in which they would be participating.

### Quantitative Data Analyses

Research question one included the following dependent variables: Whether or not a gifted student remained in the gifted program his/her senior year in high school and whether the student graduated from high school or not. For general-education students the outcomes are whether each remained in the general-education program through his/her senior year in high school and whether he or she graduated.

Independent variables to be considered for quantitative research question one include program identification (gifted or general-education), length of time in the gifted program (in terms of years), race and gender.

Independent variables to be considered for quantitative research question two include differences between gifted subjects and general-education subjects and the accompanying manner of measurement were included under the general headings of demographics, school variables, home variables and social variables:

### Demographic Variables

1. Race information was taken from the cumulative record as listed at the time of initial enrollment in the school district.

- a. African-American,
- b. Caucasian

2. Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male

### Home Variables

1. Household Income (HHI) The Source for income data was the ten-block radius census tract area mean income of members living in a household, as indicated by the student's address for the year the senior group of students would have been in the second grade. By their second grade year 90% of gifted students in this study had been identified and placed in the gifted program.

The Bureau of Census poverty area designation is a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or more. The poverty rate for this study was established from the poverty rate for a median family income for a household of four of \$12,674.00, given by the Bureau of Census for the year the senior group of students would have been in the second grade.

- a. HHI per student household
- b. Poverty level HHI designation

- 1) Poverty HHI: below poverty level to 20% above poverty level of \$12, 400.00 [\$9,920.00 to \$17,360.00] for the year

2) Non-poverty HHI: 20% above poverty level [\$17,361.00+]

c. HHI range by income level.

1) Low, (\$1-\$16,866.00 HHI [to 33% above poverty level] 32.7% of gifted sample,

2) Median (\$16,869.00-\$30,331.00 HHI, 34.6% of gifted sample),

3) High (\$30,332.00-\$41,287.00+ HHI, 33.7% of gifted sample).

2. Family constellation in early elementary was taken from information concerning legal guardianship changes reported to the school.

a. Single parent,

b. Two parents,

c. Extended family or other,

d. Parent and stepparent

3. Number of total guardianship changes during school years

School Variables

1. MEAP scores:

a. MEAP science percentile score in fifth grade,

b. MEAP science percentile score in fifth grade

2. Grade point averages (grades 1-5):

a. Reading,

b. Math,

c. Science

3. Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized achievement scores (grades 1-5):

a. Reading percentile rankings,

- b. Math percentile rankings
- 4. Attendance: Half days absent in elementary school
- 5. Number of grade retentions and social promotions in elementary school
- 6. Number of school changes

#### Social Variables

- 1. Extra-curricular activities for middle school included arts programs only due to inconsistent record keeping and programming for middle school sports.
  - a. Middle school arts,
  - b. High school arts and sports
- 2. Transition to middle school concerns: the level of sixth grade concern about transitioning to middle school taken from the average ranking of concerns on ' The Transition to Middle School Survey' (Appendix C).

#### **Quantitative Summary**

Two research questions were generated to be answered quantitatively in this study. Quantitative question one is: Do graduation outcomes depend on time enrolled in the gifted program, race, gender, and household income?

Quantitative question one: What are the differences in selected demographic, home, school, and social factors between gifted students who remain in a self-contained gifted placement through high school graduation, and those who do not, in comparison to their general-education peers?

Student groups to be considered for outcomes were identified by their placements in twelfth grade. These student groups were:

- 1) Gifted-movers: gifted students who leave the school district,

2) Gifted-program-leavers: gifted students who leave the gifted program to enroll in the general-education program,

3) Gifted program remainers: gifted students who remain in the gifted program,

4) General-movers: general-education students who leave the school district,

5) General-program-remainers: general-education students who remain in the general-education program.

The student remained in the gifted or general-education program if he/she was enrolled up to the end of senior year in high school. The student left the gifted or general-education program if he/she was not enrolled prior to the end of senior year in high school.

The first research question investigates the relationship of student group outcomes of graduation and placement in twelfth grade to

1) Time enrolled in the gifted program (number of years),

2) Race,

3) Gender, and

4) Household income (HHI) through chi-square and analysis of variance analyses.

The second research question investigates the relationship of the following factors to student group outcomes of graduation rate and placement in twelfth grade via chi-square and analysis of variance analyses:

1) Demographic characteristics (race and gender);

2) Home factors (HHI, family constellation in early elementary, and number of guardianship changes);

3) School characteristics (MEAP fourth grade math percentile score, MEAP fifth grade science percentile score, Iowa Test of Basic Skills [ITBS] standardized test score averages for elementary reading and math, grade point averages, elementary attendance, number of grades retained, number of school changes); and

4) Social factors (participation in school-related extra-curricular activities and level of transition to middle school concerns).

The results for research question one and two are described in the Quantitative Results section of Chapter Four.

## **Qualitative Methods**

### **Qualitative Subjects**

Qualitative data was gathered in the format of a structured interview and standardized questionnaires. The qualitative student sample interviewed was a stratified sample of gifted students from the quantitative student sample. The qualitative sample of seniors was selected six years after the transition survey data was gathered. Stratification was based on the dependent variables of race and gender, household income, grade point average, and status in the gifted program (i.e., whether the student remained in the gifted program, or left). An attempt was made to interview a representative group of students.

Thirteen students were interviewed. Following the guidelines for inclusion in the qualitative sample, forty-three students were identified as possible students

to interview. The goal was to interview twenty students, evenly divided by race and gender, with emphasis placed on minority students who did very well academically, came from poorer homes, or dropped out of the program.

The process of contacting students to set up interviews involved the following difficulties: 1) Students having lower incomes as identified by their census tract number were the most difficult to contact. Many had no working phone. 2) Many lower income students selected because they had left the program were found to be no longer living in their parents' or legal guardian's home, with no forwarding address or phone number available. Attempts were made to contact these missing students by talking to relatives, extended family and schoolmates.

3) Several times, though contact was eventually made, the student did not show at the appointed time and meeting place for the interview.

Household income was stratified by median household income for the ten block census tract area in which each student lived, for the year attending second grade, or when they entered the school district, whichever came first. The Bureau of Census designation for poverty areas was considered. A poverty area is a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or more. Household income for the sample of gifted students selected in elementary was divided into three groups:

- 1) Low, (\$1-\$16,866.00 HHI [to 33% above poverty level]),
- 2) Median (\$16,869.00-\$30,331.00 HHI), and
- 3) High (\$30,332.00-\$41,287.00+ HHI).



Grade point average was stratified as low, median and high. Race was either African-American or Caucasian.

Thirteen students were interviewed, five African-American females, one Caucasian female, four African-American males and two Caucasian male students. An attempt was made to contact minority students who were successful academically, i.e., who had high GPAs, as well as minority students who left the program.

Four students with high GPAs who remained in the program were interviewed, three African-American females and one African-American male. Four students who remained in the program and attained median GPAs were interviewed. These included one African-American female and one African-American male student, who were chosen for the unusually low household income of their families. Two Caucasian male students who attained median GPAs and had high family household incomes were also interviewed.

Five students who left the program prior to their senior year were interviewed. These included two African-American female students, two African-American male students and one Caucasian female student.

Table 5 summarizes the characteristics of the gifted students in the qualitative interview sample.

**Table 5**

**Characteristics of Gifted Seniors Interviewed**

Gender	Race	HHI	High GPA		Med. GPA		Unknown GPA		Total	
			Remain	Left	Remain	Left	Left			
Female	African American	High	1	0	0	0	2			
		Med	0	0	0	0	0			
		Low	2	0	1	0	0		6	
	Caucasian	High	0	0	0	0	0			
		Med	0	0	0	0	1			
		Low	0	0	0	0	0		1	
	Male	African American	High	1	0	0	0	1		
			Med	0	0	0	0	1		
			Low	0	0	0	1	0		4
Caucasian		High	0	0	0	0	0			
		Med	0	0	2	0	0			
		Low	0	0	0	0	0		2	
Total			4	0	3	1	5	13		

**Key to Household Income (HHI)**

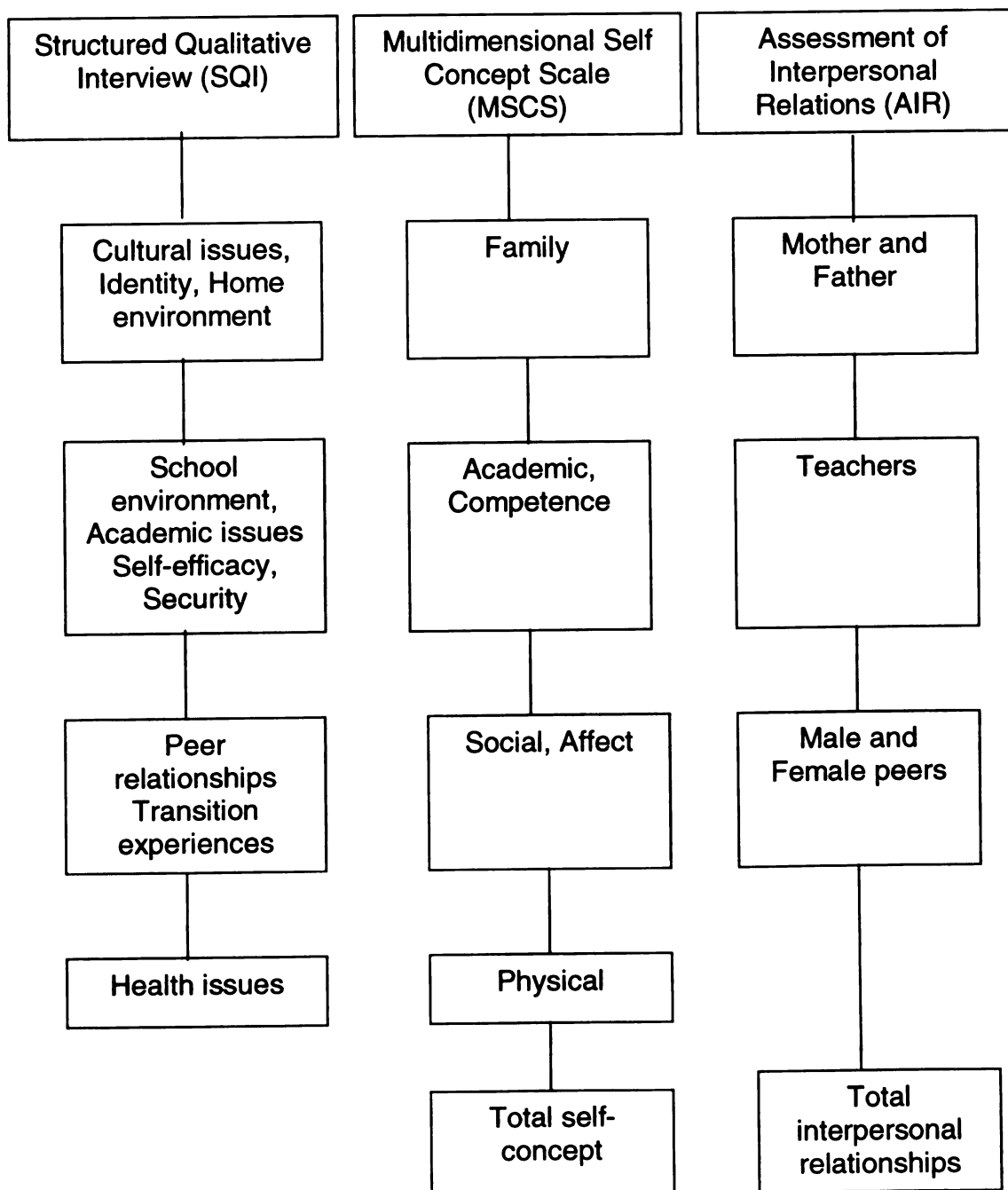
Low (\$1-\$16,866.00 HHI [to 33% above poverty level] 32.7% of gifted senior sample)

Med (\$16,869.00-\$30,331.00 HHI, 34.6% of gifted senior sample)

High (\$30,332.00-\$41,287.00+ HHI, 33.7% of gifted senior sample)

### Qualitative Instrumentation

The qualitative interviews were conducted to allow for a more in-depth understanding of the contextual factors related to individual student's retention in the gifted program and her/his level of academic success. Context areas related to self-concept and to interpersonal relations were addressed by the Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS) and the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (AIRS). Individual contexts related to remaining in or leaving the gifted program were addressed more intensely in the Structured Qualitative Interview (SQI). Figure 1 outlines the context areas by instrument.



**Figure 1. Qualitative Independent Variables**

### The Structured Qualitative Interview (SQI)

At the time of this study, no existing instrument available measured the issues relevant for urban and minority gifted students in self-contained gifted classroom settings. The SQI is a non-standardized structured qualitative interview developed specifically for this study (See Appendix E). It addresses issues specific to students in the urban gifted program being studied. It tapped students' opinions about cultural issues, school environment, home environment, peer relationships, security, identity, self-efficacy, health issues, transition experiences, and academic issues.

### The Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS)

#### And the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (AIR)

The MSCS and the AIR are standardized clinical instruments. The MSCS assesses global self-concept and six content-dependent self-concept domains that are functionally and theoretically important in the social-emotional adjustment of youth and adolescents. The six domains assessed include: Social, Competence, Affect, Academic, Family and Physical self-concept. These instruments were chosen for use in this study, in part, due to co-norming of the MSCS (Bracken, 1992) and the AIR (Bracken, 1993) on a national sample of school-age adolescents, with separate statistical analyses conducted to examine race, gender and age trends in self-concept. The MSCS can be administered in approximately twenty minutes.

The AIR assesses the quality of adolescents' interpersonal relationships in hierarchical fashion. It includes global relationship quality and relationship quality

within three context-dependent domains: Family (mother and father relations), Social (male and female peer relations), and Academic (teacher relations). All five subscales administered in combination reflect the adolescent's global interpersonal relations. The AIR can be administered in approximately twenty minutes.

### Qualitative Procedures

When students were located, a contact was made to the student and their parent or legal guardian by telephone, or in person when there was no phone, to set up a meeting. An initial phone contact or visit to the home was made to explain the purpose of the interview. Consent for students to participate in the qualitative interview component of the study was obtained from parents, or legal guardians, and students. If first contact had been made by telephone, verbal consents were made, and follow-up written permission forms were mailed to the student and parent or guardian with a stamped return envelope included. Letters of consent were either mailed or signed at the time of the interview. Consent forms are in Appendix D.

The student was told that the interview would last for one to one and a half hours. Interviews were held in a quiet room, if possible, in a public location to which the student could find convenient transportation, if possible. Otherwise, interviews were held in the student's home. When held in the home, the interview was held in a quiet room separate from the rest of the family. Two interviews took place in adult education school settings, four in a public library,

one in a community college library, three in a school district conference room and three in a student's home.

All thirteen students completed the oral Structured Qualitative Interview (SQI) and the written, multiple-choice Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS) during the interview time period. One African- American male student was unable to complete the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (AIR), due to a time constraint caused by his transportation situation. He completed two out of five subsections on this questionnaire. Additionally, four students, two African-American males and two African-American females, did not complete the 'father' component of the AIR because they did not live with their fathers.

At the beginning of the interview, after a brief greeting, the student was told that it was acceptable to skip any question that was uncomfortable, or that he/she wanted to omit for any reason. Each was asked if he/she would give verbal consent to being tape-recorded. The tape recorder was left in full view.

The SQI was in the format of an oral interview conducted by the author. Each student was asked the same questions, but the interview format was semi-formal. The student was able to elaborate on a question when desired, and sometimes the interviewer would ask questions in a slightly different order, or would ask for additional information. Verbal interviews averaged an hour and fifteen minutes.

The student was then given the MCSC and the AIR to complete. At the end of the interview and completion of the multiple-choice questionnaires (MCSC and AIRS), the student was thanked for giving his/her time. In appreciation of his

or her time and input, every student interviewed was given a Border's Bookstore Gift Certificate worth \$20.00. This retail store was easily accessible through public transportation.

All taped sessions of the SIQ were transferred into written form by a stenographer. Each interview was typed verbatim, without regard to grammatical accuracy. An attempt was made to retain dialectical characteristics in the written formats. The author then scored each of the MSCS and AIR standardized questionnaires according to the manual directions.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data includes results from two standardized questionnaires and a structured interview. Due to the difference in format, they were analyzed using different approaches.

#### Structured Qualitative Interviews Data Analysis

The "Grounded Theory" approach to building theory from qualitative analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was followed to analyze the Structured Qualitative Interviews. This technique involved open coding to identify concepts that were then used to relate concepts to overarching theories. Interviews were analyzed for the focus they placed upon contexts or issues explored with the students via the questions that composed the structured interview the interview questions are in Appendix E. These contexts or issues included: cultural issues, school environment, home environment, peer relationships, security/support, identity, self-efficacy, health issues, school transition experiences and academic issues.



Although each student interviewed was asked questions that addressed certain issues, the ensuing responses often brought up different concerns. Therefore, in keeping with the methods of grounded qualitative research, similarly coded content was considered for the concepts represented and finally was related to the overarching themes posed.

#### Standardized Questionnaires (MSCS and AIR) Data Analysis

Though the sample size of 13 students did not provide for much statistical power, the numerical scores provided by the standardized questionnaires were examined using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to compare those students who remained in the gifted program and those who left.

Second, trends were identified for the ipsative analyses of completed questionnaires. Ipsative analysis is unlike norm-referenced analysis where performance is contrasted with that of peers. Instead performance of the individual on each subtest is contrasted with the examinee's overall performance on the instrument. The benefit of such an interpretation is to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. The ipsative results of students who remained and students who left the gifted program were considered.

#### Qualitative Summary

The qualitative component of this study addressed research question three: How do the overarching themes that emerge from the Structured Qualitative Interview, the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale and the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations relate to students' academic achievement and retention in the gifted program? Therefore, the students involved in the

qualitative component of this study were interviewed and completed standardized questionnaires for the purpose of highlighting and clarifying possible reasons for the particular quantitative results cited.

The trends evidenced in the standardized questionnaire results and the foci of the structured interviews for different issues and contexts, were examined together to draw out overarching themes that might emerge from the body of qualitative data as a whole. These results are presented in the Qualitative Results Section of Chapter Four in the form of tables, when appropriate and in descriptive passages.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will be organized in two main sections, quantitative and qualitative results. The quantitative results section will present the results by research question.

The quantitative results summary will address quantitative research question one and two. The independent variables for question one are 1) Time in the gifted program and 2) Graduation rate. The independent variables in question two are grouped in the following order: 1) demographics, 2) school factors, 3) home factors, and 4) social factors. The qualitative results summary addresses variables by instrument in the following order: 1) Structured Qualitative Interview (SIQ), and 2) Assessment of Interpersonal Relationships (AIR) and Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS).

#### **Quantitative Results**

##### **Research Question One**

The first step in analyzing the data was to consider the grades in which the gifted students were identified and placed in the gifted program (Figure 2).

The majority of the group of gifted students were identified and placed in the full-time self-contained elementary gifted program at a young age. Thirty-three percent were identified and placed by kindergarten, 50% by first grade,

75% by third grade, and 85% by fourth grade. One hundred percent of the group of gifted students involved in this study were identified and placed by ninth grade.

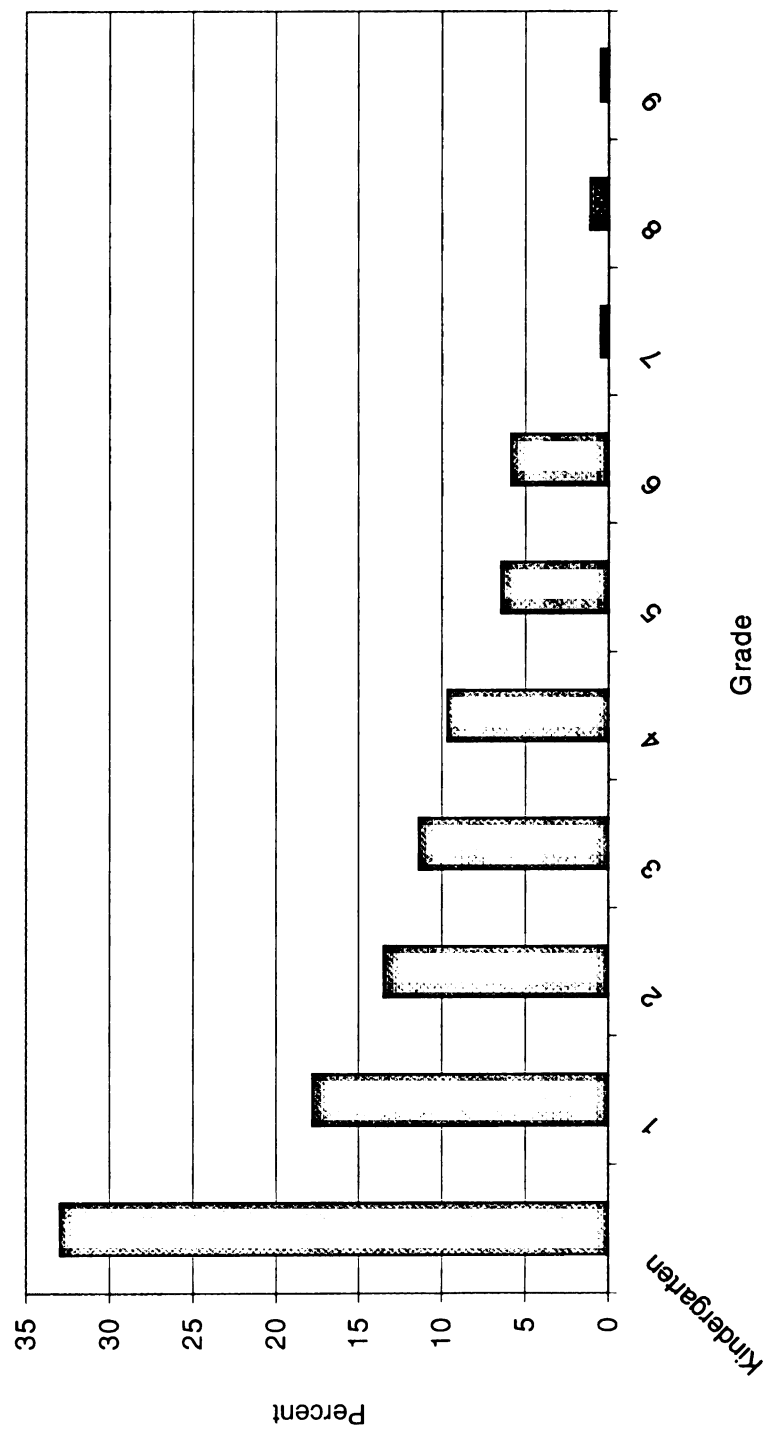


Figure 2. Grade Gifted Students Entered The Gifted Program

Next the grades in which the gifted students who did leave their placement in the gifted program were considered. Figure 3 describes the grade in which the students left the gifted program that remained in the school district and were subsequently enrolled in regular education programs.

By far, the majority of the students dropped out of the gifted program by the seventh grade. Fifty-five percent of the gifted students left the program by seventh grade and by the end of the first year of high school, ninth grade, 86% had gone. This attrition occurred during the period of transition to middle school, which began in seventh grade in this district, and during the transition to high school, which began in ninth grade.

A correlation between when the students entered the gifted program and when they left revealed no linear relation. The correlation is  $R = .16$  and it is not significant.

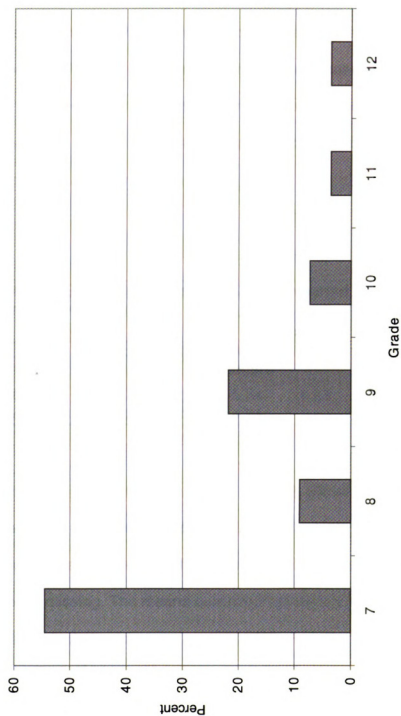


Figure 3. Grade Gifted Students Left The Gifted Program

Next, consideration was given to the grade students entered compared to their placement in what should have been their senior year, or twelfth grade in high school. An ANOVA considered the relationship between the grade in which a student was placed in the gifted program by the student's placement in twelfth grade. The result of the ANOVA showed no significant differences for the groups by placement in twelfth grade (Table 6).

**Table 6**

**ANOVA: Grade Students Entered the Gifted Program by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.69	2	5.34	1.23	0.29
Within Groups	789.12	182	4.34		
Total	799.81	184			

Table 7 describes the mean grade in which gifted students were identified and placed in the gifted program by groups: 1) gifted-program-remainers, 2) gifted-program-leavers, and 3) gifted-movers, and therefore, for whom further information is missing. The means described for each group do suggest a trend for those identified at a somewhat earlier grade in elementary to remain in the program until senior year. Also, those who left the district tended to be identified and placed in the gifted program somewhat later.



**Table 7****Descriptive Statistics: Grade Student Entered the Gifted Program by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Gifted-Movers	56	2.39	2.37	0.32	1.76	3.03	0	8
Gifted-Program-Changers	55	1.93	2.09	0.28	1.36	2.49	0	9
Gifted-Program-Remainers	74	1.84	1.83	0.21	1.41	2.26	0	7
Total	185	2.03	2.08	0.15	1.73	2.33	0	9

Next, a crosstabulation was completed to consider the grade in which the gifted students were identified as gifted, by their graduation rate (Table 8). The gifted students were divided into fairly numerically equivalent groups by grade placed 1). Kindergarten, 2). First and second grade and 3). Third grade and above.

A chi-square test was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.176$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This result suggests there is no relationship between the grade the student was identified and placed into the gifted program and whether or not he or she graduated.

**Table 8****Grade Entered Gifted Program by Graduation**

Grade Entered		Graduated		Total
		Yes	No	
Kindergarten	Count	39	4	43
	% within grade	90.7%	9.3%	100.0%
	entered gifted prog			
	% within GRAD Y/N	34.5%	30.8%	34.1%
1 & 2	% of Total	31.0%	3.2%	34.1%
	Count	37	4	41
	% within grade	90.2%	9.8%	100.0%
	entered gifted prog			
3 and Above	% within GRAD Y/N	32.7%	30.8%	32.5%
	% of Total	29.4%	3.2%	32.5%
	Count	37	5	42
	% within grade	88.1%	11.9%	100.0%
Total	entered gifted prog			
	% within GRAD Y/N	32.7%	38.5%	33.3%
	% of Total	29.4%	4.0%	33.3%
	Count	113	13	126
Total	% within grade	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
	entered gifted prog			
	% of Total	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-Square		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
		0.176	2	0.916
N of Valid Cases		126		

Students' enrollment in the gifted or general-education program was crosstabulated with whether or not the students graduated (Table 9). The chi-square result for differences between graduation rate of gifted and general-education students was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.64$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This result suggests there is no relationship between the graduation rates of the gifted and general-education programs.

**Table 9**

**Gifted and General Education Graduation Rate**

Identified		Graduated		Total
		Yes	No	
General Education	Count	46	12	58
	% within identified	79.3%	20.7%	100.0%
	% of Total	25.0%	6.5%	31.5%
Gifted	Count	113	13	126
	% within identified	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	61.4%	7.1%	68.5%
Total	Count	159	25	184
	% within identified	86.4%	13.6%	100.0%
	% of Total	86.4%	13.6%	100.0%

The placement of students, who remained in the school district through twelfth grade was then crosstabulated with whether or not each graduated (Table 10). Gifted-program-remainers graduated at a higher rate (98.6%) than gifted-program-leavers (76.9%), or general-program-remainers (79.3%). A chi-square test for the crosstabulation of graduation by the students' placement in twelfth grade yielded a significant result ( $\chi^2 = 15.92$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 10****Remaining Students Graduation by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Placement in Twelfth Grade		Graduated		
		Yes	No	Total
Gifted-Changers	Count	40	12	52
	% within PLACE-GRADE	76.9%	23.1%	100.0%
	% within GRAD Y/N	25.2%	48.0%	28.3%
	% of Total	21.7%	6.5%	28.3%
Gifted-Program-Remainers	Count	73	1	74
	% within PLACE-GRADE	98.6%	1.4%	100.0%
	% within GRAD Y/N	45.9%	4.0%	40.2%
	% of Total	39.7%	0.5%	40.2%
General-Program-Remainers	Count	46	12	58
	% within PLACE-GRADE	50.1%	7.9%	58.0%
	% within GRAD Y/N	79.3%	20.7%	100.0%
	% of Total	25.0%	6.5%	31.5%
Total	Count	159	25	184
	% within PLACE-GRADE	86.4%	13.6%	100.0%
	% within GRAD Y/N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	86.4%	13.6%	100.0%

Graduation rate analysis proceeded with the consideration of graduation in twelfth grade by placement, race and gender (Table 11). A chi-square analysis was not pursued due to the small cell numbers (less than five) for many groups.

The most outstanding result of this analysis is all of the students identified gifted who remained in the gifted program graduated (gifted-program-remainers), except for one African-American male (98.6%% graduation rate). Sixty percent (60%) of the gifted-program-remainers who graduated were African-American and forty percent were Caucasian (40%).

The graduation rate was seventy percent (77%) for the gifted students who left the gifted program to enroll in general-education (gifted-program-leavers). However, the majority of the African-American gifted-program-leavers graduating were gifted African-American female students (72%).

The graduation rate for students who had remained in the general-education program through twelfth grade (general-program-remainers) was seventy-nine percent (79%). Fewer Caucasians remained in the general-education program (17%), but those who did graduated.

In all groups considered for gifted and general-education, there is a trend for African-American males to trail somewhat African-American females in graduation rates.

**Table 11****Graduation by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

	Race	Sex	Graduation	
			Yes	No
Gifted-Changers	African-American	female	23	5
		male	9	5
	Caucasian	female	4	1
		male	4	1
Gifted-Remainers	African-American	female	25	0
		male	19	1
	Caucasian	female	17	0
		male	12	0
General-Remainers	African-American	female	24	3
		male	15	6
	Caucasian	female	3	1
		male	4	2

Length of stay in the gifted program was calculated by the grade in which the student entered the gifted program by the grade in which the student left (Figure 4). A chi-square analysis was not pursued due to the small cell numbers (less than five) for many groups.

The greatest percentage of students remained in the gifted program for seven, six and five grades respectively. The mean years a gifted student remained in the gifted program was 6.15 years, with a standard deviation of 2.28 years.



Figure 4. Length of Stay in The Gifted Program



An ANOVA of length of stay in the gifted program for the gifted-program-leavers by graduated or did not graduate was not significant (Table 12).

**Table 12**

**ANOVA: Length of Stay in the Gifted Program**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.93	1	0.93	0.17	0.68
Within Groups	270.77	50	5.42		
Total	271.69	51			

Gifted students who graduated were enrolled in the gifted program on the average for 6.2 years. Gifted-program-leavers who did not graduate were enrolled in the gifted program on the average for 5.8 years (Table 13)

**Table 13**

**Descriptive Statistics: Length of Stay in the Gifted Program**

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum Maximum
Graduated	40	6.15	2.24	0.35	5.43	6.87	2 11
Did not Graduate	12	5.83	2.62	0.76	4.17	7.50	1 10
Total	52	6.08	2.31	0.32	5.43	6.72	1 11

The graduation rate for students identified as gifted by relative income level (by census tract area in early elementary) was considered for those gifted students who remained within the school district and in the gifted program (Figure 5). A chi-square was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.29$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

A trend suggests that a higher percentage of the poorer gifted students are represented in the group of gifted students who left the district and did not graduate (69%).

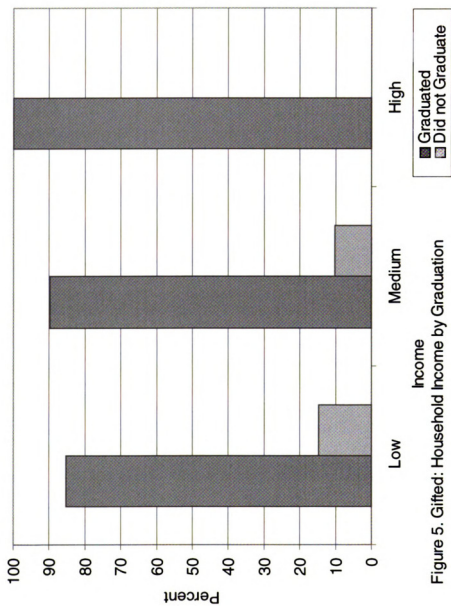


Figure 5. Gifted: Household Income by Graduation

The general-education students grouped by relative income level were considered for graduation rate were not significantly different by graduation rate (Figure 6) ( $\chi^2 = 2.06$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

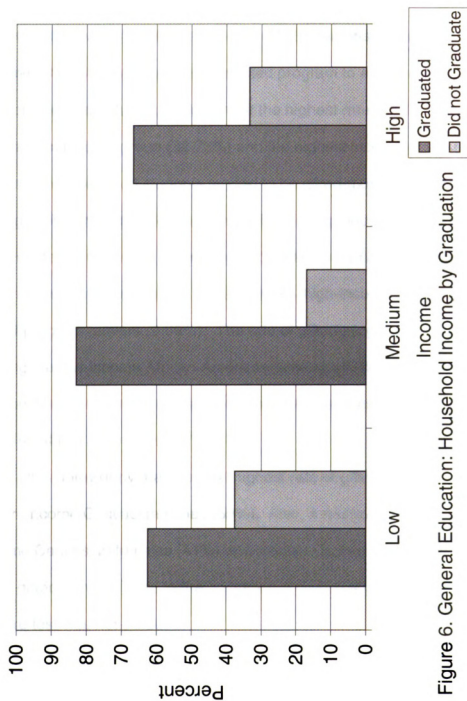


Figure 6. General Education: Household Income by Graduation

A frequency of the gifted students grouped by relative income and placement in twelfth grade (Tables 14 and 15) demonstrates a trend for the lower income gifted students to leave the gifted program to enroll instead in the district's general-education program at the highest rate (58.18%) compared to the median income group (32.73%) and the highest income group (9.09%). Median- income gifted students tended to be gifted-movers and gifted-program-changers in fairly equivalent numbers. Finally high-income gifted students were represented fairly evenly among those gifted-movers (21.43%) and gifted-program-remainers (28.38%). Relatively few high-income gifted students were gifted-program-leavers (9.09%). The rate of gifted-program-leavers was highest among the low-income African-American females (49%). This trend was also demonstrated within the median income gifted students for African-American females (44%) and males (32%).

It is noteworthy that the next highest rate of gifted-movers was for the lower- income Caucasian males (59%). Also, a relatively high rate of lower-income Caucasian females (41%) and median-income Caucasian males (56%) were gifted-movers. Due to the presence of cell numbers less than five, a chi-square test was not pursued.

**Table 14**

**Gifted Students' Placement in Twelfth Grade by Income, Race and Gender**

Household Income		Left Gifted		Gifted Left to General		Gifted Remained in Gifted		
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	
Low	African American	Female	5	8.9%	18	32.7%	14	18.9%
		Male	2	3.6%	6	10.9%	9	12.2%
	Caucasian	Female	7	12.5%	4	7.3%	6	8.1%
		Male	10	17.9%	4	7.3%	3	4.1%
	Total		24	42.9%	32	58.2%	32	43.2%
Medium	African American	Female	4	7.1%	8	14.6%	6	8.1%
		Male	7	12.5%	7	12.7%	8	10.8%
	Caucasian	Female	4	7.1%	2	3.6%	4	5.4%
		Male	5	8.9%	1	1.8%	3	4.1%
	Total		20	35.7%	18	32.7%	21	28.4%
High	African American	Female	2	3.6%	3	5.5%	5	6.8%
		Male	2	3.6%	1	1.8%	3	4.1%
	Caucasian	Female	4	7.1%	0	0.0%	7	9.5%
		Male	4	7.1%	1	1.8%	6	8.1%
	Total		12	21.4%	5	9.1%	21	28.4%



Among all income groups of general-education students, the most general-program-remainers were among median-income African-American females (78%) and males (80%) . The highest rate of general-movers was for median-income Caucasian females ( 64%) and males (67%), and higher-income Caucasian males (80%). Due to the presence of cell numbers less than five, a chi-square test was not pursued.

**Table 15****General Education Students' Placements in Twelfth Grade by Income, Race and Gender**

Household Income			General Movers		General Program Remainers	
			Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Low						
	African-American	Female	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
		Male	1	20.0%	4	80.0%
	Caucasian	Female	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
		Male	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Median						
	African-American	Female	7	21.9%	25	78.1%
		Male	4	20.0%	16	80.0%
	Caucasian	Female	7	63.6%	4	36.4%
		Male	10	66.7%	5	33.3%
High						
	African-American	Female	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
		Male	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
	Caucasian	Female	2	50.0%	2	50.0%
		Male	4	80.0%	1	20.0%

## Research Question Two

### Demographic Variables

To define the demographics of the gifted and general-education students, the total number of gifted and general-education students, 287, was considered. The number of gifted students was 185 compared to 102 general-education students. Although total numbers differ, the percentages by race and gender are similar for each group. The breakdown of the gifted and general-education sample by race and gender is detailed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

#### **Percent of Gender and Race Within Gifted and General Program Identification**

		Gifted Students		General Students		
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count
African American						
	Female	65	35%	35	34%	100
	Male	45	24%	27	27%	72
Caucasian						
	Female	38	21%	17	17%	55
	Male	37	20%	23	23%	60
Total		185	100%	102	100%	287

### Home Variables

#### Family Constellation

The family constellation of the gifted and general-education students reported at the time of enrollment in early elementary was considered by placement in twelfth grade (Table 17). Students were grouped by family

constellations of single parent families, two parent families, parent and stepparent families, and other, which included extended family placements and foster care placements. The chi-square results suggest that there was a significant difference between family constellation in early elementary and the placement of a student in twelfth grade, ( $\chi^2 = 21.32$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The majority of gifted-movers lived with both parents (61%). The majority of those gifted-program-remainers (70%) also lived with both parents. Students living with both parents in early elementary were also represented in the greatest number among general-program-remainers (57%).

Students from single parent families were represented at a higher rate among general-movers (58%). Overall, a lesser percentage of the gifted-program-remainers were from single-parent families (25%) than from two-parent families.

**Table 17**

**Placement in Twelfth Grade by Legal Guardianship**

		Single Parent	Legal Guardian			Total
			Both Parents	Other Than Parents	Parent & Step- Parent	
Gifted-Movers	Count % within Placement	16 28.1%	35 61.4%	1 1.8%	5 8.8%	57 100.0%
Gifted-Program-Changers	Count % within Placement	23 41.1%	27 48.2%	3 5.4%	3 5.4%	55 100.0%
Gifted-Program-Remainers	Count % within Placement	19 25.0%	53 69.7%	0 0.0%	4 5.3%	76 100.0%
General-Movers	Count % within Placement	22 57.9%	13 34.2%	1 2.6%	2 5.3%	38 100.0%
General-Program-Remainers	Count % within Placement	23 35.4%	37 56.9%	1 1.5%	4 6.2%	65 100.0%
Total	Count % within Placement	103 35.3%	165 56.5%	6 2.1%	18 6.2%	292 100.0%

### Guardianship Changes

The number of guardianship changes as recorded on the cumulative record was considered for the general and gifted students' placements in twelfth grade. The crosstabulation (Table 18) was completed to consider the students by guardianship changes, no guardianship changes during the school years and one or more changes. There were no significant differences for placement according to number of guardianship changes. ( $\chi^2 = 2.99$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, there was a trend for students who experienced one or more guardianship changes to be gifted-program-leavers (26%), in comparison, the gifted-program-remainers included fewer students having one or more guardianship changes (16%).

**Table 18**

#### **Guardianship Changes by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

		Number of Guardian Changes		
		No changes	1 or more changes	Total
Gifted-Program-Changers	Count	40	14	54
	% within Placement	74.1%	25.9%	100.0%
Gifted-Remainers	Count	62.0	12.0	74.0
	% within Placement	83.8%	16.2%	100.0%
General-Remainers	Count	54.0	9.0	63.0
	% within Placement	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	156.0	35.0	191.0
	% within Placement	81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

## Household Income

### *Household Income and Twelfth Grade Placement*

An ANOVA investigating household income by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade yielded significance at the .01 level (Table 19).

**Table 19**

#### **ANOVA: Household Income by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Dependent Variable: HHI					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.4E+09	19	179266629	2.51	0.00
Intercept	1.6E+11	1	1.57E+11	2193.80	0.00
Place in Twelfth Grade	1.8E+09	4	453647925	6.35	0.00
Gender	5.6E+07	1	55672998.1	0.78	0.38
Race	1.9E+07	1	19413374.6	0.27	0.60
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	2.0E+08	4	50200425	0.70	0.59
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	4.7E+08	4	116722324	1.63	0.17
Gender * Race	1.4E+06	1	1.39979.06	0.02	0.89
Race and Gender by Place in Twelfth Grade	3.1E+08	5	62933677.1	0.87	0.50
Error	1.9E+10	266	71496243.3		
Total	2.2E+11	286			
Corrected Total	2.2E+10	285			

<sup>a</sup> = R Squared = .152 (Adjusted R Squared = .091)

The mean household income for the gifted-program-leavers was by far the lowest (mean = \$21,5040.00). The highest household income group by placement in twelfth grade was the general-movers (mean =\$30,156.00), followed by the general-program-remainers (mean = \$29,024.00). All groups of gifted had lower mean incomes their general-education counterparts (Table 20).

**Table 20**

**Descriptive Statistics: Household Income by Placement in Twelfth Grade  
And Multiple Comparisons Dependent Variable: HHI Bonferroni**

**Descriptive Statistics: Household Income by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

	Mean	Std. Error	9 5% Confidence Interval for Mean	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted-Movers	26315.70	1159.98	24031.80	28599.61
Gifted-Program-Changers	21039.78	1400.99	18281.34	23798.22
Gifted-Program-Remainers	26954.06	1018.53	27948.66	23798.22
General-Movers	30156.04	1428.72	27283.94	33257.65
General-Program-Remainers	29024.22	1284.17	26495.79	31552.66



**Table 20 Continued**

**Multiple Comparisons Dependent Variable: HHI Bonferroni**

(I) Place- ment	(J) Place- ment	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	4484	1605	0.08	-268.4	9235.8
	3	-230	1498	1.00	-4663.2	4204.1
	4	-4510	1777	0.18	-9771.1	751.1
	5	-3435	2458	1.00	-10713.0	3842.2
	6	-2923	1663	1.00	-7846.7	2000.9
2	1	-4484	1605	0.08	-9235.8	268.4
	3	-4713	1505	0.03	-9169.8	-256.8
	4	-8994	1784	0.00	-14274.2	-3713.4
	5	-7919	2463	0.02	-15210.7	-627.6
	6	-7407	1670	0.00	-12351.0	-2462.2
3	1	230	1498	1.00	-4204.1	4663.2
	2	4713	1505	0.03	256.8	9169.8
	4	-4280	1687	0.18	-9276.2	715.3
	5	-3206	2394	1.00	-10294.0	3882.3
	6	-2693	1567	1.00	-7332.5	1945.8
4	1	4510	1777	0.18	-751.1	9771.1
	2	8994	1784	0.00	3713.4	14274.2
	3	4280	1687	0.18	-715.3	9276.2
	5	1075	2578	1.00	-6558.4	8707.7
	6	1587	1836	1.00	-3848.3	7022.6
5	1	3435	2458	1.00	-3842.2	10713.0
	2	7919	2463	0.02	627.6	15210.7
	3	3206	2394	1.00	-3882.3	10294.0
	4	-1075	2578	1.00	-8707.7	6558.4
	6	513	2501	1.00	-6892.1	7917.1
6	1	2923	1663	1.00	-2000.9	7846.7
	2	7407	1670	0.00	2462.2	12351.0
	3	2693	1567	1.00	-1945.8	7332.5
	4	-1587	1836	1.00	-7022.6	3848.3
	5	-513	2501	1.00	-7917.1	6892.1

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

### *Household Income and Graduation Rate*

An ANOVA was completed for household income by graduation rate for general-education students (Table 21). The results were not significant at the .05 level.

**Table 21**

#### **ANOVA: HHI for General-Education Students by Graduation Rate**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	72481298	2	36240649	0.83	0.44
Within Groups	4.06E+09	93	43696131		
Total	4.14E+09	95			
A	identified = general education				

The majority of general-education students who remained in the school district graduated. Of fifty-eight students forty-six did and twelve did not graduate (Table 22). The general-education students who left the school district lived in neighborhoods with the highest mean HHI in early elementary (\$30,580.00).

**Table 22**

**Descriptive Statistics: HHI of General-Education Students by Graduation Rate**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Poverty Group	46	28971	5261.1372	775.71	27408	30533	11204	35357
Non-Poverty Group	12	28370	5751.4116	1660.3	24716	32025	16866	39543
Missing	38	30581	8144.462	1321.2	27904	33258	11321	56965
Total	96	29533	6598.422	673.45	28196	30870	11204	56965
a	identified = general education							

**Key**

Poverty Group = HHI up to 20% above poverty level for census tract in early elementary.

Non-Poverty Group = HHI higher than 20% above poverty level.

An ANOVA was completed for household income by graduation rate. For gifted students the results were significant at the .05 level (Table 28, page x).

**Table 23**

**ANOVA: HHI for Gifted Students by Graduation Rate**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	582453578.3	2	291226789	3.35	0.04
Within Groups	15548246344	179	86861711		
Total	16130699922	181			
A	identified = gifted				

The majority of the students identified as gifted who remained in the school district graduated (n = 113). Thirteen students identified as gifted did not graduate. These gifted students were among those who lived in the poorest neighborhoods in early elementary (Table 24). The mean HHI for the graduating group was \$25,229.00, in comparison to a mean HHI of \$18,722.00 for those gifted students who did not graduate. The group of gifted students who left the school district lived in the highest income neighborhoods in early elementary (mean = \$26,070.00).

**Table 24**

**Descriptive Statistics: HHI of Gifted Students by Graduation Rate**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Poverty Group	113	25229.87	9730.33	915.35	23416.21	27043.52	8074	56965
Non-Poverty Group	13	18721.85	8546.59	2370.40	13557.19	23886.50	9899	31646
Missing	56	26070.61	8599.82	1149.20	23767.56	28373.65	8074	41287
Total	182	25023.70	9440.33	699.76	23642.95	26404.44	8074	56965
a	identified = gifted							

**Key**

Poverty Group = HHI up to 20% above poverty level for census tract in early elementary.

Non-Poverty Group = HHI higher than 20% above poverty level.

A Bonferroni multiple comparisons test analyzed differences between gifted students' graduation rates by HHI (Table 25). There were significant differences at the .05 level between the mean HHI of the gifted students who did not graduate and the gifted students who left the school district.

**Table 25**

**Bonferonni Multiple Comparison Test: Gifted Students for HHI by Graduation Rate**

		Mean Difference e (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Graduated	Non-Poverty Group	6508.02	2729.53	0.05	-88.41	13104.46
	Missing	-840.74	1523.09	1.00	-4521.56	2840.08
Did not Graduate	Poverty Group	-6508.02	2729.53	0.05	-13104.46	88.41
	Missing	-7348.76	2869.28	0.03	-14282.92	-414.60
Missing	Poverty Group	840.74	1523.09	1.00	-2840.08	4521.56
	Non-Poverty Group	7348.76	2869.28	0.03	414.60	14282.92

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

A identified = gifted

### *Poverty and Twelfth Grade Placement*

A crosstabulation was completed for students' placements in twelfth grade by poverty group and non-poverty group (Table 26). The poverty group consisted of those students living in neighborhoods where the mean household income was less than twenty-percent above the poverty rate of \$12, 400.00 (\$9,920.00 to \$17,360.00) for the year the income information was gathered. Overall, a greater percentage of the gifted students in each group were in the poverty group, compared to their general-education peers.

A greater percentage of the gifted-program-leavers were in the poverty group (31%), compared to gifted-movers (14%) and gifted-program-remainders (23%). A chi-square for gifted and general-education students between poverty and placement in twelfth grade was significant at the .05 level, ( $\chi^2 = 18.81$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ).



**Table 26****Gifted and General Education Students by Poverty and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

		Poverty Level		
		Poverty Group	Non-Poverty Group	Total
Gifted Movers	Count	8	48	56
	% within placement	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
Gifted Program Changers	Count	17	38	55
	% within placement	30.9%	69.1%	100.0%
Gifted Program Remainders	Count	17	57	74
	% within placement	23.0%	77.0%	100.0%
General Movers	Count	3	35	38
	% within placement	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
General Program Remainders	Count	3	60	63
	% within placement	4.8%	95.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	48	238	286
	% of Total	16.8%	83.2%	100.0%

### Poverty and Graduation Rate

A crosstabulation analyzed the relationship between general-education students graduation rate and poverty (Table 27). A chi-square for general-education students between poverty and graduation rate was not significant. ( $\chi^2 = 0.98$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p > .001$ ).

The percentage of poverty group general-education students who graduated was fifty (50%). Of those general-education students who did not graduate, thirteen percent (13%) were within the poverty group. The group of general-education students who left the district was within the poverty group at a rate of fifty percent (50%).

**Table 27**

#### General Education Students by Poverty and Graduation Rate

		Poverty Level		
		Poverty Group	Non-Poverty Group	Total
Graduated	Count	3	43	46
	% within graduated	6.5%	93.5%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	50.0%	47.8%	47.9%
	% of Total	3.1%	44.8%	47.9%
Did not Graduate	Count	0	12	12
	% within not-graduated	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	0.0%	13.3%	12.5%
	% of Total	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Missing	Count	3	35	38
	% within missing	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	50.0%	38.9%	39.6%
	% of Total	3.1%	36.5%	39.6%
Total	Count	6	90	96
	% of Total	6.3%	93.8%	100.0%
a identified = general education				

A crosstabulation investigated the relationship of graduation rate and poverty group for gifted students (Table 28). The percentage of gifted students who graduated and were in the poverty group was sixty-five (65%). Of those gifted students who did not graduate, fifteen percent (15%) were within the poverty group. The group of gifted students who left the district and were within the poverty group was twenty percent (20%). A chi-square for gifted students between poverty and graduation rate was significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 6.43$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 28**

**Gifted Students by Poverty and Graduation Rate**

		Poverty Level		
		Poverty Group	Non-Poverty Group	Total
Graduated	Count	26	87	113
	% within graduated	23.0%	77.0%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	65.0%	61.3%	62.1%
	% of Total	14.3%	47.8%	62.1%
Did not Graduate	Count	6	7	13
	% within not-graduated	46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	15.0%	4.9%	7.1%
	% of Total	3.3%	3.8%	7.1%
Missing	Count	8	48	56
	% within missing		85.7%	100.0%
	% within poverty group	20.0%	33.8%	30.8%
	% of Total	4.4%	26.4%	30.8%
Total	Count	40	142	182
	% of Total	0.22%	0.78%	1%
a	identified = gifted			

## Social Variables

### Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

#### *Participation in Middle School Extra-Curricular Arts Activities*

Participation in extra-curricular activities was considered for the gifted and general-education students. Middle school extra-curricular arts activities and high school extra-curricular arts and sports activities were considered by placement in twelfth grade. Arts activities included band or instrumental music, choir, drama, art, world politics (mini United Nations) and yearbook or other journalism activities. Sports included participation in football, swimming, soccer, track, baseball, volleyball, tennis, softball, cheerleading, hockey, golf and wrestling.

An ANOVA for participation in middle school arts activities was significant by gender and placement in twelfth grade at the .05 level (Table 29).

Participation in middle school arts activities was significant by race at the .001 level, while interactions between placement in twelfth grade and race (Figure 7) and gender and race (Figure 8) were significant at the .05 level.

**Table 29****ANOVA: Middle School Arts and Extra-Curricular Participation by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	62.30	19	3.28	2.82	0.00
Intercept	200.21	1	200.21	172.01	0.00
Place in Twelfth Grade	10.03	1	10.03	8.62	0.00
Gender	14.05	4	3.51	3.02	0.02
Race * Placement	12.51	1	12.51	10.74	0.00
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	3.07	4	0.77	0.66	0.62
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	14.13	4	3.53	3.03	0.02
Gender * Race	7.18	1	7.18	6.17	0.01
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender * Race	9.59	4	2.40	2.06	0.09
Error	267.70	230	1.16		
Total	690.00	250			
Corrected Total	330.00	249			
$\eta^2 = R \text{ Squared} = .189 \text{ (Adjusted } R \text{ Squared} = .122)$					

Figure 7. Interaction Between Race and Placement in  
Twelfth Grade for Middle School Arts Participation

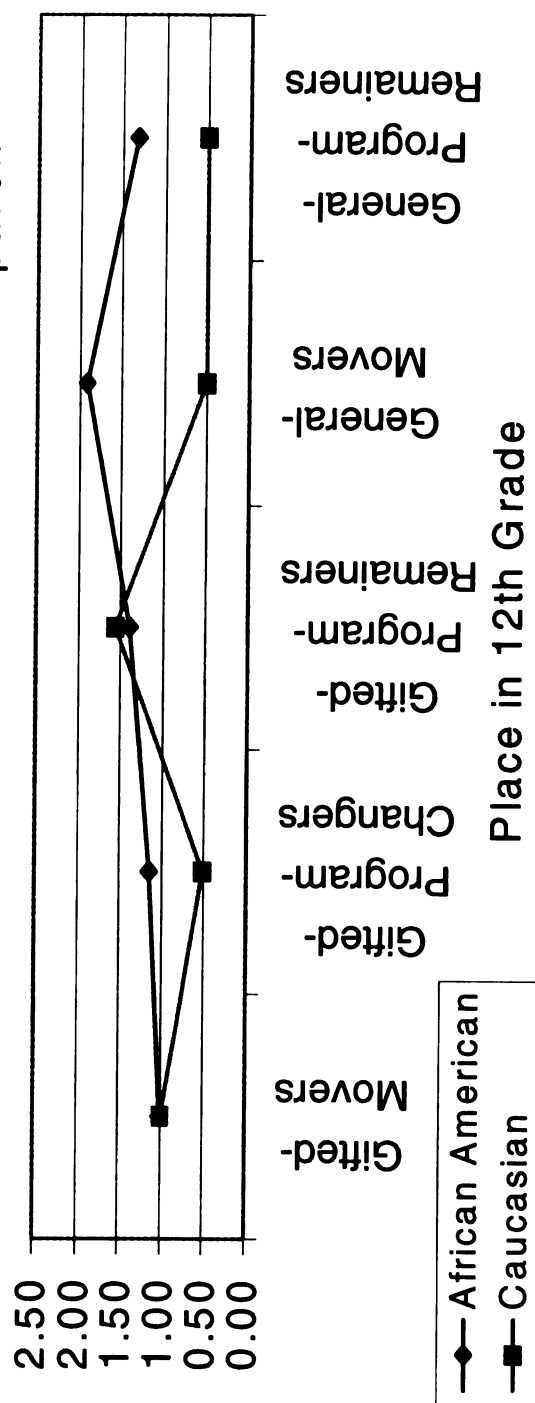
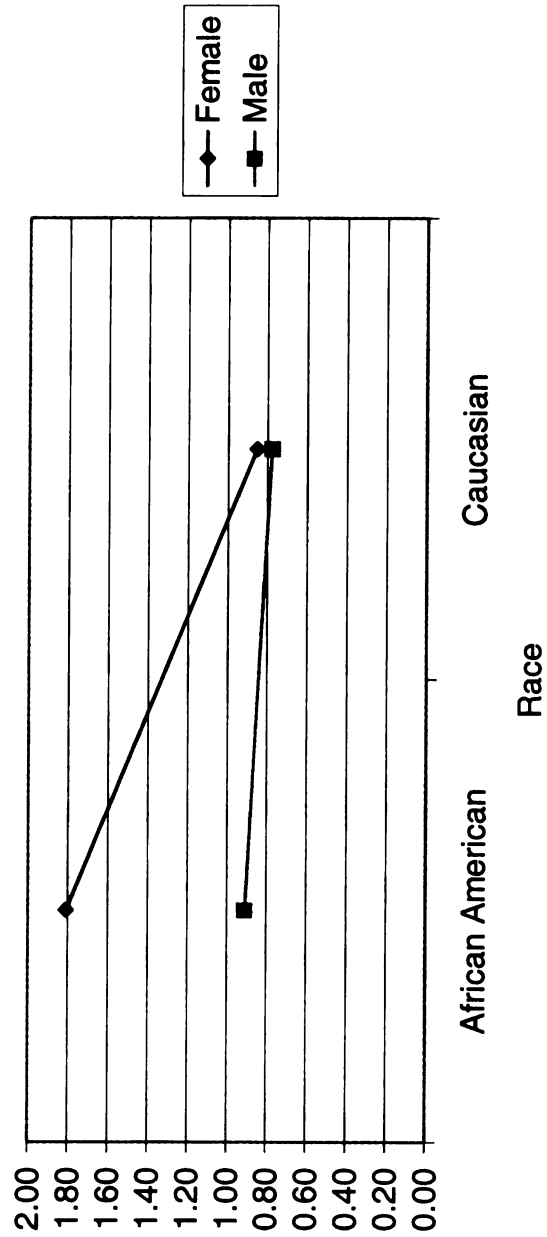


Figure 8. Interaction Between Race and Gender for Middle School Arts Participation



Gifted-program-remainders participated in the most middle schools arts activities (mean = 1.48), followed by general-movers (mean = 1.20). Gifted-program-leavers were involved in the fewest extra-curricular arts activities at the middle school level (mean = 0.83). When race and place in twelfth grade was considered, there was a consistent difference by race and group for participation in middle-school arts activities. Within the groups of gifted-program-leavers African-American males participated more (mean =1.15) than Caucasian males (mean = .517). This was also true for general-movers [Caucasian males (mean = .500) and African-American males (mean = 1.92) ] and general-program-remainders [Caucasian males (mean =.500) and African-American males (mean = 1.32)].

Overall, females were more involved in middle school arts activities (mean = 1.36), than males (mean = 0 .82). Moreover, African-American students participated in a higher number of middle school arts activities (mean = 1.4) than Caucasians (mean = 0.82). However, African-American females were most involved (mean = 1.81) compared to Caucasian females (mean =.85), African-American males (mean =.91), or Caucasian males (.78).



**Table 30****Descriptive Statistics: Middle School Arts Extra-Curricular Participation  
by Placement in Twelfth Grade**

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	Mean	Std Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted-Movers	1.00	0.18	0.654	1.355
Gifted-Program-Changers	0.83	0.19	0.467	1.199
Gifted-Program-Remainers	1.48	0.13	1.222	1.734
General-Movers	1.21	0.25	0.718	1.698
General-Program-Remainers	0.913	0.164	0.59	1.24
<hr/>				
Female	1.331	0.123	1.09	1.57
Male	0.844	0.112	0.62	1.06
<hr/>				
African-American	1.359	0.111	1.14	1.58
Caucasian	0.816	0.124	0.57	1.06

---

*Participation in High School Extra-Curricular Arts Activities*

An ANOVA for participation in high school arts activities by race was significant at the .01 level (Table 31).

**Table 31**

**ANOVA: Students' High School Arts Extra-Curricular Activity Participation**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square
Corrected Model	125.72	18	6.98
Intercept	189.34	1	189.34
Race	0.15	1	0.15
Gender	5.02	1	5.02
Place in Twelfth Grade	76.86	4	19.22
Race * Gender	0.01	1	0.01
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	55.89	4	13.97
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	7.77	4	1.94
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender * Race	6.86	3	2.29
Error	643.03	176	3.65
Total	1426.00	195	
Corrected Total	768.75	194	

<sup>a</sup> = R Squared = .164 (Adjusted R Squared = .078)

Each group of gifted students participated in more high schools arts extra-curricular activities than either group of general-education students. Gifted-program-remainers, participated in the most high schools arts activities (mean = 2.55), followed by gifted-movers (mean = 2.42) and gifted-program-leavers (mean = 1.23). General-movers participated least in high school arts extra-curriculars (mean = .93). Among all student groups, Caucasians gifted-movers (mean = 3.33) and gifted-program-remainers (mean = 3.14) participated most in high schools arts extra-curricular activities. Among African-Americans, gifted-program-remainers (mean = 1.96) and gifted-program-leavers (mean = 1.92) participated most in high schools arts extra-curricular activities (Table 32).

**Table 32**

**Descriptive Statistics: Students' High School Arts and Extra-Curricular Participation**

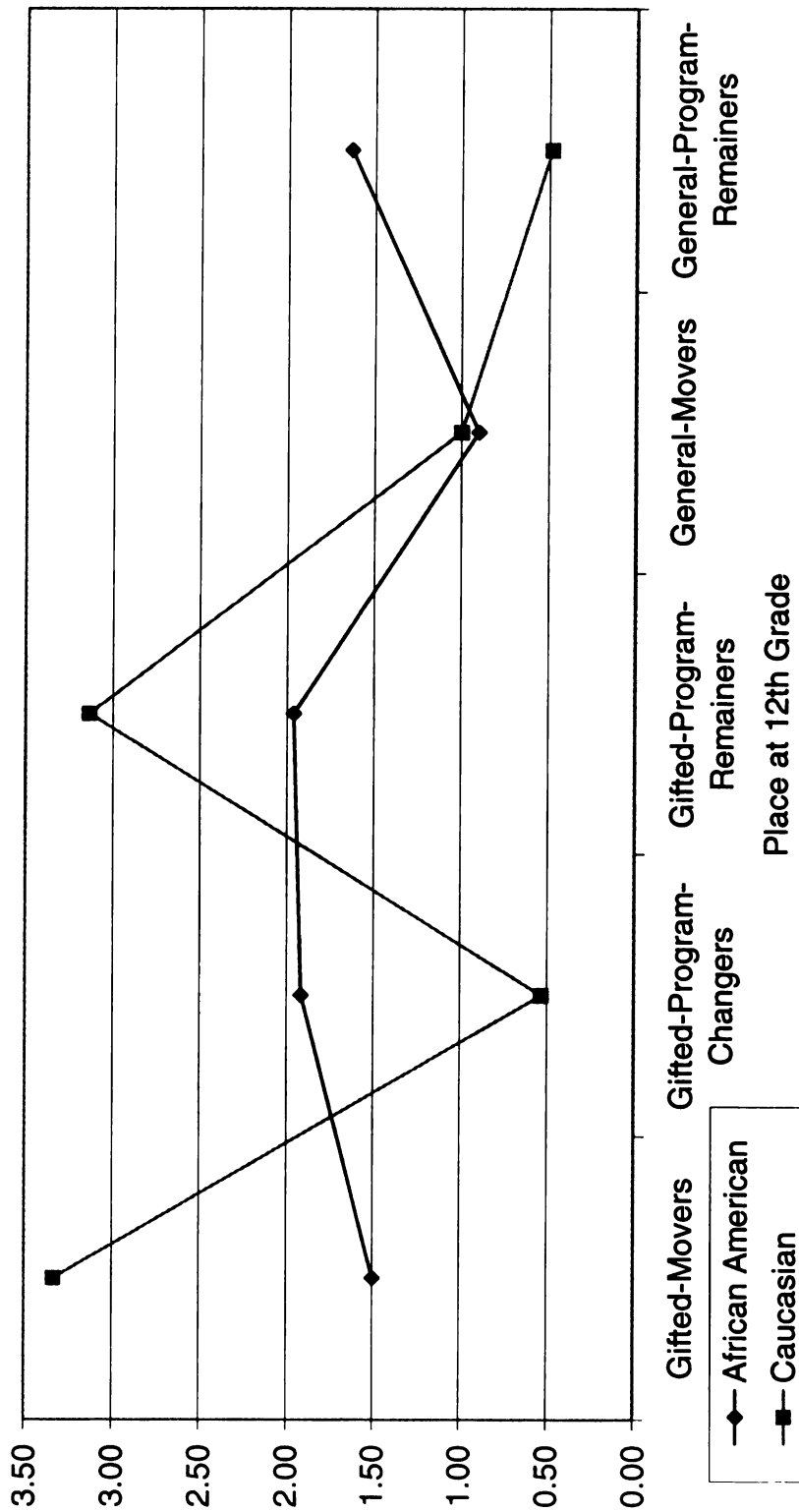
	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted-Movers	2.42	0.80	0.83	4.00
Gifted-Program-Changers	1.23	0.33	0.57	1.88
Gifted-Program-Remainers	2.55	0.23	2.09	3.01
General-Movers	0.93	0.65	-0.34	2.21
General-Program-Remainers	1.06	0.31	0.44	1.68
a Based on modified population marginal mean.				

**Table 32 Continued**

RACE	Place in 12th grade	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
African-American	Gifted-Movers	1.50	1.17	-0.81	3.81
	Gifted-Program-Changers	1.92	0.33	1.27	2.56
	Gifted-Program-Remainers	1.96	0.29	1.38	2.54
	General-Movers	0.90	0.70	-0.48	2.28
	General-Program-Remainers	1.64	0.28	1.08	2.20
Caucasian	Gifted-Movers	3.33	1.10	1.16	5.51
	Gifted-Program-Changers	0.53	0.58	-0.61	1.68
	Gifted-Program-Remainers	3.14	0.36	2.42	3.86
	General-Movers	1.00	1.35	-1.67	3.67
	General-Program-Remainers	0.49	0.56	-0.62	1.59
a	Based on modified population marginal mean.				

An interaction between race and placement in twelfth grade for high school extra-curricular arts participation was significant at the .05 level (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Interaction Between Race and Placement in Twelfth Grade for High School Arts Participation



*Participation in High School Extra-Curricular Sports Activities*

An ANOVA for participation in high school sports extra-curricular activities was not significant at .05 level for race, gender or place in twelfth grade (Table 33).

**Table 33.**

**ANOVA: Students' High School Sports Extra-Curricular Participation**

	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	36.25	18	2.01	0.84	0.65
Intercept	24.73	1	24.73	10.34	0.00
Race	0.42	1	0.42	0.17	0.68
Gender	0.79	1	0.79	0.33	0.57
Place in Twelfth Grade	16.02	4	4.01	1.67	0.16
Race * Gender	0.08	1	0.08	0.03	0.86
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	8.53	4	2.13	0.89	0.47
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	1.26	4	0.32	0.13	0.97
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender * Race	2.47	3	0.82	0.34	0.79
Error	423.48	177	2.39		
Total	573.00	196			
Corrected Total	459.73	195			
$a = R \text{ Squared} = .164$					
(Adjusted R Squared = .078)					
$R \text{ Squared} = .079$ (Adjusted R Squared = -.015)					

The overall mean for participation in high school sports activities for gifted and general-education students was 0.76, with a range of 0 to 16.

**Table 34.**

**Descriptive Statistics: Students High School Sports Extra-Curricular Participation**

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sports	197	0	16	0.76	1.53

*Transition to Middle School Concerns*

The Transition to Middle School Survey measured the concerns gifted and general-education students expressed prior to making the transition to middle school. This instrument scored as “one” for very concerned, to “five”, not concerned. An ANOVA analyzed the average transition to middle school concerns attained from students’ responses by race, gender and place in twelfth grade (Table 35).



**Table 35****ANOVA: Average Transition to Middle School Concerns**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	22.7	19	1.2	1.9	0.0
Intercept	1008.9	1	1008.9	1606.5	0.0
Race	0.3	1	0.3	0.4	0.5
Gender	0.3	1	0.3	0.4	0.5
Place in Twelfth Grade	6.9	4	1.7	2.7	0.0
Race * Gender	0.7	1	0.7	1.0	0.3
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	6.8	4	1.7	2.7	0.0
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	3.8	4	0.9	1.5	0.2
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender * Race	4.1	4	1.0	1.6	0.2
Error	125.0	199	0.6		
Total	1391.8	219			
Corrected Total	147.7	218			

<sup>a</sup> = R Squared = .154 (Adjusted R Squared = .073)

Average transition to middle school concerns were significant for placement in twelfth grade and for an interaction between race and placement in twelfth grade at the .05 level (Table 36).

All student groups expressed a moderate or greater level of concern about making the transition to middle school. Comparably, the least concern was expressed by the gifted-program-remainders (mean = 2.69), with the greatest overall concern about middle school transition expressed by general-program-

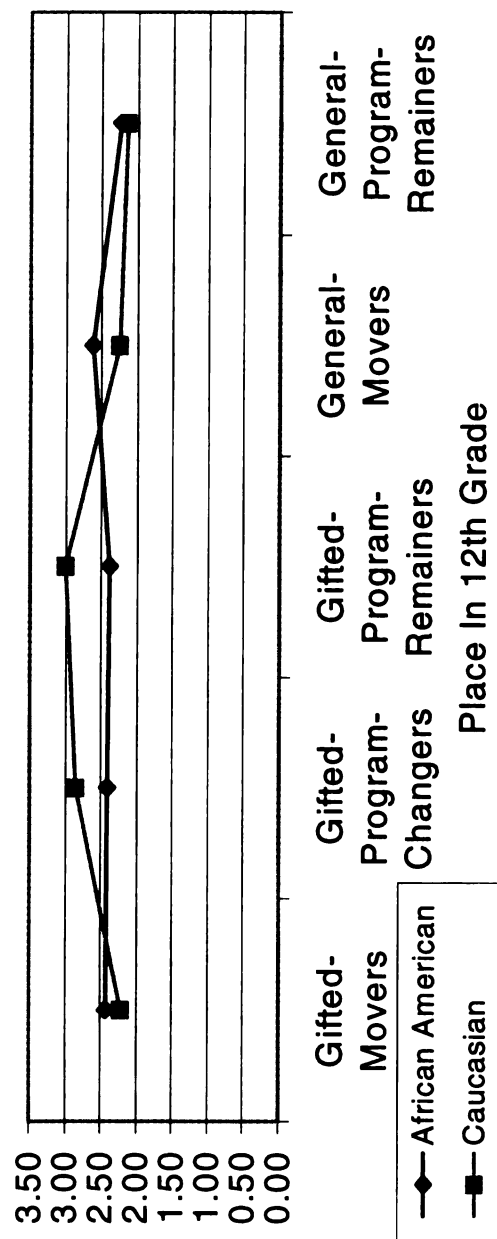
remainers (mean = 2.19). When differences are considered by placement in twelfth grade and by race, the least concern was expressed by the Caucasian gifted-program-remainers (mean = 3.00), followed by Caucasian gifted-program-leavers (mean = 2.86). The greatest level of anxiety and concern was expressed by Caucasian (mean = 2.14) and African-American general-program-remainers (mean = 2.23).

**Table 36****Descriptive Statistics: Average Transition to Middle School Concerns**

RACE	place in 12th grade	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
African-American	Gifted-Movers	2.43	0.21	2.03	2.84
	Gifted-Program-Changers	2.41	0.16	2.10	2.72
	Gifted-Program-Remainers	2.38	0.14	2.11	2.66
	General-Movers	2.62	0.23	2.16	3.07
	General-Program-Remainers	2.24	0.12	2.00	2.47
Caucasian	Gifted-Movers	2.22	0.17	1.89	2.55
	Gifted-Program-Changers	2.86	0.28	2.31	3.41
	Gifted-Program-Remainers	3.01	0.19	2.64	3.37
	General-Movers	2.25	0.18	1.90	2.60
	General-Program-Remainers	2.14	0.22	1.71	2.58
				95% Confidence Interval	
	place in 12th grade	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	Gifted-Movers	2.33	0.13	2.07	2.59
	Gifted-Program-Changers	2.64	0.16	2.32	2.95
	Gifted-Program-Remainers	2.69	0.12	2.46	2.92
	General-Movers	2.43	0.15	2.14	2.72
	General-Program-Remainers	2.19	0.13	1.94	2.44

Figure 10 demonstrates the interaction between race and placement in twelfth grade for gifted and general education students' average transition to middle school concerns.

Figure 10. Interaction Between Race and Placement in Twelfth Grade for Average Transition to Middle School Concerns



## School Variables

### The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

#### *Fourth Grade Math MEAP*

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) math test fourth grade percentile scores for gifted and general-education students were considered for differences by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade. The results of an ANOVA showed no difference for these factors between gifted and general-education students (Table 37).

**Table 37**

**ANOVA: MEAP Math Fourth Grade Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4453.07	19	234.37	1.30	0.18
Intercept	1484113.30	1	1484113.30	8236.76	0.00
Race	176.21	1	176.21	0.98	0.32
Gender	79.11	1	79.11	0.44	0.51
Place in Twelfth Grade	596.11	4	149.03	0.83	0.51
Race * Gender	8.66	1	8.66	0.05	0.83
Place in Twelfth Grade *	618.94	4	154.73	0.86	0.49
Race					
Place in Twelfth Grade *	689.73	4	172.43	0.96	0.43
Gender					
Place in Twelfth Grade *	914.29	4	228.57	1.27	0.28
Gender * Race					
Error	42522.86	236	180.18		
Total	2007676.00	256			
Corrected Total	46975.94	255			

<sup>a</sup> = R Squared = .095 (Adjusted R Squared = .022)

The mean MEAP Math percentiles were highest for general-program-remainers (mean = 89.92) and for gifted-movers (mean = 89.07). The lowest mean MEAP Math percentiles were obtained by gifted-program-leavers (mean = 84.57) and for general-movers (mean = 87.48) (Table 38).

**Table 38**

**Descriptive Statistics: MEAP Math Fourth Grade Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Student Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted-Movers	89.07	2.05	85.04	93.10
Gifted-Program-Changers	84.57	2.31	80.02	89.13
Gifted-Program-Remainers	88.41	1.64	85.19	91.63
General-Movers	87.48	2.50	82.56	92.40
General-Program-Remainers	89.92	2.23	85.52	94.32

*Fifth Grade Science MEAP*

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program science test fifth grade percentile scores for gifted and general-education students were considered for differences by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade. The results of an ANOVA demonstrate a significant difference at the .05 level for race and MEAP fifth grade science test scores (Table 39).



**Table 39**

**ANOVA: MEAP Science Fifth Grade Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2379.29	11	216.30	2.68	0.01
Intercept	396581.43	1	396581.43	4922.03	0.00
Race	576.93	1	576.93	7.16	0.01
Gender	24.14	1	24.14	0.30	0.59
Place in Twelfth Grade	367.13	2	183.56	2.28	0.11
Race * Gender	9.59	1	9.59	0.12	0.73
Place in Twelfth Grade * Race	167.16	2	83.58	1.04	0.36
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender	202.07	2	101.04	1.25	0.29
Place in Twelfth Grade * Gender * Race	214.01	2	107.00	1.33	0.27
Error	5237.23	65	80.57		
Total	520293.00	77			
Corrected Total	7616.52	76			

<sup>a</sup> . = R Squared = .312 (Adjusted R Squared = .196)

African-American students attained lower science percentile rankings, on the average (mean = 79.39 %), than did Caucasian students (mean = 85.68%) (Table 40).

**Table 40**

**Descriptive Statistics: MEAP Science Fifth Grade Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
African American	79.38	1.49	76.40	82.37
Caucasian	85.68	1.82	82.05	89.31

Grades

*Reading Grades for First through Fifth*

Reading grades, assigned by teachers on a four-point scale, for first through fifth grades for gifted and general-education students were analyzed for differences by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade (Table 41) through a repeated measures ANOVA. Reading grade differences between subjects were significant at the .05 level for race, placement in twelfth grade and gender. Within student group differences were significant at the .01 level for reading grades. There was an interaction within student groups significant at the .05 level for reading grades and race .

**Table 41**

**Repeated Measures ANOVA: Reading Grades by Race, Gender and Twelfth Grade Placement**

<b>Test of Between-Subjects Effects</b>					
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reading Grades	8.98	4	2.24	7.17	0.00
Reading Grades * Race	4.06	4	1.01	3.24	0.01
Reading Grades * Gender	6.07	16	0.38	1.21	0.25
Race * Gender	0.61	4	0.15	0.49	0.74
Reading Grade * Race * Place in Twelfth	5.70	16	0.36	1.14	0.31
Reading Grades * Race * Gender	1.38	4	0.34	1.10	0.36
Reading Grades * Place in Twelfth * Gender	5.60	16	0.35	1.12	0.33
Reading Grades * Place in Twelfth * Gender * Race	4.05	16	0.25	0.81	0.68
Error(READ)	268.10	856	0.31		

**Table 41 Continued**

**Tests of Within-Subjects Effects (Reading Grades)**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
READ	8.98	4	2.24	7.17	0.00
READ * RACE	4.06	4	1.01	3.24	0.01
READ * PLAC12TH	6.07	16	0.38	1.21	0.25
READ * GENDER	0.61	4	0.15	0.49	0.74
READ * RACE * PLAC12TH	5.70	16	0.36	1.14	0.31
READ * RACE * GENDER	1.38	4	0.34	1.10	0.36
READ * PLAC12TH * GENDER	5.60	16	0.35	1.12	0.33
READ * RACE * PLAC12TH * GENDER	4.05	16	0.25	0.81	0.68
Error(READ)	268.10	856	0.31		

Reading grades were highest for gifted and general-education students in first grade (mean = 3.47). Reading grades dropped each year to a mean low of 3.22 in fourth grade and rose to a mean of 3.25 in fifth grade.

Gifted-program-remainers attained the highest overall mean reading grades (mean = 3.40), followed by gifted-movers ( mean = 3.56). General-program-remainers attained the lowest overall mean reading grades (mean = 2.92).

Caucasians attained higher mean reading grades (3.41) than African-Americans (3.23). Whereas, females attained higher mean reading grades (3.41) than males (3.23). (See Table 42.)

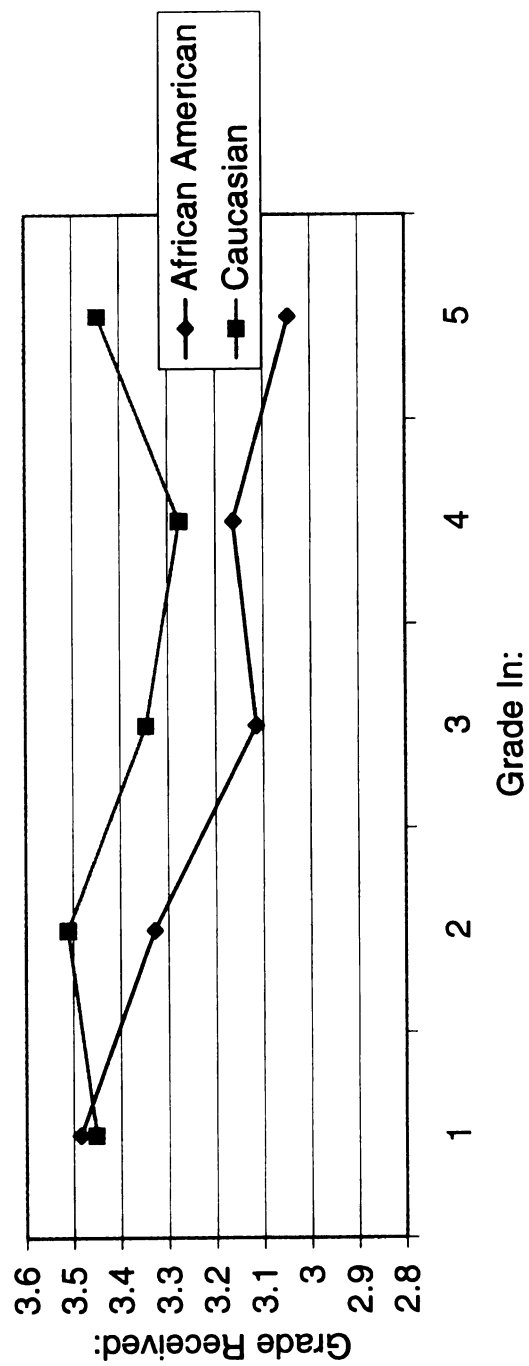
Table 42

**Descriptive Statistics: Reading Grades by Race, Gender and Twelfth Grade Placement**

Grade Level	95% Confidence Interval			
	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	3.47	0.05	3.37	3.57
2	3.42	0.05	3.32	3.52
3	3.23	0.05	3.12	3.34
4	3.22	0.06	3.11	3.33
5	3.25	0.06	3.14	3.36
Placement in Twelfth Grade				
Gifted Movers	3.56	0.08	3.41	3.71
Gifted Program Changers	3.44	0.09	3.26	3.62
Gifted Program Remainders	3.70	0.06	3.58	3.82
General Movers	2.97	0.10	2.78	3.16
General Program Remainders	2.92	0.08	2.76	3.08
Race				
African American	3.23	0.05	3.13	3.32
Caucasian	3.41	0.06	3.29	3.52
Gender				
Female	3.40	0.05	3.31	3.50
Male	3.23	0.05	3.12	3.34

Students varied in their reading grades by race. Caucasian (mean = 3.45) and African-American students reading grades (mean = 3.49) are fairly commensurate in first grade. Thereafter, Caucasians mean reading grades are consistently higher at each subsequent grade level (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Interaction Between Reading Grades by Race





### *Science Grades For Fourth and Fifth*

Differences in science grades, assigned by teachers on a four point scale, were investigated through a repeated measures ANOVA, for fourth through fifth grade gifted and general-education students by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade (Table 43). Differences between student groups were significant at the .01 level for race, placement in twelfth grade and gender. The between group interaction of race and placement in twelfth grade was significant at the .05 level. Variability within student groups was significant at the .01 level for science grades.

**Table 43****Repeated Measures ANOVA: Science Grades by Race, Gender and Twelfth Grade Placement**

<b>Test of Between-Subjects Effects</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Source</b>						
Intercept		4292.55	1	4292.55	7897.89	0.00
Race		7.03	1	7.03	12.94	0.00
Place in Twelfth		60.65	4	15.16	27.90	0.00
Gender		10.07	1	10.07	18.53	0.00
Race * Place in Twelfth		7.87	4	1.97	3.62	0.01
Race * Gender		0.00	1	0.00	0.00	0.95
Place in Twelfth * Gender		3.41	4	0.85	1.57	0.18
Place in Twelfth * Gender * Race		4.74	4	1.18	2.18	0.07
Error		134.25	247	0.54		

**Table 43 Continued****Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts (Science Grades)**

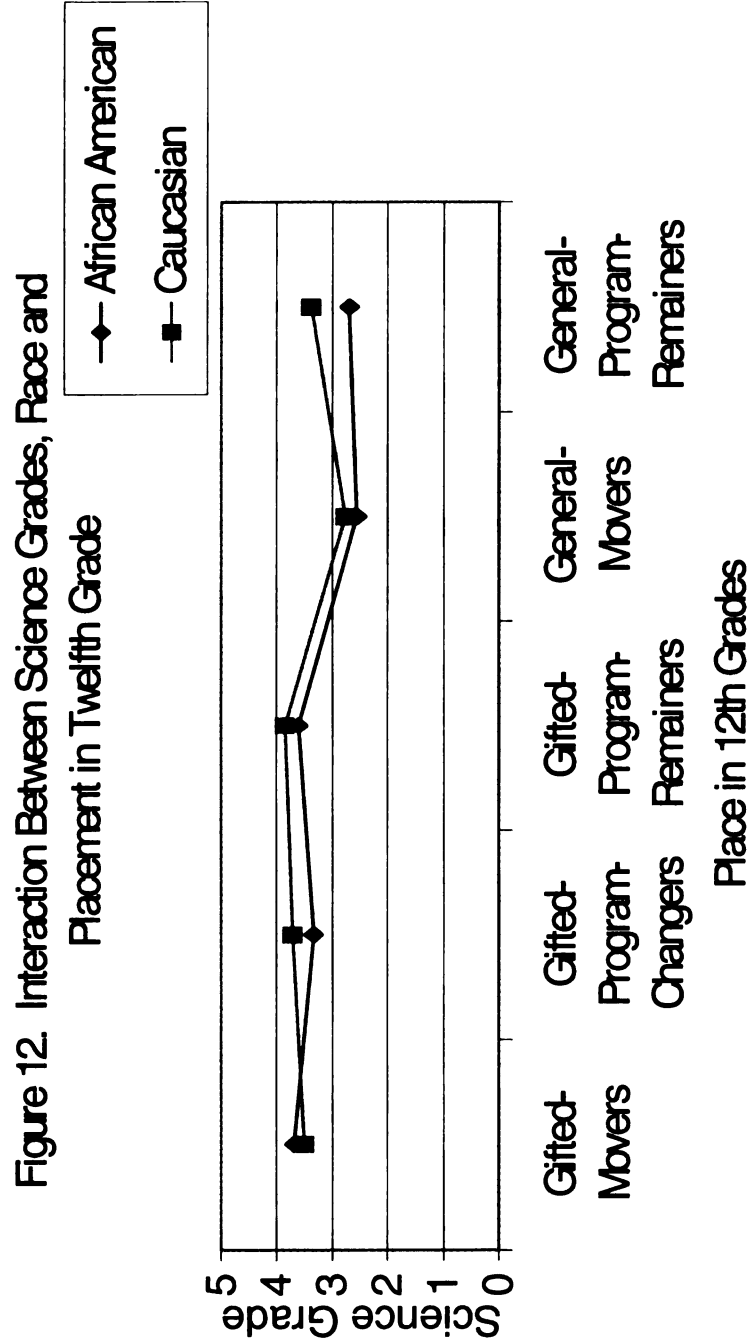
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Science Grades	7.15	1	7.15	21.39	0.00
Science Grades * Race	0.08	1	0.08	0.23	0.63
Science Grades * Place in Twelfth	1.92	4	0.48	1.44	0.22
Science Grades * Gender	0.50	1	0.50	1.49	0.22
Science Grades * Race * Place in Twelfth	2.53	4	0.63	1.89	0.11
Science Grades * Race * Gender	0.33	1	0.33	1.00	0.32
Science Grades * Gender * Place in Twelfth	0.63	4	0.16	0.47	0.76
Science Grades * Gender * Place in Twelfth * Race	1.52	4	0.38	1.14	0.34
Error(SCIGR)	82.54	247	0.33		

The mean fourth grade level science grade (3.44) was higher than the mean fifth grade level science grade (3.17). Moreover, all groups of gifted students have higher science grades than all groups of general-education students. The highest mean elementary science grades were attained by the gifted-program-remainers (3.73), followed by those gifted-movers (3.60) and gifted-program-leavers (3.52). The lowest mean science grades were for general-movers (2.66) and general-program-remainers (3.04). Finally, the mean science grades were higher for Caucasian students (3.44), than for African-American students (3.17), and for females (3.47), than for males (3.15).

**Table 44****Descriptive Statistics: Science Grades by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Grade Level	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
4	3.44	0.04	3.36	3.53
5	3.17	0.05	3.08	3.27
Placement in Twelfth Grade				
Gifted Movers	3.60	0.08	3.44	3.75
Gifted Program Changers	3.52	0.09	3.35	3.70
Gifted Program Remainers	3.73	0.06	3.60	3.85
General Movers	2.66	0.10	2.47	2.85
General Program Remainers	3.03	0.08	2.87	3.20
Race				
African American	3.17	0.05	3.08	3.27
Caucasian	3.44	0.06	3.33	3.55
Gender				
Female	3.47	0.05	3.37	3.57
Male	3.15	0.05	3.04	3.25
African American				
Gifted Movers	3.69	0.13	3.44	3.93
Gifted Program Changers	3.34	0.09	3.17	3.51
Gifted Program Remainers	3.60	0.08	3.45	3.76
General Movers	2.55	0.16	2.24	2.86
General Program Remainers	2.69	0.08	2.54	2.85
Caucasian				
Gifted Movers	3.51	0.09	3.33	3.69
Gifted Program Changers	3.71	0.16	3.40	4.02
Gifted Program Remainers	3.85	0.10	3.65	4.05
General Movers	2.77	0.11	2.55	2.99
General Program Remainers	3.38	0.15	3.08	3.67

The between subjects interaction between race and place in twelfth grade for fourth and fifth grade science grades is illustrated in Figure 12. The African-American gifted-movers received higher grades on the average in science than their Caucasian counterparts. However, for all other groups considered, the African-American gifted and general-education students received lower science grades than their Caucasian peers.



### *Math Grades For First Through Fifth*

A repeated measures ANOVA analyzed differences between gifted and general-education students for math grades, assigned by teachers on a four point scale, for first through fifth grades by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade (Table 45). Between-subjects differences for mean math grades by grade level were significant at the .05 level for race and at the .001 level for placement in twelfth grade. Within-subjects differences for mean math grades by grade level and an interaction for mean math grades by grade level and placement in twelfth grade were significant at the .001 level.



**Table 45****Repeated Measures ANOVA: Math Grades by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

<b>Test of Between-Subjects Effects</b>					
<b>Source</b>	<b>Type III Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Math Grades	43.78	4	10.95	39.38	0.00
Math Grades * Race	2.26	4	0.57	2.04	0.09
Math Grades * Place in Twelfth	16.50	16	1.03	3.71	0.00
Math Grades * Gender	1.10	4	0.27	0.99	0.41
Math Grades * Place in Twelfth * Race	5.33	16	0.33	1.20	0.26
Math Grades * Race * Gender	0.31	4	0.08	0.28	0.89
Math Grades * Place in Twelfth * Gender	3.96	16	0.25	0.89	0.58
Math Grades * Place in Twelfth * Gender * Race	6.05	16	0.38	1.36	0.15
Error(MATH)	243.51	876	0.28		

**Table 45 Continued**

**Tests of Within-Subjects Effects (Math Grades)**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MATH	43.78	4	10.95	39.38	0.00
MATH * RACE	2.26	4	0.57	2.04	0.09
MATH * PLACE IN TWELFTH	16.50	16	1.03	3.71	0.00
MATH * GENDER	1.10	4	0.27	0.99	0.41
MATH * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH	5.33	16	0.33	1.20	0.26
MATH * RACE * GENDER	0.31	4	0.08	0.28	0.89
MATH * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	3.96	16	0.25	0.89	0.58
MATH * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	6.05	16	0.38	1.36	0.15
Error(MATH)	243.51	876	0.28		

The means for math grades by grade level for grades first through fifth grades are at the highest level (3.44) in first grade and consistently drop every grade level to a mean of 2.79 in fifth grade (Table 46). By student group, gifted-program-remainers have the highest mean math grades (3.57), followed by gifted-movers (3.43). The lowest mean math grades were attained by general-program-remainers (2.79). Moreover, African-American students received lower mean math grades for grades first through fifth grades (3.09) than Caucasians ( 3.29).

**Table 46**

**Descriptive Statistics: Math Grades by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Math Grade Levels	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	3.44	0.05	3.34	3.54
2	3.37	0.05	3.26	3.47
3	3.20	0.05	3.09	3.30
4	3.16	0.06	3.05	3.28
5	2.79	0.06	2.67	2.90
<hr/>				
Gifted Movers	3.42	0.09	3.25	3.60
Gifted Program Changers	3.33	0.10	3.13	3.53
Gifted Program Remainers	3.57	0.07	3.43	3.71
General Movers	2.77	0.11	2.56	2.98
General Program Remainers	2.86	0.10	2.67	3.05
<hr/>				
African American	3.09	0.05	2.99	3.20
Caucasian	3.29	0.06	3.16	3.41

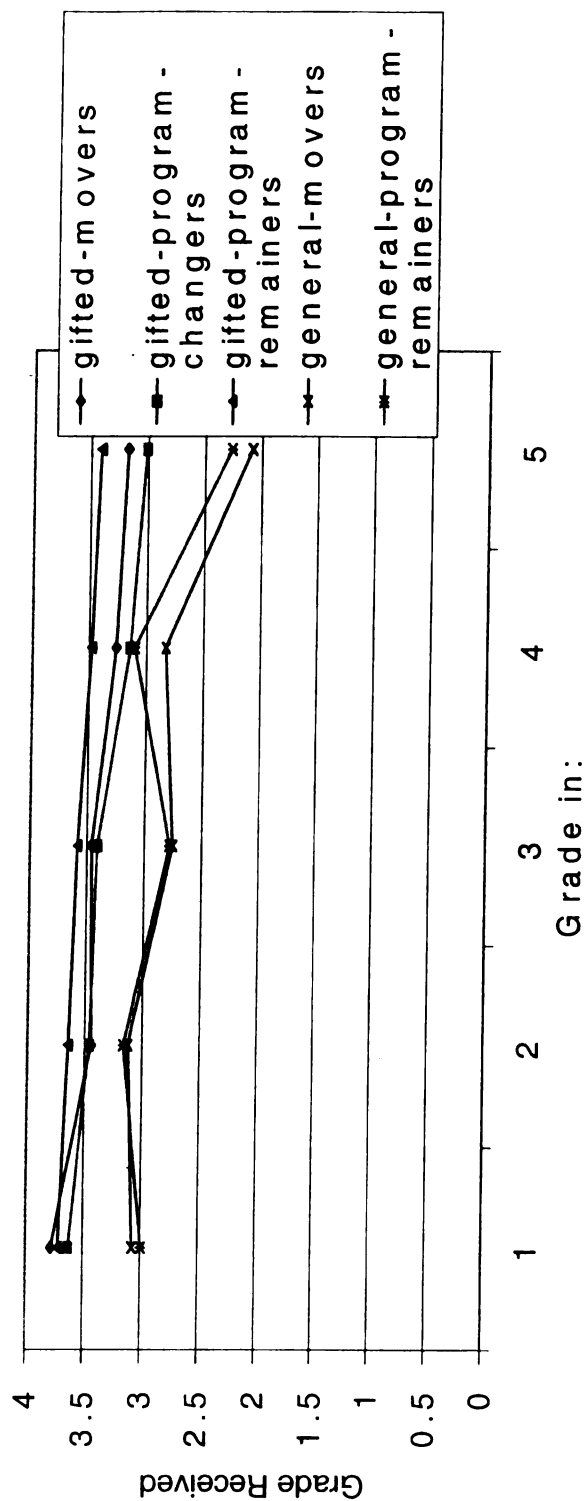
**Table 46 Continued**

	Math Grade Levels	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted Movers	1	3.78	0.11	3.56	4.00
	2	3.45	0.11	3.23	3.67
	3	3.46	0.11	3.24	3.68
	4	3.26	0.13	3.02	3.51
	5	3.17	0.12	2.94	3.41
Gifted Program Changers	1	3.63	0.13	3.38	3.88
	2	3.46	0.13	3.20	3.71
	3	3.41	0.13	3.15	3.67
	4	3.14	0.14	2.85	3.43
	5	3.01	0.14	2.73	3.28
Gifted Program Remainers	1	3.72	0.09	3.55	3.89
	2	3.65	0.09	3.47	3.82
	3	3.58	0.09	3.41	3.76
	4	3.48	0.10	3.28	3.68
	5	3.41	0.10	3.22	3.60
General Movers	1	3.07	0.13	2.81	3.33
	2	3.12	0.13	2.85	3.39
	3	2.75	0.14	2.48	3.02
	4	2.83	0.15	2.53	3.13
	5	2.08	0.15	1.79	2.37
General Program Remainers	1	2.99	0.12	2.76	3.23
	2	3.16	0.12	2.92	3.40
	3	2.78	0.12	2.54	3.02
	4	3.10	0.14	2.83	3.37
	5	2.26	0.13	2.00	2.52

There is an interaction between mean math grades and placement in twelfth grade (Figure 13). The gifted students begin at the same math grade level in first grade. The general-education students begin at a lower, but common grade point range in first grade, as well. By second grade gifted-movers and gifted-program-leavers are at a lower math grade point average, which they maintain in relation to the gifted students who remained in the gifted program through fifth grade.

By third grade, the general-movers and general-program-remainers drop to a lower math grade point average than any other group considered. Nevertheless, the general-program-remainers are higher than their general-education counterpart by the fifth grade and are commensurate with the mean math grades for the gifted-program-changers. However, the general-movers and general-program-remainers have the lowest math grades of all groups considered by the end of fifth grade.

Figure 13. Interaction Between Math Grades and Placement in Twelfth Grade



### The Iowa Test of Basic Skills

#### *ITBS Reading Percentiles*

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a nationally standardized achievement test. An ANOVA for ITBS reading percentile scores for first through fifth grades for gifted and general-education students for differences by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade was completed (Table 47). Between-subject differences for race and placement in twelfth grade were significant at the .001 level. Differences within-student groups were significant at the .001 level for ITBS reading percentile scores.



**Table 47****Repeated Measures ANOVA: ITBS Reading Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade****Test of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	3129459.53	1	3129459.53	2375.64	0.00
RACE	19677.35	1	19677.35	14.94	0.00
PLACE IN TWELFTH	221090.65	4	55272.663	41.96	0.00
GENDER	104.72	1	104.72	0.08	0.78
RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH	3569.72	4	892.43	0.68	0.61
RACE * GENDER	930.16	1	930.16	0.71	0.40
PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	9254.77	4	2313.69	1.76	0.14
RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	11616.58	4	2904.15	2.21	0.07
Error	260827.66	198	1317.31		

**Table 47 Continued**

**Tests of Within-Subjects Effects (ITBS Reading Percentiles)**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ITBS READING	4184.80	4	1046.20	6.27	0.00
ITBS READING * RACE	796.18	4	199.05	1.19	0.31
ITBS READING * PLACE IN TWELFTH	2881.75	16	180.11	1.08	0.37
ITBS READING * GENDER	822.79	4	205.70	1.23	0.30
ITBS READING * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH	3533.10	16	220.82	1.32	0.18
ITBS READING * RACE * GENDER	480.47	4	120.12	0.72	0.58
ITBS READING * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	3349.73	16	209.36	1.26	0.22
ITBS READING * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	3549.38	16	221.84	1.33	0.17
Error(ITBSMTH)	132118.66	792	166.82		

The mean ITBS reading percentile scores for Caucasian students was higher ( 68.51%ile) than those of African-American students (58.44%ile). The percentiles also varied by mean score according to the placement in twelfth grade, with gifted student groups scoring consistently higher than general-education student groups.

Gifted-movers scored a higher mean percentile score (81.68%ile) than gifted-program-remainers (77.62%ile) and gifted-program-leavers (70.09%ile). General-movers (45.39%ile) scored higher mean ITBS reading scores than general-program-remainers (42.58%ile). Overall ITBS reading percentile means were highest in second grade (67.33%ile) and lowest in third grade (60.47%ile) (Table 48).

**Table 48****Descriptive Statistics: ITBS Reading Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Grade Level	ITBS Reading Percentiles			
	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	64.39	1.47	61.48	67.29
2	67.33	1.60	64.16	70.49
3	60.47	1.61	57.29	63.64
4	62.02	1.60	58.87	65.18
5	63.16	1.70	59.82	66.51

Placement in Twelfth Grade				
Gifted Movers	81.68	2.77	76.22	87.14
Gifted Program Changers	70.09	3.21	63.76	76.43
Gifted Program Remainders	77.62	2.12	73.45	81.80
General Movers	45.39	3.46	38.58	52.20
General Program Remainders	42.58	2.83	37.00	48.15

Race				
African American	3.09	0.05	2.99	3.20
Caucasian	3.29	0.06	3.16	3.41

### *ITBS Math Percentiles*

An ANOVA for ITBS math percentiles for first through fifth grades for gifted and general-education students for differences by race, gender and placement in twelfth grade was completed (Table 49). Between-subjects differences for race and placement in twelfth grade were significant at the .001 level. Within-subjects differences were significant at the .001 level for ITBS math percentiles by grade and by placement in twelfth grade.

**Table 49**  
**Repeated Measures ANOVA: ITBS Math Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

<b>Test of Between-Subjects Effects</b>					
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	3857548.77	1	3857548.77	2750.16	0.00
RACE	17902.78	1	17902.78	12.76	0.00
PLACE IN TWELFTH	210053.23	4	52513.31	37.44	0.00
GENDER	1761.09	1	1761.09	1.26	0.26
RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH	3310.47	4	827.62	0.59	0.67
RACE * GENDER	768.49	1	768.49	0.55	0.46
PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	974.97	4	243.74	0.17	0.95
RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	8599.84	4	2149.96	1.53	0.19
Error	273519.14	195	1402.66		

**Table 49 Continued**

**Tests of Within-Subjects Effects (ITBS Math Percentiles)**

Source	Sum of				F	Sig.
	Squares	df	Mean Square			
ITBS MATH	13804.35	4.00	3451.09	23.61	0.00	0.00
ITBS MATH * RACE	472.69	4.00	118.17	0.81	0.52	0.52
ITBS MATH * PLACE IN TWELFTH	5660.15	16.00	353.76	2.42	0.00	0.00
ITBS MATH * GENDER	654.78	4.00	163.69	1.12	0.35	0.35
ITBS MATH * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH	1308.59	16.00	81.79	0.56	0.91	0.91
ITBS MATH * RACE * GENDER	1052.20	4.00	263.05	1.80	0.13	0.13
ITBS MATH * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	2308.88	16.00	144.30	0.99	0.47	0.47
ITBS MATH * RACE * PLACE IN TWELFTH * GENDER	2958.01	16.00	184.88	1.26	0.21	0.21
Error(ITBSMTH)	114019.33	780.00	146.18			

The mean ITBS math percentile rankings were lower for African-American students (66.28%ile) compared to their Caucasian peers (75.97%ile) (Table 50). The highest mean ITBS math percentile scores by student group were attained by the gifted-program-remainers (86.23%ile), followed by gifted-movers (84.79%ile). The lowest mean ITBS math percentile scores by student group were attained by the general-program-remainers (49.44%ile), followed by general-movers (54.80%ile).

By grade level, the highest mean ITBS math percentile score was attained in second grade (77.47%ile), followed by the first grade math percentile score (74.66%ile). The math percentile scores consistently drop from third grade (69.52%ile) to fifth grade (66.27%ile).

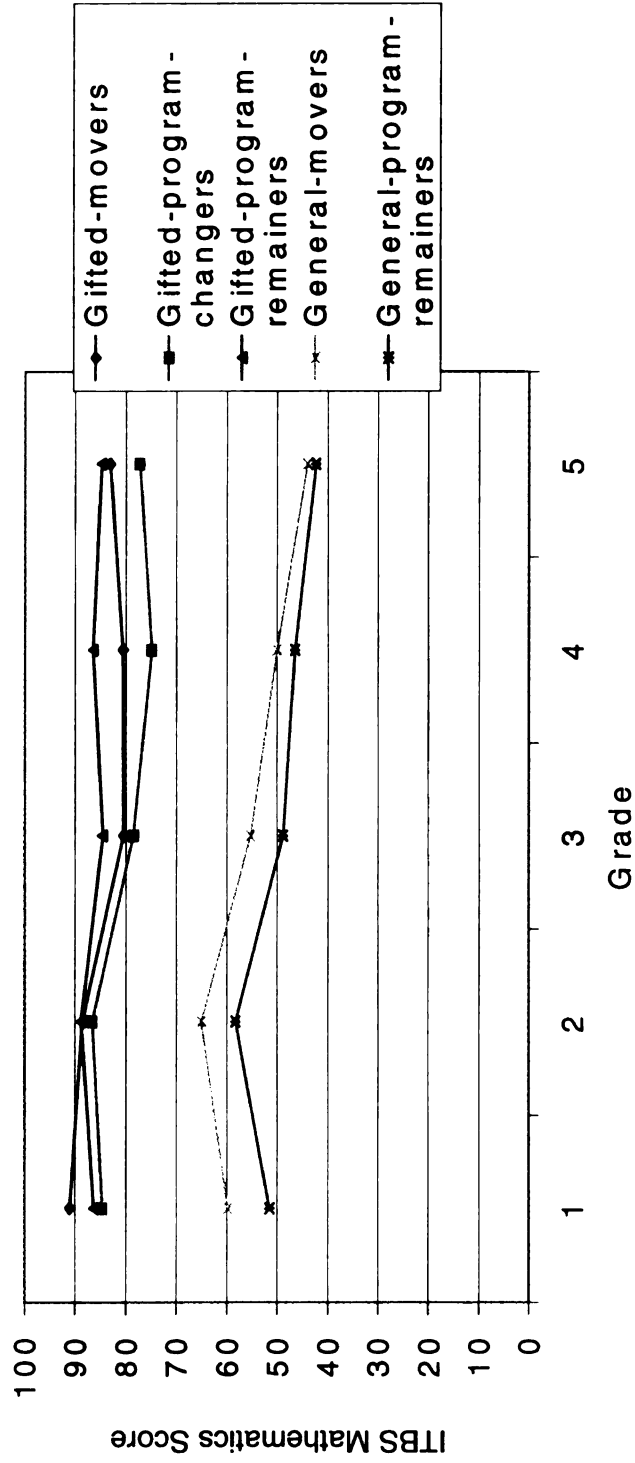


**Table 50****Descriptive Statistics: ITBS Math Percentiles by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Grade Level	ITBS Math Percentiles			
	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	74.66	1.49	71.73	77.60
2	77.47	1.47	74.57	80.37
3	69.52	1.78	66.01	73.04
4	67.72	1.62	64.52	70.92
5	66.27	1.69	62.95	69.60
Placement in Twelfth Grade				
Gifted Movers	84.79	2.84	79.19	90.38
Gifted Program Changers	80.39	3.53	73.42	87.36
Gifted Program Remainers	86.23	2.22	81.85	90.61
General Movers	54.80	3.47	47.96	61.64
General Program Remainers	49.44	2.91	43.69	55.18
Race				
African American	66.28	1.77	62.78	69.78
Caucasian	75.97	2.05	71.93	80.02

The within-student group interaction between ITBS math percentile score and placement in twelfth grade is illustrated in Figure 14 . All gifted student groups scored consistently higher than general groups. However, gifted-movers started out in first grade at a higher mean ITBS percentile score and were lower in fifth grade than the gifted-program-remainers. Similarly, the general-movers started out in first grade at a higher mean ITBS percentile score and were equivalent to the general-program-remainers by fifth grade.

Figure 14. Interaction Between ITBS Math Percentile Scores and Placement in Twelfth Grade



### Elementary Absences

An ANOVA was completed for the number of half day absences recorded for gifted and general-education students grades kindergarten through fifth grades for race, gender and placement in twelfth grade (Table 51). Differences in absenteeism were significant at the .05 level by placement in twelfth grade.

**Table 51**

**ANOVA: Absences for Kindergarten Through Fifth Grade by Race, Gender  
And Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3431.80 <sup>a</sup>	19	180.62	1.56	0.07
Intercept	44854.50	1	44854.50	386.54	0.00
Race	23.97	1	23.97	0.21	0.65
Gender	153.59	1	153.59	1.32	0.25
Placement in Twelfth Grade	1656.46	4	414.12	3.57	0.01
Race * Gender	5.41	1	5.41	0.05	0.83
Race * Placement in Twelfth Grade	199.48	4	49.87	0.43	0.79
Gender * Placement in Twelfth Grade	749.28	4	187.32	1.61	0.17
Race * Gender * Placement in Twelfth Grade	956.90	4	239.22	2.06	0.09
Error	29474.56	254	116.04		
Total	86623.43	274			
Corrected Total	32906.36	273			

<sup>a</sup> = R Squared = .104 (Adjusted R Squared = .037)

The gifted-program-remainers (mean = 10.53 half days) and general-program-remainers (mean =12.81 half days) were absent the least in elementary. In comparison, the general-movers (mean =17.29 half days) and gifted-movers (mean = 16.88 half days) had poorer attendance. Table 52, demonstrates these statistics.

**Table 52**

**Descriptive Statistics: Absences for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade by Race, Gender and Placement in Twelfth Grade**

Place in Twelfth Grade	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gifted-Movers	16.88	1.56	13.80	19.95
Gifted-Program-Changers	14.89	1.79	11.36	18.41
Gifted-Program-Remainers	10.53	1.31	7.96	13.11
General-Movers	17.29	1.87	13.61	20.96
General-Program-Remainers	12.81	1.65	9.57	16.05

**Retentions in Elementary**

A crosstabulation between race, gender and retention in elementary school (Table 53) suggests that a total of 8.6 % of the students in this study were retained in elementary. There were no significant differences in retention rate by race and gender ( $\chi^2 = 4.11$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However there is a definite trend for African-Americans to be retained at a higher rate than Caucasians. African-American males were retained at a rate of 14.5 percent, a rate greater than that

of any other group by race and gender. The group retained least was Caucasian females (rate = 5.7%).

**Table 53 Race and Gender and Retention in Elementary School**

			Retained in Elementary School		
			No	Yes	Total
African American					
Female	N		89	7	96
	%		92.7	7.3	100.0
Male	N		59	10	69
	%		85.5	14.5	100.0
Caucasian					
Female	N		50	3	53
	%		94.3	5.7	100.0
Male	N		56	4	60
	%		93.3	6.7	100.0
Total	N		254	24	278
	%		91.4	8.6	100.0
Chi-square=4.11 ns					
df=3					

A crosstabulation between placement in twelfth grade and retention in elementary school (Table 54) suggests that there are significant differences between students depending upon their placement in twelfth grade ( $\chi^2 = 34.46$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Overall, there were fewer (gifted-movers, 3.6% and gifted-program-leavers, 1.9%) or no retentions (gifted-program-remainers, 0%) among groups of gifted students compared to the general-education groups.

The highest percentage of retentions in elementary were among general-movers (24.3%), followed by those general-program-remainers (21.1%).



**Table 54****Placement in Twelfth Grade by Retention in Elementary School**

		Retained in Elementary		
		No	Yes	Total
Gifted-Movers	Count	53	2	55
	% within placement	96.4%	3.6%	100.0%
Gifted-Program-Changers	Count	53	1	54
	% within placement	98.1%	1.9%	100.0%
Gifted-Program-Remainers	Count	74	0	74
	% within placement	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
General-Movers	Count	28	9	37
	% within placement	75.7%	24.3%	100.0%
General-Program-Remainers	Count	45	12	57
	% within placement	78.9%	54.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	253	24	277
	% of Total	91.3%	8.7%	100.0%

A crosstabulation between graduation and retention in elementary school (Table 55) suggests that there is no significant difference for graduation rates by retention in elementary ( $\chi^2 = 5.32$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, there is a trend for higher retentions among those who did not graduate (16.0%) compared to those who did graduate (5.2%). Students for whom data is missing, in other words students who left the district, were retained at a rate of twelve percent.

**Table 55****Graduation and Retention in Elementary School**

		Retained in Elementary School		
		No	Yes	Total
Graduated	N	145	8	153
	%	94.8	5.2	100
Not Graduated	N	21	4	25
	%	84.0	16.0	100
Unknown	N	81	11	92
	%	88.0	12.0	100
Total	N	247	23	270
	%	91.5	8.5	100

chi-square=5.32 ns

df=2

### School Changes

Non-normative school changes are those changes that a student would not experience in the normal course of schooling. These changes might include moves in the middle of the school year or many school changes besides the normative transitions to middle school or high school. A Crosstabulation analyzed the relationship between graduation and number of non-normative school changes in elementary school (Table 56). The differences in number of non-normative school changes for students who graduated, did not graduate and who left the school district was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.80$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, the students who did not graduate experienced the highest percentage of two or more non-normative school changes (52%).

**Table 56**  
**Graduation and Number of School Changes in Elementary School**

		Number of school changes in elementary school			Total
		none	one	two or more	
Graduated	N	41	56	55	152
	%	27.0	36.8	36.2	100
Not Graduated	N	3	9	13	25
	%	12.0	36.0	52.0	100
Unknown	N	28	29	30	87
	%	32.2	33.3	34.5	100
Total	N	72	94	98	264
	%	27.3	35.6	37.1	100

Chi-square=4.80, df=4

A Crosstabulation analyzed the differences between race, gender and number of non-normative school changes in elementary school (Table 57). The differences in number of non-normative school changes for students by race and gender was significant ( $\chi^2 = 17.77$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .05$ ). African-American males (51.5%) and Caucasian males (46.6%) experienced the highest percentage of non-normative school changes compared to Caucasian females (21.6%) and African-American females (29.5%).

**Table 57**  
**Race and Gender and Number of School Changes in Elementary School**

		Number of school changes in elementary school				
			none	one	two or more	Total
African American	Female	N	27	40	28	95
		%	28.4	42.1	29.5	100
	Male	N	14	19	35	68
		%	20.6	27.9	51.5	100
Caucasian	Female	N	19	21	11	51
		%	37.3	41.2	21.6	100
	Male	N	17	14	27	58
		%	29.3	24.1	46.6	100
Total		N	77	94	101	272
		%	28.3	34.6	37.1	100
Chi-Square=17.77		p<0.007				
7						
df=6						

A Crosstabulation investigated differences between placement in twelfth grade and number of non-normative school changes in elementary school (Table 58). The differences in the number of non-normative school changes for students by placement in twelfth grade were significant ( $\chi^2 = 58.05$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Gifted-program-leavers experienced the most non-normative changes (49.1% had two or more), followed by general-movers (38.9% had two or more). Gifted-movers experienced the least non-normative changes (31.4% had two or more), followed by gifted-program-remainders (34.2% had two or more).

**Table 58**

**Placement in Twelfth Grade and Number of Elementary School Changes**

		Number of elementary school changes			
		None	Once	Two or more	Total
Gifted-Movers	Count	8	27	16	51
	% within placement	15.7%	52.9%	31.4%	100.0%
Gifted-Program-Changers	Count	8	19	26	53
	% within placement	15.1%	35.8%	49.1%	100.0%
Gifted-Program-Remainers	Count	11	37	25	73
	% within placement	15.1%	50.7%	34.2%	100.0%
General-Movers	Count	20	2	14	36
	% within placement	55.6%	5.6%	38.9%	100.0%
General-Program-Remainers	Count	29	9	20	58
	% within placement	50.0%	15.5%	34.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	76	94	101	271
	% of Total	28.0%	34.7%	37.3%	100.0%

### Quantitative Summary

The results were organized by research question.

#### Research Question One

The first question considered whether graduation outcomes depend on time enrolled in the gifted program, race, gender, and household income. The independent variables for question one are 1) time in the gifted program and 2.) graduation rate. The analyses yielded the following results:

##### *Time in The Gifted Program*

The majority of this gifted sample was identified and placed in a gifted program by third grade (75%) and the majority of the gifted students had left the gifted program by the end of ninth grade (85%). There was no correlation between when a student was identified as gifted and when a student left the gifted program. The length of stay for the gifted- program-leavers was not significant for graduation rate.

There was also no significant difference between a student's placement in twelfth grade and the grade in which the student was identified as gifted. However, there was a trend for those identified earlier to remain in the gifted program through to their senior year.

Gifted and general-education placements in twelfth grade by race and gender suggest trends for income by placements. A higher percentage of students who were low income left the gifted program (gifted-program-leavers), the greater of which were African-American females. Higher income gifted



students were represented evenly in all gifted groups: gifted-movers, gifted-program-leavers and gifted-program-remainers.

### *Graduation Rate*

There were no significant differences between the grades in which gifted students were identified as gifted and graduation rate. There were significant differences between graduation rates for gifted and general-education students by placement in twelfth grade. The gifted-program-remainers graduated at the highest rate (98.6%).

More African-American students remained in the gifted program through to twelfth grade than did Caucasian students. The African-American female gifted-program-leavers graduated at a rate of eighty percent (80%), while African-American females general-program-remainers graduated at a rate of eighty-eight percent (88%). These rates are higher than the African-American male gifted-program-leavers, who graduated at a rate of sixty-four percent (64%), while African-American male general-program-remainers graduated at a rate of seventy-one percent (71%). African-American males who left general-education also left the district, so their graduation information is missing. Less Caucasians remained in the general-education program, but they graduated.

Graduation rate for general-education students by relative income and by the placement in twelfth grade was not significant. Graduation rate for gifted students by relative income and the placement in twelfth grade was not significant. However, a trend suggests that a higher percentage of the poverty

group gifted students were represented in the group of gifted students who left the district and did not graduate.

### Research Question Two

The results of quantitative question two addressed the question: What are the differences in selected demographic, home school and social factors between gifted students who remain in a self-contained gifted placement through high school graduation, and those who do not, in comparison to their general-education peers? The independent variables in question two are grouped in the following order: 1) demographics, 2) school factors, 3) home factors, and 4) social factors. The analyses yielded the following results:

#### *Demographic Variables*

The gifted and general-education students were not significantly different by a breakdown of race and gender.

#### *Home Variables*

There was no significance between family constellation in early elementary and the placement of a student in a twelfth grade. Trends suggest that the majority of gifted-program-remainers lived with both parents. Students who lived in single parent families were represented at a higher rate among the gifted-program-leavers. There was no significant difference in the placement in twelfth grade by the number of guardianship changes.

Household income and placement in twelfth grade was significant. The gifted-program-leavers had the lowest mean household income in early elementary, followed by the general-program-remainers. Household income of

general-education students was not significant by graduation rate. Household income of gifted students was significant by graduation rate. Gifted students who were the poorest were represented at a higher rate among those who did not graduate. The household income difference between those gifted students who did not graduate and those who left the school district was statistically significant. The gifted students who did not graduate tended to live in lower income neighborhoods in early elementary.

The differences between the poverty group and the non-poverty group within gifted and general-education was significant by placement in twelfth grade. About one third of gifted-program-leavers were in the poverty group, whereas, only fourteen percent of gifted-movers were in poverty.

Poverty and graduation rate of general-education students was not significant. Poverty and graduation rate of gifted students was significant. The students who graduated were mainly within the poverty group. Those for whom information was missing on graduation, because they left the district, were not in the poverty group.

### *Social Variables*

Differences in gifted and general-education students' participation in middle school arts extra-curricular activities were significant for race and placement in twelfth grade. African-American females participated in the most middle school arts extra-curricular activities, as did the gifted-program-remainers and general-movers compared to their peers. Differences in gifted and general-education students' participation in high school arts extra-curricular activities

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were significant for placement in twelfth grade. By far gifted-program-remainders were more involved in high school arts extra-curricular activities, followed by gifted-movers. Differences in gifted and general-education students' participation in high school sports extra-curricular activities were not significant.

The transition to middle school concerns for gifted and general-education students were significant for race and gender. African-American female students expressed the highest level of concern about making the transition, while Caucasian females expressed the least concern. Males, regardless of race were at a similar level of concern, lower than that of African-American females, but higher than that of Caucasian females.

#### *School Variables*

The MEAP fourth grade math percentile scores were not significantly different between gifted and general-education students. The MEAP fifth grade science percentile scores were not significantly different between gifted and general-education students, however they were for race. African-Americans scored lower.

Reading grades were highest in first grade and dropped until fifth grade, where they rose again slightly. Gifted-program-remainders attained the highest reading grades, while general-program-remainders attained the lowest. Caucasians attained higher reading grades than African-Americans, while females attained higher reading grades than males.

Fourth grade science grades were higher than fifth grade science grades. All groups of gifted students attained higher science grades than general

education students. The highest science grades were attained by gifted-program-remainers, while general-movers attained the lowest.

Math grades consistently drop from first grade to fifth grade. Gifted-program-remainers have the highest grades, while general-program-remainers have the lowest math grades by student group. African-Americans attained lower math grades than Caucasians.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading percentiles for grades first through fifth grades were significant for differences between gifted and general-education students for race and placement in the twelfth grade and for within subjects differences for ITBS reading scores. Caucasians scored higher than African-Americans, while gifted students scored higher than general students. Gifted –movers scored highest and general-program-remainers scored lowest.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) math percentiles for grades first through fifth grades were significant for differences of race and placement in the twelfth grade and for differences in ITBS math scores over the five years, as well as for ITBS math percentiles by grade and by placement in the twelfth grade. Caucasians scored higher than African-Americans. Gifted–program-remainers scored highest and general-program-remainers scored lowest.

Absence for kindergarten through fifth grades was significant for differences between gifted and general-education students by placement in twelfth grade. Gifted-program-remainers were absent the least, while general-movers had the poorest attendance in elementary.

There were significant differences for retentions between gifted and general-education students. The highest percentage of retainees was among general-movers. There were no significant differences for retention by graduation rate. However, there was a trend to retain more African-American males.

There were significant differences for number of non-normative school changes between gifted and general-education students by graduation rate. Gifted-program-leavers experienced the most non-normative changes, while gifted-movers experienced the least non-normative changes. There was a trend for those students who did not graduate to have experienced a higher percentage of two or more non-normative school changes. There was also a trend for African-American and Caucasian males to experience a higher number of non-normative school changes.

## **Qualitative Results**

### **Qualitative Subjects**

Each of the thirteen students interviewed is a unique young person. Six students interviewed remained in the program until graduation, three females and four males. Seven students interviewed left the program prior to graduation, three females and three males. Names reported are fictional. Table 59 demonstrates the breakdown by pseudonym, race and gender.

**Table 59****Description of Gifted Students Interviewed**

Sample	Pseudonym	Gender	Race	GPA	HHI
<b>Remained in Gifted Program</b>					
Females	Gwen	Female	African-American	High	Low
	Opal	Female	African-American	Median	Low
	Zara	Female	African-American	High	Low
Males	Kenneth	Male	African-American	High	High
	Paul	Male	Caucasian	Median	High
	Sterling	Male	Caucasian	Median	High
<b>Left Gifted Program</b>					
Females	Nicole	Female	African-American	High	Low
	Roslyn	Female	African-American	Unknown	High
Males	Darius	Male	African-American	Unknown	High
	Joshua	Male	African-American	Unknown	Median
	Logan	Male	African-American	Unknown	Median
	Thomas	Male	African-American	Median	Low
	Denise	Female	Caucasian	Unknown	Median

### Student Profiles

To provide a background for the thematic analysis, a profile of each student is provided. The profiles include: descriptors of style, dress and presenting demeanor, grade entering the gifted program, reason(s) for remaining or if appropriate grade and reason for leaving, GPA and level of early elementary neighborhood income, social involvement while in the gifted program, family constellation, college graduates among family members and aspirations of parent and self for the student's future.

### Students Who Remained

#### **Gwen**

(Race: African-American, Gender: Female, GPA: High, HHI: Low)

Gwen is a very mature, confident, straightforward and focused African-American teen girl. She entered the gifted program in first grade. Gwen graduated from high school with a high GPA compared to other gifted students in the program. She lived in one of the poorer neighborhoods in early elementary. In high school her friends were fellow classmates within the gifted program. Gwen stated she remained in the gifted program because,

The preparation, pre-college classes, it helps you prepare for the future. You're not going into college clueless like most of the freshmen are. It's a challenge, but it's worth it, it's gonna be worth it in the end... Yeah. The way you think and look at stuff, you analyze stuff differently than they do. They (*general-education teachers*) give you the basic answer, but you look at the good and the bad an' everything that's gonna go with each side of your answer (*in the gifted program*). ...It's the classes, the classes that they're havin' might not be on the same level that we have.

Ah....I don't think I'd a been as outgo'in' as I am now [*if I hadn't been in the gifted program*]. I'd a been a lot more shy, 'cause you have those different types of people in that class; you don't have the gifted students.... It's. it's



very few students in the gifted program who worry about being put-down for excelling;... those are the ones that don't stay in there.

Gwen was dressed in popular style jeans and a classic shirt. She gives full eye contact and speaks with a strong, even voice. She has a tendency to look away or to seem embarrassed when speaking about her accomplishments, but speaks strongly about principles and ideas. She lives with her mother, a factory worker and her father, retired from a finance position. Her older sister recently moved out, with her son and daughter who now live with Gwen's grandparents.

In Gwen's family her mother, father, aunts and uncle have had some college. She recognizes that as having been helpful to her in school. She said that her parents dream for her was to be successful. She is planning to go to college for a degree in chemical engineering with the goal to work with nuclear power. She has already been accepted to several colleges of her choice, but had been holding out for 'the big one'. The letter came the other day; she is 'in'.

### ***Opal***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Female, GPA: Median, HHI: Low)

Opal is a sweet but rather quiet African-American teen girl. She presented herself as somewhat shy, yet she spoke in carefully articulated sentences that included lengthy, rich descriptions of feelings and impressions. She was dressed in comfortable clothes and wore no jewelry and little or no make-up. She entered the gifted program in the first grade. Her GPA was mid-range compared to others in the gifted program. She lived in a low-income neighborhood during early elementary. She prefers to be with a few close gifted

friends, especially those who are highly active, high academic achievers in high school. Opal describes her reasons for remaining in the gifted program:

Oh, well I guess, I guess I could say the gifted program as a whole, but, um (laugh), I know (laugh) it's positive, that, it really is; the gifted program has just been one major influence in my life. I, I, um, I was started in third grade and from kindergarten through the half of second grade, I think I practically begged my mom to be in it, because there was, at that time, there was commercials for the gifted program and, uh (laugh), I saw the commercial....(Laugh) And (laugh) I wanted to be in the gifted program (laugh).

And so once I was in, I, I loved it. It was a life-changing, it really was, because I was not challenged at the school I was at before and, now, that could have been an interference, because I was not challenged, and I was disruptive in class and I was, I was just a disruptive student, and once I was in the gifted program, I found out, later on, it was because I wasn't being challenged, and so I had free time to roam off and do anything, but once I went to [School A] and, which was [named school B] at that time, it was a life-changer, it was just, it was, it made it wonderful. It really is.

Just to really enjoy it inside and out; and right now, I'm at the point in my educational career where I look forward to every day of learning. I wake up looking forward to going to class and that's a good feeling, it's a really good feeling.

Opal describes her engineer father and social service worker mother as very strict about religion. She has a younger sister also in the home. Both parents have college degrees. According to Opal, her parent's dream for her "is to be successful and to be happy, probably. Like my mother says, in all of your getting, get understanding, and she's always telling me, I guess, ta understand life (laugh)." "I'm gonna try to do the three-year (college) program at James-Madison, and so in five years I'll be in law school."

## **Zara**

(Race: African-American, Gender: Female, GPA: High, HHI: Low)

Zara came to the interview with her planner. She is a confident African-American teen girl, who appears strong and athletic. Her clothes, hair and make-up were impeccably neat. Yet while she seems well organized and focused, her friendly grin and infectious laugh bely her mature image. She is friendly and puts the listener at ease with her engaging manner. Zara entered the gifted program in third grade with her twin sister. Her GPA, and the income of the neighborhood in which she lived in early elementary, are higher than that of most of the other students enrolled in the gifted program. Zara describes her reason for remaining in the gifted program:

It's a lotta work. Yeah....I think it's a lot. I'm used to it, but, um, my junior year, we had, I had World Civics and Economics and, uh, I know a girl that got in there, her counselor put her in the class, but she had never been in the gifted class before and we had a paper due, like, every week, like every Friday, and she found it really hard to do that, but to me it wasn't that hard, and I guess to her it just wasn't worth putting in the extra work to do it and so she got out...Um, I think it's given me a better education and I think it's helped prepare me for college more.

Zara lives with her mother, twin sister and her aunt. Both her older brother and sister have gone to college. Her mother works for a school and has a college degree, as well. Zara's father lives in another city in the same state, but her contact with him is minimal, perhaps a phone call or two per year. He did not attend college. Zara expressed her mother's dream for her as "to get through college and have a nice job". Zara stated that she "might wanna go into sociology, or write for a magazine.... Like, the past couple of years I've been

going to a lot of college preps, like summer programs and uh, I've been looking up different programs, different majors. I'm like, what kinda career options you have and what kind of classes you can take in school. I'm accepted at two, but I'm waiting it out..."

***Kenneth***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Male, GPA: High, HHI: High)

Kenneth is a tall, athletic looking African-American male. He also carried his planner. Yet the characteristic that is most striking about Kenneth is his confidence. He expresses himself very openly and enjoys having a forum for expressing his views and interpretations. Not surprisingly, he is active in student government and a variety of other school-related activities. He was wearing expensive name-brand clothes, labeled shirt and saggy pants. Kenneth wears braces. His GPA and the level of income in his early elementary neighborhood were higher than that of most of his gifted peers. He entered the gifted program in the third grade.

...Why'd I stay in the gifted program....well, the gifted program had been good to me, I guess.

Well, I got to high school, my counselor, I had a counselor change a couple years ago, 'cause my counselor really sucked, so I didn't get much guidance from my counselor, and uh, I think there were elements, as far as me stayin' in the gifted program, part loyalty, because it, I'd been in the gifted program for so long, four or five years, and then, the other thing was that I knew that the skills that were bein', that were bein' given to me in the gifted program, that I just couldn't get in the regular program, and the other thing is that, if I were to leave the gifted program in the ninth grade, bein' that I, I, I might have left, I don't know what readin' level or whatever I was on in the, in the eighth grade, it, I mean, let's say I was on the tenth, a eleventh grade readin' level when I left the eighth grade, then I'm in the ninth grade, which means that my whole curriculum is gonna be kicked back two years, which means, in essence, I, I'll be doin' things in the ninth grade, if I was in the ATP

[academically talented program], then I'll be doin' things that I was doin' in the seventh, or sixth or seventh grade, for me.

Right, for me....It, it, it would have, it was no, to me, there was no advantage for leavin' the gifted program, academically.

Kenneth's parents are near retirement. He is the youngest child. His brother and sister have college degrees and are living on their own. His parents have associates degrees and jobs, with his mother working in a medical setting and his father working in an industrial setting. Their hope for him is "to get my education". Kenneth reported, "I hope I'll complete college and be at an internship for Microsoft in five years."

### ***Paul***

(Race: Caucasian, Gender: Male, GPA: Median, HHI: High)

Paul is a lanky Caucasian teen. He has a ready smile, direct look and easy, unassuming way about him. His dress was loose and casual, no name brands, with no particular style statement. His extreme politeness seemed thoughtful and pleasant. He entered the gifted program in kindergarten and has a mid-range GPA compared to his gifted peers. In early elementary, he lived in a high-income neighborhood compared to others in the gifted program. He does not involve himself in school activities intentionally, which is contrary to his popular status.

Um, i's, um, it's put, it put me in an environment where I could absorb information at the rate that, um, that I chose or, not necessarily that I chose, but that was good for me; 'cause, in regular ed., it's slow and boring... Yeah, they're (*general-education classes*) really monotonous and, usually, I'm ready to move on to the next thing while other people are still learning it. I stayed in the gifted program for um, continuity.

Uh, going through the program, I found that people (*teachers*) who followed their curriculum....Like, usually, it was informative, but it didn't really teach us that much....But teachers who tried to get creative about it realized that, um, gifted kids have a shorter attention, attention span, because they can absorb things and process things so quickly that it, things become really bored and monotonous for them very quickly; and so usually the most creative teachers had the most success....And, uh, I think, I think that helped me learn better.

Paul's lives with his step-father and mother. (His mother recently remarried.) His brother is in college. Paul had less contact with his father growing up than he would have desired, although his father lives in the same city. When asked if anyone in his family attended college, he stated, "so many people, I couldn't name". His parent's dream for him is to be successful, to achieve what he tries. Paul stated, "I hope to be at college."

### ***Sterling***

(Race: Caucasian, Gender: Male, GPA: Median, HHI: High)

Sterling dressed in athletic wear and is a Caucasian teen of average height and stocky build. He was very verbally expressive, somewhat self-conscious, yet insightful about new social situations. He was eager to share his insights into the gifted program. Sterling entered the gifted program in the second grade, lived in an early elementary neighborhood that is high income, and his GPA is mid-range compared to his gifted classmates. Sterling was quite active in a variety of school-related activities, especially sports. In speaking about remaining in the gifted program, Sterling states:

I, I think I had a lotta more opportunities and I was able to take more challenging classes and....I got the, the better teachers, in most cases. Um, it even looked better on your college resume but, I mean, just can't really write it down, but, I think it, you know, it's given me a better education, overall.

In discussing academic achievement in the gifted program Sterling asserted that:

Um-hm....Um, well....School, yeah, school performance probably has it to the effect that, ah, if you're doing really badly, yeah, usually I can talk to, influence one of my friends (*in the gifted program*) to try and help me out in my situation. Um, and also, if you're not, if you feel like you're not accepted, like, I've gone through those periods, you know....Sometimes you, sort of, lacking in school efforts....I....See, I don't have that problem and, in the gifted program....Yeah, I think, I think it, I'm not afraid to, like, uh, speak out if I think I have the answer. I (laugh), I've never really had any thoughts of getting out and.... I, it was, um, I, I guess I just wanted to do it, overall.

Sterling lives with his father, mother, two brothers and grandmother. For several years at a time, aunts, nieces and nephews have lived with the family also. His parents are college educated and work in professional positions. His mother recently returned to work. When asked about his parents' aspiration for him, he stated that, "they never told me any specific thing, but, um I'm pretty sure they want me to be happy....I, well... I, I guess I hope to be earning my master's degree in something, but I haven't really planned for it yet... So I guess I can't get my master's if I don't know what to do..."

#### Students Who Left

##### ***Nicole***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Female, GPA: High, HHI: Low)

Nicole is a medium build, attractive African-American teen. Her striking features, and stylish hair, dress and nails are characteristic of a professional model. She is articulate and feisty, while expressing strong views and opinions. Nicole lived in a low-income neighborhood in early elementary, entering the gifted program in kindergarten; she left the gifted program in mid-eleventh grade, enrolling full-time in general education. In general education, Nicole is achieving

at a high GPA level compared to her gifted counterparts who remained in the gifted program. In her school, she is also a leader in school government and in sports. Nicole often works to pay her own expenses. Concerning her reasons for leaving the gifted program, Nicole stated:

I always participated in sports. I met a lot of friends through sports. They were the 'downstairs' kids that I had felt isolated from. I liked being with all kinds of kids. It made me feel accepted by everybody. I got out of the magnet gifted program for a couple of reasons. I was president of my class. Since the magnet English classes are at [School A] and my home school is [School B], going to [School A] interfered with participating in after school meetings as president. The meetings began at 2:05, at [School B], but I would miss them, because I didn't get out at [School A] until 2:30. It made it hard. People were saying that I wasn't doing my job, but I couldn't.

But really, the thing that took me over the edge was ...I had a teacher my sophomore year who had never taught gifted kids before. He was surprised when we settled down right away when the bell rang and were ready to work. He didn't like being questioned too much and he gave boring lectures, with busywork. I was bored. I decided that if it was going to be like that, then it wasn't worth it!

So, I dropped out of the program- I didn't go back to School B]. I was only at [School A]. Then, math is more difficult for me, so I dropped out of that part of the program at [School A]. All my classes were easier. I got good grades without trying as hard, but math was still a little difficult, but it was better in the regular program. My US History and English class were very easy. They were doing work I had already covered. It was not problem for me to do a research paper. I had been doing that since middle school. But, the teachers in regular ed. really took an interest in me. I think they saw someone who wanted to work and they challenged me. It made them more interested in what they were teaching. I didn't mind being different... I think learning to express myself while I was in that program was good. But I have a lot of friends, I like. They really accept me. They aren't nerds.

Nicole lives with her mother and father, who never attended college. Her older brother is currently attending college. Nicole describes her mother's work as 'in insurance' and her father's as in an automobile factory. Her parents dream



for her is to earn a basketball scholarship to pay for college. About her future aspirations Nicole states, "I hope to be practicing psychology. I am preparing now to practice psychology by reading articles and applying to college."

***Roslyn***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Female, GPA: in Adult Education Program are Unknown, HHI: High)

Roslyn presents herself as a low-key, soft-spoken, but sincere African-American teen. She engaged in fleeting direct eye contact, did not delve into much personal detail on a feeling level, but was expressive, articulate and intensely engaged in the topic of the gifted program. Roslyn wore very casual, non-trendy clothing. Her hair was in significant disarray on the day of the interview, for which she had several weeks notice.

She left the gifted program in seventh grade and enrolled in a private school. She then enrolled in a general-education program at ninth grade, from which her GPA is very low compared to that of her gifted peers. Roslyn is now concurrently enrolled in an alternative or adult education program and a general-education high school program.

I wanted to go to school [*the middle school gifted program*], but my grandmother mother wasn't really convinced that I just go to that school, so they should have more orientations with the, um, the high school and the middle schools to give more information to parents. She, I don't know. She just, she didn't want me to go to [*the public school*], I wanted to go to [*the gifted program*] and I ended up at the catholic school. Um, I think if I'd stayed in the gifted program, I'd probably be, have a 4.0.

She was one of the children from the gifted program who lived in the poorest neighborhood in early elementary. She was somewhat involved in

school-related activities while in the gifted program, and has been involved less with school related activities since leaving.

Roslyn's lives with "jus' me 'n my mom 'n my cat". Her father died when she was four years old. Her mother's friend did live with them for a period of time during elementary, but no longer does. For many of those elementary years, Roslyn lived with her grandmother, who takes great interest in her well-being to this day. Her mother now has a job in a factory. The only member of her family she could recall who had a college education was her grandfather. He went on to the graduate level and is revered within the family. Her family's dream for her is "to go to college and make something of myself". She is currently enrolled in a cooperative nursing program through adult education, which may transfer into some credits towards a community college degree, if she completes her high school graduation requirements while enrolled in the adult education program. About her future Roslyn states, "I want to be a nurse practitioner, ... or a pediatrician or an anesthesiologist."

### ***Denise***

(Race: Caucasian, Gender: Female, GPA in Adult Education is Unknown, HHI: Median)

Denise is an intense Caucasian teen, whose speech may be characterized by her emotionality. She wore worn clothing, her hair was not styled and her overall look was disheveled. Denise's insights and ability to relate ideas contradict her appearance. She is exceptional in her critiquing and sharing of abstract ideas. Denise entered the gifted program in kindergarten and left

after seventh grade. Her current GPA is unknown, because she is enrolled in an alternative education program, open to adult students. However, her early elementary neighborhood was middle income in comparison to her gifted peers. She was not involved in school-related activities while in or after leaving the gifted program. Denise describes her reasons for leaving the gifted program as multifaceted:

Yeah. Elementary school, I loved school, I really, I loved it. It was, it was so cool. I'm like, "Yeah, I'm one of the smart kids, I'm leamin' eighth grade math in fourth grade"; but then, when middle school came, it was like, Ok, I'm going from this classroom to that classroom back to that classroom, I'm with different kids every class, these kids are lookin' at me weird; nope, I want nothin' to do with it. I don't wanna be one of the smart kids, 'cause they get looked at differently.

I tried one year of middle school. My first seventh grade year, I tried in the gifted program, but I was very sick. I had a lot of mental problems going on. Um, I became manic-depressant and I was born sociopathic, but it started to show, so I was basically not there. I think I went three days....School was the last place I wanted to be; and basically had to do with all the people bein' there. It wasn't the building I didn't like, it was, it wasn't even the teachers I didn't like, it was the other students; just bein' around 'em just irritated me...Middle school was not there. Not to mention I, that I was experimenting with drugs and alcohol, which I'm out of now, I don't do that anymore; so if I was there, I don't remember it, 'cause I was high.

I've been ahead, so I didn't realize that I was ahead until I really went back to the regular program in middle school. I didn't realize that, hey, I'm basically in college courses here, and I could have gone so far ahead; and then, bam, you're out of it...I was bored. I'm like, I did this in fourth grade! Seriously, I'm like, the teacher'd hand me a test, and she'd like, "Ok, you have a half-hour to do it". I'd sit there, done! hand it in, and they'd be all right, and they didn't understand that, and they wanted to skip me a grade, but I don't wanna be in with the older kids.

The counselors did not care. My counselor, I, I tried, when [*my friend*] died, I tried to go in there and talk to 'em. They did not have time. They don't have time for the students; that, "Oh, you should be able to handle it on your own". I seriously, you know, I know the gifted program didn't screw me up in the head as much as I am screwed up, but a lot of it was from nobody caring about what happened. Seriously.

Gifted: that makes it sound like you're special. You're no special, no more special than any other student in there, and they need soo, I don't know how they could do it, but if at all possible, have the classes so that it's not all magnet students. If they could get, like, half 'n half, 'n just have, like, one learning, like, a week ahead of the other, so that they're interacting and so they don't feel like they're up on a pedestal; because when they realize they're not, it's like ("whoosh" sounds), 'cause when you grow up and everybody tells you, "Oh, you're gifted, you're gifted, you're gifted", and you're like, yeah, I'm gifted, and when you get to high school, it's like, I'm sh--, I'm nothing (laugh).

Denise lives with her parents, younger sister and a girlfriend (who moved in with them about three years ago after her mother died). Denise's father is a maintenance worker and she describes her mother as a "housewife". Denise's mother is terminally ill.

A cousin and an uncle have attended college in her family. According to Denise, "my parents have different aspirations for me. My father wants me to be a neurosurgeon or something like that, when I have no interest in that. He just wants me to make a lot of money. My mom just wants me to be happy, and to give her sixteen grandchildren, that's what she wants, is sixteen. She'll be lucky to get three... Well, she just wants grandchildren to spoil." Denise hopes to complete her education in five years and, "hopefully, I'll have a job; if my mother's still alive, I most likely will be living at home, taking care of her; but if not, I will be on my own."

### ***Darius***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Male, GPA: Grades from Adult Education Unknown, HHI: High)

Darius presented himself as a warm, polite and amiable, yet self-effacing African-American teen. His dress was neat and somewhat formal. He lived in one of the poorer neighborhoods in early elementary compared to his gifted peers and entered the gifted program in first grade.

He left the gifted program in the ninth grade. He achieved poorly there due to excessive absence as a result of asthma complications. Darius attended an alternative education program to attempt to gain credit hours more readily and then returned to the general-education high school program. Darius was retained, again due to excessive absences and he finally dropped out of school during his junior year in high school, because he was too old to continue in a high school program. Darius was advised that he had too many absences, according to the school district's strict attendance policy guidelines, to make up in the school year remaining. His age precluded him from returning the following year. He has since received his GED, on the first try, after taking a GED preparation course. It was important to him to graduate, which he felt he did. Darius now works in a factory, night shift. He was not involved in school-related activities while in the gifted program. In discussing his departure from the gifted program, he stated:

I'd say, it was very good in elementary...Middle school, I started missin' an' I missed more days, I would say, in middle school than in high school. Uh, basically because that's when I started, first got sick with asthma. I was real sick.

They gave me medicine....I was in the hospital for weeks at a time.

Yes, as far as people bein' sick, if you was sick and you brought in a note, the absences still count against you... You have to be, the way they policy, policy is, you have ta be in the class. You can't miss a certain amount a days, or you're automatically flunk the class.

Uh, I feel that the attendance policy, it could be good, because a lotta people weren't goin' to school, so the people that weren't goin' to school was gettin' penalized for it, but then, about the people that's sick and if they can't come to school, they have a note or somethin', they should be excused... The absences shouldn't count against 'em.

I feel like the counselors should be more open an' talk to students more 'bout, instead a just waitin' 'til the student drops out or somethin', because, counsel them; an' counselors really din' do much from, when I went through school, I din' never really talk to my counselor an' they never really give me any information or anything, so I feel they should be more open with the students.

He currently lives with his mother and grandfather, who moved in six years ago after his stepfather moved out. His mother drives to another city to work nights in a factory to support the household. His older brothers did go to college, "and they motivatin' me a lot. They still pushin' me to do good". He believes that his stepfather, whom he considers his father, will help him pay for college, which is his goal. "Some kinda degree, I really wanna degree, maybe start my own business... in computers. Everything is gonna be computerized in a few years. I'll begin at a community college and then get a degree in business."

### ***Joshua***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Male, GPA: Unknown, HHI: Median)

Joshua is a tall, broad African-American male. His dress and hairstyle might be characterized as 'rap-influenced'. His eye contact was limited and he

seemed uncomfortable at times. Nevertheless, he spoke enthusiastically and became animated when speaking about his involvement in the gifted program and about his “rap band” and record company, of which he was “the CEO”. He entered the gifted program in third grade and left after seventh grade. He enrolled in a general-education program and his GPA is low compared to that of his gifted peers, who remained in the gifted program. In the general-education program, Joshua was retained twice. Upon the second retention, he enrolled in an alternative education program to earn credit hours towards graduation. He returned to a general-education program and was retained again. At the time of the interview he is in his senior year, but has only one half of the credits required to graduate with a high-school diploma. Joshua played sports throughout school, when enrolled in the gifted and in the traditional high-school program.

In response to a question about why he left the gifted program, Joshua replied:

It wasn't, uh, it wasn't anything that it didn't do. It was, like, more my decision. Probably, I just wanted ta go to [School X, a general-education program]. It wasn't anything about the gifted program that made me change my mind, like, oh, I don't, I don't wanna, uh, stick with this; it wasn't that. It, it was just, just, choice. When I went over to the program, it seemed like I was jus' back on a regular level again, or though some a the courses were good and challenging, but it seemed like all the time the gifted program presented a challenge to me. ...Um, a plus for leavin', it, it gave me a time, uh, like, get a breather, and I'll say, probably negative, is probably if I, if I'd a stayed into it, I probably coulda done some things and took some courses that, that I couldn't have in the regular program.

Joshua's father died when he was in the fifth grade and he lives alone with his mother, but he has “aunties all over the place”. His mother and father attended college. She is employed part-time in a school. Her aspiration for

Joshua is “to go to college, be successful in whatever field I choose to go into and, jus’, jus’ live right”. Justin wants to go to college for a business degree and to have “my own successful business, be financially independent and maybe have a family”.

### ***Logan***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Male, GPA: Grades from Parochial School Unknown, HHI: Median)

Logan is a very tall, lanky, African-American teen boy. He was perhaps over six feet tall, attractive and neat. His intermittent eye contact increased with his comfort level. He spoke haltingly at times, his comments interspersed with nervous laughter. Yet he seemed to enjoy the topic of the gifted program and the conversation it afforded.

Logan entered the gifted program in kindergarten. He left after sixth grade and enrolled in a general-education program, after which he left to enroll in a private school in ninth grade. Logan’s GPA is unknown, but his early elementary neighborhood income was in the mid-range compared to his gifted peers. He was involved in band while in the gifted program, an experience that has continued to have a significant influence on his life goals. Logan discussed the decision surrounding his leaving the gifted program:

Oh, my mom made that decision, so....Um, my brother went there, my older brother; he liked it, so....I think it was disadvantage because, at [*the general-education public high school*], I mean, I, like, I stopped concentrating as hard on, on m' school work 'n stuff, and that's why I had to go to [*a private catholic high school*], 'cause my mom thought it'd be a better environment...[*the public school general program*] it was just more, ah, more distractions. Um, I think the, the gifted kids at [*School C*], I mean, at [*School B*], they, um, I don't know, it seemed like they worked hard.



Well, like, at [*School X, the public school general program*], like, I hang around, around people who, like, didn't like, they didn't, like, try to get really good grades, so I would downplay it; but now, at [*School Y, the private catholic school*], like, everyone's tryin' to get good grades, pretty much, an' my friends who don't, I still try, I don't downplay it at all. Um, the way, the reason I didn't, like, answer more at [*School X, the public school general program*]'s 'cause I didn't want kids ta think I was, like, really smart, uncool, n' stuff...but, um, it wasn't like that for me in the gifted program. We all wanted to do good...you know, to dog each other.

Logan lived with his mother and two brothers. His parents divorced when he was in first grade. Although he knew his father, who lived in another state and did not attend college, his contact was extremely limited. Therefore, his father's means of employment was unknown to him. His mother attended college, as was his older brother at the time of the interview. She worked in the area of finance. His parents' aspirations for him are, "for me ta be happy an' jus' do what I want ta do", which is to "attend Bowling Green to major in music and play the trumpet."

### ***Thomas***

(Race: African-American, Gender: Male, GPA: Median, HHI: Low)

Thomas is an African-American teen who exuded a high level of comfort and confidence with who he was, where he had been, and where he was going. He was perhaps one of the poorer students in his class of gifted, while his grades were in the mid-range of that group. His entrance to the gifted program was first grade.

His mild-mannered, easy way of relating to others was misleading, because in conversing with him, one was pleasantly surprised at his depth of knowledge on a wide range of topics, and his facility with concepts. Thomas

dressed in neat, functional clothing. He had braces. Since he was able, he had worked a job after school. In discussing his experience in the gifted program and reasons for leaving, Thomas stated:

I think in the first grade, when I first started, I was identified as gifted. My mother, I think, put me in the gifted program, told me that I was academically gifted, and I was gonna be in the program ta help me, ta, ta help my needs.

My brother showed interest every now an' then, but for the most part, it was just my mother an' father. Like, if I was to get a bad grade on my report card, he'd ask me, like, what was goin' on or somethin' like that, but that was about it. For the most part, as far as, you know, stayin' on me about it, it was basically my parents. They, they punish me hard....(Laugh)... If I don't get grades...No messin' around.

I think, once I got to high school, it wasn't a matter of gifted, it was just; I think, once I got to high school, it was simply a label, once I got to high school, 'cause it was like, like, all the teachers doin' the same thing. A matter a fact, I think that, that some a the gifted teachers were worse than some so-called regular teachers that you have, because they; I had a couple teachers at [*School A, gifted high school program*] that, that had some just flat-out bad attitudes, let's put it like that.

I left the gifted program....This year. This is my first year being outta the gifted program, Senior year. I felt like, like I shoulda done it, I'd say, after my ninth grade year. I think if I hada done it then, I'd be a lot better off gradewise than I am now, so that, to a certain extent, I was cheated. I'm, I don' wanna say unfairly, but different....

I'd say, because it's like, I was held to a different standard. Well, I'll say, I mean, you can actually expect me to be held to a different standard because of the gifted or whatever, but....

Thomas lived with his mother, father and sister. He described his mother as having some college and a job at a university, and his father as a 'laborer'.

His brother was in college. He stated that his parents' hope for him is "to do my best at all times, to the best of my ability, 'n to strive for excellence". For himself,

his goals were: “I hope to do well in college. I’m tryin’ to brin’ my grades up before the en’ of the year.”

### Structured Qualitative Interview

Each student interviewed was first asked to rate their overall school experience on a Likert scale of 1) Great, 2) Good, 3) OK, 4) Poor, and 5) Very poor. Their responses ranged from one to three. The range in the ratings made by gifted African-American students tended to be smaller slightly more positive than those made by the Caucasian students. Of the thirteen students polled, two African-American gifted students rated their school experience as “Great”, no African-American student rated it as less than “Good”. Table 60 describes school experience ratings by whether the student remained or left the gifted program, Table 61 describes school experience ratings by gender, and Table 62, describes school experience ratings by race.

**Table 60**

#### **Interviewed Gifted Students’ School Rating Experience by Placement in the Gifted Program**

	1. Great	2. Good	2.5 Good	3. OK	Total
Remained	2	3	0	1	6
Left	0	5	1	1	7
Total	2	8	1	2	13

**Table 61****Interviewed Gifted Students' School Experience Rating by Gender**

	1. Great	2. Good	2.5 Good	3. OK	Total
Female	1	3	1	1	6
Male		5		1	7
Total	1	8	1	2	13

**Table 62****Interviewed Gifted Student's Rating of School Experience by Race**

	1. Great	2. Good	2.5 Good	3. OK	Total
African-American	2	7	1		10
Caucasian		1		2	3
			1		
Total	2	8		2	13



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**HOMOGENOUSLY GROUPED URBAN GIFTED AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND  
CAUCASIAN SECONDARY STUDENTS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

**Volume II**

**By**

**Elizabeth Ann Rose**

**A DISSERTATION  
Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**School Psychology**

**2001**



### Grounded Theory Thematic Analysis

The structured qualitative interview is comprised of questions relating to the following contexts: cultural issues, school environment, home environment, peer relationships, security, identity, self efficacy, health issues, transition experiences, and academic issues. Following the grounded theory approach to developing theory from qualitative data, it was found that for the purposes of this analysis the most significant overarching themes could be meaningfully broken down into contextual categories. The context related emerging themes are presented in the following order:

1. Home access to technology
2. Extra-curricular school related activity involvement
3. Death and loss
4. Family constellation and family relationships
5. The supportive climate of academic achievement provided in the gifted program compared to the regular (or general) education program
6. The experience of the transition to middle school compared to that of high school
7. Gender and race: feeling accepted and treated equally
8. Teachers and peers: support of achievement

### Valences

The responses students gave to the questions concerning contextual categories included on the Structured Qualitative Interview were weighted positively and negative. Therefore, the emergent themes were identified through

the use of positive and negative valences assigned to students comments concerning different issues discussed. Each issue related to a different context in the student's life. The results are reported in Tables 64 and 65. The Key (Table 63) preceding the tables applies to both.

**Table 63**

**Key for Tables 64 and 65**  
**Contextual Themes and Corresponding Valences**

Contextual themes	Positive Valences	Negative Valences
Family Contellation	Two Parent	Divorce, Single-parent
Family Relationships	Supportive	Distant
Death/Loss	No Significant Loss	Significant Loss
Peers	support achievement	Non-support Achievement
Extra-curricular	Involved School Related	Not Involved School Related
Race	Felt Accepted	Felt Discrimination
Gender	Treated Equally	Treated Unequally
Gifted Academics	Positive for Learning	Negative for Learning -
Regular Academics	Positive for Learning	Negative for Learning
Teachers	Supportive	Not Supportive
Transition to Middle School	Prepared	Not Prepared
Transition to High School	Prepared	Not Prepared
Home Access to Technology	Home Access	No Home Access

**Table 64**  
**Valences for Contextual Themes from Interviews of Gifted Students Who Remained in the Gifted Program**

	Gwen	Opal	Zara	Kenneth	Paul	Sterling	Total Positive Themes	Total Negative Themes	Percent Positive Themes
Family Constellation	+	+/-	-	+	+/-	+	5	3	62%
Family Relationships	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	6	2	75%
Death/Loss	+	+	-	+	-	-	3	3	50%
Peers	+/-	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	6	3	66%
Extra-curricular	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	6	1	86%
Race	+/-	+	+	+/-	-	+	5	3	63%
Gender	+	-	+/-	+/-	-	-	3	5	37%

**Table 64 Continued**

Gifted Academics	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	10%
Regular Academics	-	-	+-	-	-	-	-	6	14%
Teachers	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	5	55%
Transition to Middle School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0%
Transition to High School	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	1	83%
Access to Technology	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	3	50%
Total Positive Themes	11	9	9	10	6	9	55		58%
Total Negative Themes	5	6	8	7	9	5	41		

**Table 65. Valences for Contextual Themes from Interviews of Gifted Students Who Left the Gifted Program**

	Nicole						Total		Percent Positive Themes
	+	-	+	-	+	-	Positive Themes	Negative Themes	
Family Constellation	+	-	+	-	-	+	3	4	43%
Family Relationships	+	+/-	-	+	+/-	+	6	4	60%
Death/Loss	+	-	-	-	-	+	2	5	29%
Peers	+/-	+	-	+	+	+/-	7	4	64%
Extra-curricular	+	+/-	-	-	+	+	5	3	62%
Race	-	+	+/-	+	+	+	6	2	75%
Gender	-	+	+/-	+	+	-	4	4	50%
Gifted Academics	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+	7	2	77%
Regular Academics	+/-	-	-	-	+/-	-	2	7	22%

**Table 65 Continued**

Teachers	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+/-	-	6	4	60%
Transition to Middle School	+/-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	12%
Transition to High School	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+	7	2	77%
Access to Technology	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	1	6	14%
Total Negative Themes	10	8	6	8	9	7	8	56		51%
Total Positive Themes	8	7	11	7	6	8	7		54	

The differences in percentage of positive valences between the responses of students who remained in the gifted program and gifted students who left were computed for the differences between the two groups for contextual categories considered.

**Table 66**

**Percentage Differences of Positive Valence Points on the Structured Qualitative Interview**

Contextual Themes	Percentage Positive Responses		Valence Difference
	Remained Gifted Program	Left Gifted Program	
Gender	37	50	-13
Race	63	75	-12
Transition To Middle School	0	12	-12
Regular Education Academic Achievement	14	22	-8
Teachers	55	60	-5
Peers	66	64	2
Transition To High School	83	77	6
Family Constellation	62	43	14
Family Relationships	75	60	15
Death /Loss	50	29	21
Gifted Program Academic Achievement	100	77	23
Extra-curricular Activities	86	62	24
Home Access to Technology	50	14	36



### Emergent Contextual Themes

The Contextual Themes that emerged from the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative analysis are presented in a detailed manner in the following discussion. The themes are presented in order of those that differentiate most between the two groups of gifted students who were interviewed to the those that are the least differentiating.

#### *Home access to technology*

An unintended outcome of building theory from the results of the Structured Qualitative Interviews was to touch upon the students' access to technology. The questionnaire was not designed to consider this aspect of the gifted educational experience. However, when they were questioned about support at home, the students themselves brought up the topic of technology. A pattern began to develop as the comments were identified that related to home access to technology. For the most part, students who remained had more access. This is documented in the valence chart describing topic areas all students addressed during the interviews. Fifty percent of the students interviewed who remained enrolled in the gifted program had home access to computer technology (Table 66). Of the students interviewed who left the gifted program, only 14% had home access. The sample size is small, but a 36% difference suggests a very strong trend.

The students' comments reinforce the importance of the role of home access to technology in the lives of some students, and the total lack of home

access for others. Gwen, and Kenneth's statements illustrate the important role of home access to technology in their education:

Gwen: The most important educational materials to me at my house...[are] Computers....And calculators.

Kenneth: In a general sense, it's got, it's almost ha, it almost has to be the ability to access information....So, when I was really small, it would have been a library card, when I was really small; but, when I got older and they [*my parents*] bought me, they bought me a computer, it was the PC....And, uh, well, it was still a library card, but the newer PC that we had....We had a older PC, but that was before like the, the Web and all that stuff was on; and then, when we got the next one, and it had Internet access, and access to online-type 'cylopedias and things like that....So, it would probably be the PC, and I say made a difference, any, if, if any parent teaches a kid how to use a computer, um, they really have a, a very valuable tool....I mean, if my PC blew up tomorrow, I, you know, I might have a nervous breakdown. I'd be able to make it, but (laugh) it would, it wouldn't be so nice (laugh).

Nevertheless, there were some students who answered differently. Roslyn was one of the students from the lowest income early elementary neighborhood.

Roslyn: At home it was important to have, Um, quiet, a quiet, um, environment and a lotta, like....uh, things you had at home that you would refer to,...dictionary; my Webster, and my grandmother (smile).

When he had an essay to write, one student who left the program stated:

Joshua: Probably, uh, ah, I will ask my mother and then she w-, she helps me with alotta things and, if not, I'll go to the library to sit and write it, that's all really.

Logan's description of materials available was similar:

Logan: For me, it was just the school books. I mean, js-, followin' the in the books an' everything, I could figure it out.

Another gifted girl who left the program stated that the only material she had at home was a calculator. As far as getting home support, she stated:

Denise: Calculator (laugh), that's about it, pencils and paper. A calculator helped. Not because I couldn't do it, just because it was so much easier just to punch it in (laugh). Once in a while, I cud go ta my cousin Donnie. My mom din't finish high school and my dad was never around; he just lives there. And Donnie lived in St. Clair Shores, so that told you how much I saw him. I have a really big phone bill I still have to pay my parents back for.

During interviews, it became apparent that students enrolled in the gifted program were aware of the discrepancies in materials available. They called attention to the fact that the school itself could not bridge the gap. On a larger scale they expressed concerns about the school-wide lack of additional resources.

Kenneth: The only thing, the only thing that, that I can remember, as far as all the schooling that, that really took an effect on ATP [*Academically Talented Program*], was when we had the funding problem and, uh, we had the funding problem, which really cut things as far as field trips and learning outside the school and getting some, getting some of the materials and technology, and things that were needed for the higher learning.

Paul: [We need] Mainly money, you know, opportunities, specifically just money. Our school doesn't have enough money. Uh, Governor Engler...I mean, Paint's falling off my, the walls in my classrooms; um, we're understaffed...Ok, so, I mean, basically, in terms of just material things and staff, it's, it's weak? It just needs money.

### *School Related Extra-Curricular Involvement*

The students who remained in the gifted program described themselves as more connected to school through extra-curricular activities. Eighty-six percent of the students who remained in the gifted program described school-related extra-curricular involvement, for which they expressed an excitement.

Opal: ...and then in high school, that's when I picked up theater, and I began to debate with Mini-UN [*Mini-United Nations*], and I also picked up forensics,

and I also worked on the newspaper, the yearbook, became a Thespian, really, anything that I could find to involve myself in in high school, I did, because I didn't want to leave any area uncovered.

Gwen: High school, I was NHS [National Honor Society], I was in SADD [Students against Drunk Driving] for a year, and that was it. NHS did... added to my school experience. A lot. Um, you go out and you help people, you meet a lotta people, and you see the good that you're doin' and it, it makes you feel good.

For some extra-curricular participation in sports was the common thread or springboard for relationships with all groups of students and tended to reduce any isolation felt in the gifted program.

Paul: My best friend, well, ...ah, he used to be my best friend, was all about friends. He was athletic which gave him a connection to people not in the gifted program. What it gave him is real rare for a white person. When you are gifted and white you become an extra minority.

Sixty-two percent of those students who left the gifted program described involvement in school-related activities. For them this school-related extra-curricular involvement usually dropped after leaving the program. For some, like Denise, who felt isolated due to her encroaching mental health issues, and Darius, who was away from school for long periods due to medical complications, secondary education lacked such school-related involvement and instead, brought isolation rather than more connectedness.

Darius: So...Uh, I didn't really get in any activities. In elementary, I was in Boy Scouts. That was about all after that. Cause, then I started to get sick. Then in middle school, Uh, nothin'. Uh, sometimes I felt like that in middle school, isolated, an'.... in a couple a my classes. I found myself, yeah....Not answerin' a lotta questions. I got to know some guys in the neighborhood and sometimes we hung out,...And high school, nope, I didn't get into activities.

### *Death and Loss*

The Structured Qualitative Interview did not include questions pertaining to issues of death and loss. Therefore, it was particularly revealing to find that many of the students reported significant death or loss of someone very close to them. The students who left the gifted program reported at a somewhat higher rate than did the students who remained in the gifted program. Only two of the seven students who left reported no significant loss. For some the results were devastating. Joshua's father died in fifth grade and soon after his grades plummeted. Roslyn's father died in early elementary and she was sent to live with her grandmother for the balance of her elementary years by a mother overwhelmed by grief, and by the magnitude of the sole responsibility for the family suddenly thrust upon her.

Denise describes an incident that preceded a long bout with depression:

Denise: My best friend was murdered by his twin brother....I spent the entire day [*my friend*] got killed, I spent, we were skippin' school, and he was in [*School A*] and I was in [*School C*], which are side by side, and was a whole day we spent together, and then, like, 4:00 I go home, 'cause he says he has to 'check in',... I go to call him, and a cop answered the phone, "Um, he's on his way to the hospital, you'll have to go up there for any more information"; and I was like, what! So that really screwed me up.

For others interviewed who left the gifted program, there was a significant loss by separation. Darius' stepfather, the man he considered 'Dad' left after divorcing his mother, which occurred during the same time frame when his asthma became acute. Logan's father also left the household due to a divorce, with no further contact, save a few phone calls throughout the years.

Of the two students who left the gifted program and reported no significant loss in their lives and intact families, one (Thomas) remained in the accelerated gifted program until his senior year. The other (Nicole) left after her sophomore year and had a stellar high-school career, attaining a high GPA, being elected as president of her class, and being a star on the girl's basketball team.

Among those who remained in the gifted program, three students reported significant loss. One student, Opal, experienced divorce in her family, but her mother married her stepfather, a man with whom she developed a close bond. Sterling experienced the death of a very close cousin, who was his age. It led to a difficult period for him. Yet he reports that he maintained full involvement in many activities, and that his friends and intact extended family shared his grief and loss. However, Paul's father left the home because of divorce, and despite Paul's attempts for it to be otherwise, they did not see each other on any regular basis. Interestingly, While Paul was popular by self-report and that of other students, he did not get involved in many extra-curricular activities. Although he remained in the gifted program, his grades and attendance dropped in high school.

### *Family Constellation and Relationships*

Family constellation refers to the make-up or configuration of the family members with whom the student actually resides. For the purposes of this study it is differentiated from family relationships, which are considered for their supportive nature. Approximately one half of the students from both groups interviewed lived in single-parent families at one time during their school-age

years. In fact there is no clear difference in the nature of their family make-ups. Some lived with nuclear families, some with extended, some with a mix of both.

The aspect of families which seems to have most affected the student's educational experience is the supportive nature of the family relationship to the student. Seventy-five percent of the students who remained in the gifted program responded that their family relationships were supportive; only sixty percent of the students who left responded that their family relationships were supportive.

The supportive nature of the family's involvement as described by those who remained is usually characterized as positive, especially towards education:

Zara: Um....My older sister, um, for, like, math and stuff, but if I write papers, my mom will usually look over my papers for me. My grandparents always knew what I was doin'.

Kenneth: Well, gosh, when I was real little, my sister helped me with me "A, B, C's" (laugh). My dad helped me with my math, and I think my mother helped me most of my life. Everyone cares about how well I did. Everyone.

Opal: Um, my Mom was involved in everything she could get involved in (laugh). Um, she's always been a member of the PTA [*Parent Teacher Association*] ever since elementary, whenever; and, um, also just, I think just about anything she could do, she did. I, I remember her coming up to the school often just to talk to the teacher and, um, that was in elementary but in high school, now she works on the PTA and also with things like our Thespian trips or UN [*United Nations*]. She always tries to help out with that. It's just little things, little things that moms do, you know (laugh) that make it good...She was always, it was always, everyone knew Mom, always (laugh)...

Well, my, um, parents always made sure I had a tutor or if, whenever I needed one, a tutor would come by two or three times a week to help me with math, 'cause that has always been a problem area, and, uh, whenever the tutor wasn't available, my mother would take out time to sit down with me, or either one of my older uncles, one of her brothers, would take out time to sit down and to help me; but there was always someone there whenever I

needed help. You know, I can't really think of a time when I was confused and just alone.

Really, it was a family effort. Everyone, whenever I received a report card, the whole family knew it, and my grandmother has 10 children, and that; I have a huge family, and so everyone, it was a family effort when, um, because my sister and I are the only grandchildren in the family of 10, well, now it's like 15; but we're the only grandchildren, and so we were always focused on whenever we had report cards or any award, my whole family was there; anything. It would always go back to the family.

Those students who left the program described families who cared, but who were perhaps less available, or sometimes took a more hands-off approach in supporting academic achievement:

Joshua: My relatives are in another state, but if I was to be, like in trouble,...um I'd call one of my mom's friends.

Darius: My father, my brothers aren't living with me, but I would call 'em. Uh, both a my brothers finished high school an' went to... Went to college, so I kinda set the road for me right there to get where they are an'....Yes, they motivatin' me a lot. There's. I would say my older brother. Uh, my cousin.

Joshua: Yeah, they came, so they got; my mother, she came to games and supported. It seems like in elementary the parents were way more involved....And it seems like in middle school and high school, it's just like, you're grown up now, you're, you gotta be adult, you, the parents come up there more rare... And it seems like this in elementary, they was always there to conferences and everything.

### *Climate of Academic Support*

Responses concerning the thematic context of the climate for academic achievement or in other words, learning environment, within the gifted versus general education classrooms revealed some startling views. The two groups gave similar ranges of positive responses concerning the learning climate within the gifted classroom. One hundred percent of those who remained in the gifted classroom responded positively about its learning climate, as did 77% of those



who left the gifted program. In comparison, 14% of those students who remained in gifted education were positive in their comments about the support for achievement provide in the general-education classrooms. Likewise, only 22% of those who left the gifted program were positive about the supportive nature of the learning environment in general education classrooms.

Regarding the difference in the classroom learning environments provided in the gifted program versus the general education program, gifted students who remained commented:

Gwen: They expect more out of you in the gifted program than in the regular program. I like the challenges, of a new challenge and, like, goin' to (*general education*) classes, you're like, "Ok, do this, just read this and do the questions and you're done"; I was just like, "That's it?" I was like, yeah, I wanna challenge...In the gifted program, you have same students of your caliber, responsible, you know, they're not gonna make any trouble. What other people think about how they do in school affects how they do in the regular program. Whereas with the other classes, you have a mixture of everybody and everybody's lookin' for attention...It's....'Cause here (*in a regular education classroom*) I'm worried about everybody thinks and 'bout your answer and whether it's right or wrong and everybody's gonna laugh at you; but in the gifted program, it's, it, it's no wrong answer, it's everybody's there to get work done..... I went ahead and answered it, because it was, I think I was like the only one payin' attention anyway, 'cause they sit there and they talk and they mouth back to the teacher and I was like, "You guys are so disrespect, disrespectful" and they're like, "Uh, you know, she's actin' stuck-up"; but, I don't, I don't think I got held back for anybody.

We had a teacher that just came from a regular school, he wasn't into the gifted program, so he didn't know how to treat us, rather from them, the other students. So it was just like, "Ok, you guys, sid down and quiet; ok, when you're ready, can we work"; and when he saw, you know, we set down, did our work, he's just like, "Wow, you guys are great". Um-um. He was expectin', like, rowdy, everybody jumpin' over tables and stuff; he was like, "You guys are good".

Opal: It was good being in classes with people of my thinking ability. It was good being with others who would challenge me and also challenge the

teacher. It was just wonderful. It really is, because this is my first time being in a non-magnet class [*non-academic elective class*]... for, ever since ninth, ever since elementary, and it's amazing to see the difference, because all of my life I've had on blinders, and all of my life I've been used to being in a class where others would be smarter than me or others would challenge me in different areas, and now it's just amazing, it's amazing...I wouldn't have wanted to go to, through school that way and I thank God that I didn't...I think I probably would a dropped outta school. I couldn't imagine, I really couldn't imagine that, because it's kinda like the saying, if you don't get like them, they get like you, or....Yes. I would have because, like I said, it's the standard where you have to be disruptive or, or not even disruptive, you have to be "dumb", and I hate usin' that word, in order to look cool or to look smart.

Sterling: I....See, I don't have that problem and, in the gifted program.... I think, I think it, I'm not afraid to, like, uh, speak out if I think I have the answer..., see, I've, I've been in, like, I've had to go through some of those classes (*general education*) sometimes and....You get sort of self-conscious because (laugh), you're the only one raisin' your hand all the time.

Kenneth: (*in the gifted program*) Everything was tied in, so it was like more practical learning than just learnin' something', 'cause, you know, the older you get, and you start to catch onto things in your life, "How are we actually gonna use this?" and, like, ATP [*Academically Talented*] kids say that all the time, "How are we gonna use this?" so....(laugh), "Why?"....It helped because we were all in ATP and, uh, when you're ATP, you're expected to excel, and that was something that the students expected, were expected to do, and we ex, like, you know, we really come to expected it from each other... (*General education*) It would have been different if I had never gotten into, off that waiting list, if I'd stayed at [*School E*] ? I don', I don' think my education would have had as much value to me as it does now.

The tenor of the comments given by the students who left the gifted program was similar:

Joshua: Uh, ah, the program, it seemed that it was at a accelerated pace and it prepared me for, for going to the, on to the next grades...It was, it seemed that they impacted more of the students an' also seemed like that the work was more challenging than the wor-, than the other work that I had at the other school (*general-education program*).

Nicole: Sometimes I'd be the only one discussing (*in the general education classroom*) and I'd say come on quit fooling around. I think I had confidence to express myself from being in the gifted program.

Roslyn: I felt more comfortable saying whatever I thought (*in the gifted program*). Because I felt comfortable 'round people that I felt were like me...Well, I, after I left, I went to a all-black school, and, um.... They, um, like, at (*the gifted program*), mostly all I thought about was the school work, and at there, at um, the catholic school, they really don't, I mean, they, they kinda influenced me with a lotta negative things, not school work.

Logan: Um, I mean, when I went to [*School D, a general education middle school*], like, they worked very hard, they tried really hard, 'n it was, like, more competitive at [*the gifted elementary*], 'cause people were gettin' really good grades, but when I changed to [*a general education middle school*], kids were, like, I mean, I felt, like, so much smarter than everyone else, so, um, I would say that I didn't have to work as hard as I did in elementary school. The work was turned easier.

(Laugh) I don't know, [*in the gifted classroom*] I mean, we were, we were all tryin' to be, to, like, see who's smarter, er, at [*the gifted program*] Uh, I think they should, but I don't think they do [*in the general education classroom*]

Denise: I've been ahead, so I didn't realize that I was ahead until I really went back to the regular program in middle school. I didn't realize that, hey, I'm basically in college courses here, and I could have gone so far ahead; and then, bam, you're out of it. I was bored. I'm like, I did this in fourth grade! Seriously, I'm like, the teacher'd hand me a test, and she'd like, "Ok, you have a half-hour to do it". I'd sit there, done! hand it in, and they'd be all right, and they didn't understand that, and they wanted to skip me a grade, but I don't wanna be in with the older kids.

### *Transitions: Middle School Versus High School*

The topic of the transition to middle school provoked, by far, the greatest number of negative comments from all students. In fact, none of the students who remained in the gifted program reported a positive experience in making the middle-school transition. Only 12% of those who left expressed a positive aspect to the experience. Those who remained in the gifted program expressed feeling totally unprepared and overwhelmed for the changes they experienced in middle school.

Sterling: It was scary, I....The first day, I didn't wanna go, sayin', "I don't wanna go" (laugh) and, uh, took off....I, I wasn't prepared. I didn't wanna go.

In middle school, though,...I think what I learned was more social than educational.

Zara: I mean, middle school, it's just kinda like, a waiting period or a transition period, it's like, this is just...Um, basically, just learnin' how to get from one class to the other 'cause, like, we only had, like, a four-minute period and you wanna stop and maybe, like, go to the bathroom, or stop and then you see somebody in the hall and you'd have to tell 'm somethin', you just learnin' how to navigate the hallways to the best of your ability. The teachers in middle school don't really help you with that. No....I think the teachers in high school do a better job 'a that. So, so middle school was harder, in terms of that part of it...

Gwen: It was a difficult change. It was hard, but I got used to it quickly. There was more work and more people. Nothing really prepared me for it...I just worked hard. ...Yeah, 'cause from elementary to middle school it was kinda like a gap. You went in, you say, "Ok, I'm gonna do this" and you're like, "I don't know how to do this", so I think the elementary is (*should have*) prepared the more for middle school. Uh....Elementary school, you were, you was the top of the class, you know, and then you went in and it was like, ok, you have to go up or down, and they didn't really tell you what was gonna happen in the middle school ... (*then*) in middle school, it's like cliques and everybody wants to fit in...

Paul: I don't think I could have been really prepared. The only thing that prepared me was, um, on one special occasion, I don't even remember why, um, my elementary class took a, a trip to one of the, to the middle school that I was be attending, and that was probably priceless, priceless information. I don't think that anything could prepare a kid for where they're going as much as seeing it...Um, I was nervous at first, and, but I realized that it was gonna be all right.

The students who left the gifted program often did so after experiencing the transition to middle school. For Denise, the changing of classes, volume of new teachers added to the personal difficulties she was experiencing, causing her to leave the gifted program after seventh grade. More than half of the sample of interviewed students, who left gifted education, did so in middle school.

Nicole: Middle School is a different world.... it is the hardest.

Logan: Um, I didn't know what to expect. Oh, I just remember it as bein' on the first day, like, a lotta kids, a lotta strangers, wit', like, a handful that I already knew, but, it was kinda hard. I mean, the new environment was so different. Nothing prepared me for it.

Darius: Uh, it was, I was kinda scared my first few days. I didn't talk, I just kinda walked with my head down, set in class, did my work. Uh, I had ta meet new friends. I mean, I had ta kinda sit back and jus' let things happen an' friends, because I didn't really know too much. I didn't really wanna say much to anybody because people acted different then an' I was around older people an' I didn't wanna get into any fights an' get in any troubles or....nothin' prepared me for goin' to middle school?

Roslyn: Scary. I din't know anyone. It might'a helped to...um, stayin' within the, the same program and not just skippin' anywhere.

Thomas: I was nervous. There weren't bullies like I thought, ..the difference was more classes, more teachers, more responsibility. It was, ..I wasn't expecting all of that.

Joshua: Elementary ta middle school, I'd say was the biggest step in education, because you, you go from such, from bein' in one class with people you see every day to bein' in different classes in a bigger school. That was the biggest transition for me. There was more expected of you and everything. It was a big change...I don't think I was ready for it.

Both groups described the transition to high school as an easier adjustment to make. Eighty-five percent of the students who remained in the gifted program indicated that they felt prepared to make the transition to high school.

Paul: I think the transition ta high school was easier.

Zara: I just think the difference is you can tell, like, in high school, since that is where, like, the rest of your life begins, as far as, you know, career-wise and everything. It seemed like teachers put more into their job and more into having students succeed...

Sterling: It was easier to go to high school than it was to go to middle school, even though the work was harder.

Gwen: ...but when you got to the middle school, they told you, "Ok, this is what you're gonna do in high school, you have to be prepared; and so by doing this, we're gonna give you, like, all this work"; and so it was like, "Ok, I can, I'm really ready for that". They prepared you more in middle school than they did in elementary school... when you go into high school, you see everyone's bein' theirselves; I mean, it's not a big popularity contest and you're, you're not there ta impress anybody, you're there to do your work...

Seventy-seven percent of the students who left the gifted program responded positively about being ready to make the transition to high school.

Thomas: I dealt with the transition to high school much better. I was more ready.

Logan: Um, it was easier, the transition [*to high school*], 'cause I had made it before, goin' to middle school, 'n so I knew how to meet people 'n everything.

Darius: I basically knew what goin' to high school was gonna be like. Uh, high school, I was a, I was still tense but I was a little bit more loose. Ah, started talkin' ta people....

### *Race and Gender: Feeling Accepted and Treated Equally*

The students who remained in the gifted program expressed mainly positive comments about their experience with issues of race. Sixty-three percent of these students voiced positive comments, for example:

Zara: ...like, between minorities and....there's really no difference in how they're treated. Um....Not for the most part, but I think that a lotta times, teachers do have, like, students they prefer over other students.

Sterling: Um....No, not really. It's, uh, equal. Maybe, actually, the security guard sometimes, if you, if you look like you're a good student, then they probably don't give you a hassle, they won't hassle you as much as if you look like you're a bad student. It could just be appearance, ya know, like, ah, if you look like you're doin' what you're supposed to do.

Likewise, students who left the gifted program also expressed positive sentiments about issues of racial equality.

Nicole: In the gifted program, that's where I had the most friends that were White. All of the kids at [School G] in regular classes are Black. I never felt like there was any difference between Blacks and Whites in the gifted program. We all accepted each other the same. But when I first came from [School G] Elementary, I felt like, look at all of these White people. It was different for me. I had never been in class with White kids, but then it didn't matter after that. We all accepted each other the same. In the gifted program, it really didn't matter if you were White or Black. Then, I felt like the people in the non-gifted program accepted me even better.

Roslyn: There wasn't any cliques. Not a, at least not in my class. Race didn't matter.

Joshua: Uh, by race? No, no. There weren't people dividin' themselves up by race. No, this ain't, 'cause everyone, I mean, at that age, I don't think, we probably had our views about it but, I mean, everybody was interactin' together, everybody was, you know, you could say, "cool" with each other.... I haven't felt any racism at any time.

There were some negative examples of racial inequality for the students who remained.

Kenneth: I think the other thing that happened was, just a teacher who, no matter what kind of student I was, would not give me a A grade, 'cause they just took it against me personally. They took it against a lotta other students like me, black students, they just took it against them personally.

Paul: I had a teacher in middle school who favored Black students. They would get called on more and given the parts in plays. It was very difficult to be in her room during Black History Month if you were White. I tried to drop her class second year, but nobody else was teaching that class.

However, there was a greater split for both groups over issues of gender.

Only 37% of the gifted who remained and 50% of those who left the gifted program were positive in their comments about gender equality within the school

setting and within the gifted program in particular. Among those who remained there were positive comments suggesting gender equality.

Gwen: No, I, I think it was the same; I think that they're [*boys and girls are treated*] the same.

Students who left the gifted program also expressed some positive views about gender equality.

Roslyn: I think girls and guys are treated the same.

However, there were also some students who remained in the gifted program who described a less than perfect picture of gender equity. Moreover, at times it is difficult to separate the issues of gender and race.

Paul: Girls seem to get closer to their teachers. It seems as though teachers are intimidated by the guys, especially the black guys. You know it is more about, um, getting down to business. Girls come into the classroom and you see them, they laugh and talk to the teachers, you know, it just seems more comfortable, casual. Guys don't get treated like that.

Sterling: Um....Sometimes there, there can be a, um, if I was a cute female, if I could....(*Laugh*)....They get ta weasel their way outta stuff, it feels like. Um... Well, I....There's a difference, um, I don't think the difference is very, very, ob....Like, some of the females seem undedicated to their work, but you got, ah, you still got, I don't know, maybe the females sometimes are more, um, active, they're more....Involved, yeah.

Some students who left the gifted program expressed similar views about gender inequality. Many of these comments also reflect an interweaving of race and gender issues.

Danielle: I guess in high school black kids are rougher. I see that at [*general education high school*]. Teachers might treat a bunch of black guys different, stricter, not as friendly. I think they don't want them to get out of hand. Sometimes they [*Black guys*] are louder and that bothers some teachers.... There is no slack cut for the guys. I see it in my non-



gifted classes at [*general education high school*]. Like, I have this one teacher for two classes. She is Black and all of the students in both classes are Black, but there are a bunch of girls in one and then in my other class there is a group of Black guys that all sit together. In the class with a bunch of girls, we talk and discuss and giggle. She lets us talk together and she encourages us to discuss and ask questions to her. She is way different in the class with more guys. She is strict and we have to be quiet. She doesn't let us talk freely.

Logan: I think girls are expected to be smarter...So, like, they can't mess up as much academically....I still, I still expect girls to be smarter...Teachers do too...but, I think, ...I don't think they would ever admit it, but, yeah (laugh)....Um, I think we are expected to act, to act up more....Yeah, but I think, um, when a girl, like, is really bad and things, I think, they get, um, I think people treat 'em worse than a, a guy who's actin' up.

#### *Teachers and Peers: Support of Achievement*

Students who remained and those who left the gifted program were fairly evenly divided about the supportiveness of their teachers and peers. Remaining students expressed positive comments at a rate of 55% about the supportiveness and caring attitudes of their teachers, and at a rate of 66% for the support of their peers towards academic achievement. Comments about the positive aspects of their relationships with teachers include:

Opal: The fact that the majority of my teachers spend time, lots and lots of time, with us. If there's something that we don't understand, they will take the time to go through. If, um, if we get into a good discussion or a good debate and it's very productive, they will just follow through on that, and that's very important, because some teachers you find that, you know, have other agendas....

Gwen: I mean, she; I don't know, I guess it was the way she acted towards us: she didn't treat us like children or tell you, "You sit down"; it was like, "Ok, you have to do this" and you, I mean, she didn't treat us just like children. It was like, "Next year, you're goin' into high school and I want you to be prepared, and so I'm not gonna treat you like this".

Kenneth: Um, the team-teaching thing was where it was basically split into the math and sciences, the sciences and the humanities, I guess you'd call

it, where you had the social studies...on one side and math and sciences on the other, where dose two teachers would work together, respectively. Um, it was good, because as a student, you were taken care of by....It was kinda, it was almost like two teach, having two teachers in one classroom, although the classrooms might be on different sides of the building, the two teachers would know what was going on with their students in the sciences or with their students in the humanities, and it would help the learning situation, because if you, whether you were slacking or the teacher wasn't picking up something that they should be, that it was kinda picked up, even before they ended the term, so grades weren't lacking in the actual learning; the material wasn't lacking, either.....Gosh, I can, I can almost recite his whole lessons, ... Yeah. That's how I feel, I think that, uh, hopefully, I think that most of the teachers in the gifted program kinda had that gift where, by the third day, they knew everybody's name, you know....And, uh, one thing that I'll always be able to say is that, uh, to have gifted students, you have to be a gifted teacher, because gifted students, gifted students are some, which some people really don't think of, are, are some of the, can be some of the worse students you ever wanna deal with because, one, gifted students think they know everything. Two, because a gifted student thinks they know everything, they know how to get in trouble and not, how not to get in trouble for doing what they did (laugh); so, they, they have these creative ways to do things, uh, make trouble and, you know, not get into trouble for it, so you have to have gifted teachers to be able to tackle that kind of thing and, uh, I think all, almost all of my teachers, I can go back and speak to and they'll know who I am and I'll know who they are, because it was really more of a student-teacher relationship than a student-teacher situation 'n that was, that was really nice.

Some students who left the gifted program also commended their teachers for the caring support given.

Denise: She'd help me, and she explained it where I could understand it. She wouldn't, would never give me the answers or never tell me how to do it, but she'd explain how to do it.

However, both gifted students remaining in the gifted program and those who left also expressed some amount of dissatisfaction with the care and support shown to them by their teachers. Students who remained commented:

Kenneth: ...there were people that, in the, in the ATP [Academically Talented Program] that obviously didn't want minority students to excel....Which was bad, but ...because it, it, it's like that you'd probably run into that in the regular program more than you'll ATP, because is, it's just like

anybody that doesn't want diverse students to excel in ATP program really won't last long, because, like I said, it has to be a gifted teacher to deal with gifted students.

think I went to a teacher and I asked the teacher 13 times, uh, uh, something for help, or....Eventually, what happened is it got too late to turn in the assignment, and so I'd been to the teacher 13 times, I just couldn't get any help, and, uh, the teacher basically flunked me for the assignment, and my parents had to work somethin' out... they talked to other parents, they talked to them and they found out that this was kind of a habitual thing that was going on....

Gwen: A lotta teachers that we had in middle school treated us like 8-year-olds, like, "Sid down, don't move". It was, it was ridiculous. That's one of the reasons why I hated middle school, 'cause of the teachers.

Among those students who left the gifted program, some comments about the lack of supportiveness of their teachers included:

Joshua: Probably, uh, (*teachers could improve by*) gettin' more involved with the students. Like, each student, give them more, more time, like, one-on-one, with the teacher and the students. That's the only thing I'll say.

Thomas: I think, once I got to high school, it wasn't a matter of gifted, it was just; I think, once I got to high school, it was simply a label, once I got to high school, 'cause it was like, like, all the teachers doin' the same thing. A matter a fact, I think that, that some a the gifted teachers were worse than some so-called regular teachers that you have, because they; I had a couple teachers at [*gifted high school program*] that, that had some just flat-out bad attitudes, let's put it like that.

Comments about peers proved to be equally split for both groups of gifted students, those who remained in the program and those who left. Comments made by those gifted who never left the gifted program include:

Gwen: I think the gifted children are most like me; or I, I may have a little bit of both, 'cause everybody's like, "Well, she doesn't look like she's in the gifted program"; and everybody look at the way I dress, baggy clothes and, "She's not in the gifted program". And they see me walk into the classroom and they look at me, my report card, they're like, "Wow! You're a 3.5 student!"; I'm like, "Yeah". It's like, "I'd a never known", I guess, 'cause a the way I carry myself, I mean.... So I'm like, in two worlds.... Nobody's told me, like, they're like, um, I'm different, they're like, "You're different"; the way

I act, the way I carry myself; it's, nobody has ever told me I'm like anybody... Yeah, I take it as a compliment. But, Be, have a 4.0, you know, [*did I*] fool around(?)..."You have a 3.9!"; I'm like, suck it in, it's, it's close enough....(laugh)

I mean, I don't care if people accept me or not, I'm not doin' it for them, it's, it's for me. And I tell myself that, even though people are like, we want you to go ahead, I'm, I'm do it for myself. I don't like doin' stuff 'cause other people want me to do it, I wanna do it for myself.

Kenneth: The, the "upstairs kids" thing, an' I mean any, any, um, I'm sure anybody that you'll survey, an' if you ask 'em about the "upstairs kids" thing, they will definitely know what you're talking about... Kids who are not in the gifted program; just the regular academic program kids; and uh, it was like, it was, it was, it was weird, because you were almost put on this pedestal; and, just to be quite honest, it was kind of fun that you were, like, these gifted kids. You were upstairs and you had all the computers and the new books; but, come recess time or lunch time, it was, you were definitely isolated from any of the other kids... You were, it was just a big isolation. Um.... One, if it was possible, and the, it was some, that's somethin' that's, that's more, much easier said than done, is to widen the gifted program so it wouldn't, so it wouldn't have such a level of isolation that it does...

A lot of us got tagged a few times (laugh), kinda beat up. I, I was a fourth grader; it was a sixth grader in the regular program, and so the kid walked up behind me, picked me up, and dumped me on my head, and, uh.... Just, just because.... I was, I was a gifted kid...

Yeah, they know who the gifted kids was. We were always buddies with each other... and the thing about lunch detention was that the, the likeliness of a gifted student being in lunch detention was little or none, so, I mean.... 'Cause the gifted kids are, the other thing was, if you were a gifted child, either a excuse'd be made why you did this, or they would have a parent-teacher conference and, you know, lunch detention thing, that would be bypassed, because usually your parents would, like, you know, lock you up and throw you in the hole for two years or somethin'.... (Laugh) And, uh, so it's like, [*my friend*] and I, only two ATP kids in lunch detention so, when we got to the room, we were like, God dog, we were right next to each other (laugh).... we had been in a fight (laugh), but we're like (laugh).... So they was dumpin' us in there and, like, we're gifted kids, an' all the other kids are lookin' at us like, an' so.... I mean, I, I think that lunch detention is how we got to be good friends, so....

Similar sentiments were expressed by those gifted students who left:

Nicole: The way the program is, it's like separating you. I felt separated. In elementary, you had the 'upstairs' kids, that was us and the 'downstairs' kids. It made you feel like a nerd, like you were missing out on friends, secluded.

Being in the gifted program made me more advanced. I have more confidence to express myself. After I left, I felt like I quit. I didn't hang out with the same people. Friends I had been in the gifted program with said, you aren't going anymore. They didn't understand. I didn't hang out with the same people after that. Playing sports brought me a whole new group of friends. That was one good thing about being in sports. It wasn't hard for me to have new friends, because I knew people from being in sports.

In high school I don't think so.- I'm accepted by both groups [*gifted and non-gifted*]. Being withdrawn will keep you from being accepted. It helped being involved in activities at school. It makes me feel like going to school.

Roslyn: It's special. I don't know, it just makes you feel special and it helps you out a lot. The kids help you, too; 'cause we were, like, kind of, um, separated from the, I don't know if they still are, from the downstairs kids or if the whole school is gifted now, but we were really separated. I guess I feel more comfortable. It is ok to be smart in the gifted program. But, I know a lotta kids that were in, weren't in the gifted program that were very smart.

Um, I on' know if it was the, the program, it was, I know after I left the program that split us up, 'cause I'm not really friends with anyone from there, 'cept for one, and the one that was my cousin. But I'm friends with some a the kids that were at [*School C*], in the regular program. I have a best friend, my best friend, he was in the downstairs program [*general education*].... And he talks about it..Yeah. I mean, yeah, he was, like, he thought we was stuck-up.

Joshua: I think that, that wo-, that could ha' been good, but, but it wa'nt, I, I don't think we should ha' been, like, separated, like these the gifted kids over here, they in, they're in their own class and everything. It could be where we could, uh, be mixed with the kids that were, like, in the regular program.

Yeah. This always pressure, this always pressure with friends, but is, is jus' makin' the smart decisions for yourself you have ta make, the smart decisions.

### Airs and MSCS

The Assessment of Interpersonal Relationships (AIRS) was completed by each student interviewed. The AIRS included the following subscales: mother,

father, male peers, female peers, and teachers. The Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS) included the following subtests: social, competence, affect, academic, family and physical. The total scores attained on the AIRS and the MSCS for each student were considered for significant differences. ANOVA results for the AIRS across placement (remained versus left gifted program) (Table 67) and gender (Table 68) showed no significance.

Table 67

## AIRS Total Scores for Placement

Descriptive Statistics		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum Maximum
Remained in Gifted	6	49.83	25.22	10.3	23.36	76.3	26 96
Left Gifted Program	6	46	27.36	11.17	17.29	74.71	7 83
Total	12	47.92	25.17	7.26	31.93	63.91	7 96
ANOVA for Placement							
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Between Groups	44.08	1	44.08	0.06	0.81		
Within Groups	6922.83	10	692.28	0	0		
Total	6966.92	11	0	0	0		

**Table 68**

**AIR Totals Scores for Gender**

**Descriptive Statistics**

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Female	6	42.67	30.16	12.31	11.02	74.31	7	96
Male	6	53.17	20.44	8.34	31.72	74.62	26	83
Total	12	47.92	25.17	7.26	31.93	63.91	7	96

**ANOVA for Gender**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	330.8	1	330.75	0.5	0.5
Within Groups	6636.2	10	663.62		
Total	6966.9	11			



ANOVA results for the MSCS across placement (remained or left gifted program) (Table 69) and gender (Table 70) showed no significance. Race was not considered due to the unequal size of the groups.

**Table 69**

**MSCS Total Scores for Placement**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Remained in Gifted	6	65.42	33.25	13.57	30.53	100.31	6	99.53
Left Gifted Program	7	69.86	34.14	12.91	38.28	101.44	13	96
Total	13	67.81	32.39	8.98	48.24	87.38	6	99.53

**ANOVA for  
Placement**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	63.56	1	63.56	0.06	0.82
Within Groups	12522.11	11	1138.37		
Total	12585.67	12			

**Table 70**

<b>MSCS Total Scores for Gender</b>									
<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>									
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Female	6	64.26	34.87	14.23	27.67	100.84	13	99.53	
Male	7	70.86	32.58	12.31	40.73	100.98	6	96	
Total	13	67.81	32.39	8.98	48.24	87.38	6	99.53	
<b>ANOVA</b>									
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.				
Between Groups	140.82	1	140.82	0.12	0.73				
Within Groups	12444.85	11	1131.35						
Total	12585.67	12							

The ipsative analysis of the AIRS and the MSCS was considered for subtest scores significant at the .05 level for gifted students who remained in the gifted program and for those who left.

The students who left the gifted program scored 9% more subscale points on the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations Scale (AIRS) that were weak at a .05 level of significance. The greatest difference between the two sets of AIRS subscale scores was in the subtests measuring the student's relationship to parents. A total of five of the students who left the program reported that their relationship to their parents was weak, compared to two students who remained. Two students who left had subtest scores that were strong at the .05 level for relationships with their mothers, compared to none stronger than the average range in the students who remained in the gifted program. Relationships with male peers were reported as stronger at the .05 level for three students who remained in the program, compared to only one among those who left.

**Table 71**

**AIRS Subscales Ipsative Analysis at .05 level**

Ipsative Analysis	Relationships							Total Number	Total Percent
	Mother	Father	Male	Female	Teachers				
			Peers	Peers					
Remain Gifted Program									
Weak at .05	1	1	0	1	2		5	55%	
Strong at .05	0	0	3	0	1		4	44%	
Left Gifted Program									
Weak at .05	2	3	0	1	1		7	64%	
Strong at .05	2	0	1	1	0		4	36%	

The Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS) Subscale results yielded twice as many scores that were weak at the .05 level of significance for those students who left the gifted program as those who remained (Table 72). The greatest weakness was in the area of family, where five of the students interviewed who left the gifted program scored significantly weak compared to two of their gifted counterparts who remained in the program.

**Table 72**

**MSCS Subscales Ipsative Analysis at .05 level**

Ipsative Analysis	Self Concept							Total Percent
	Social	Competence	Affect	Academic	Family	Physical	Total Number	
	Remain in Gifted Program							
Weak at .05	1	0	0	0	2	1	4	67%
Strong at .05	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	33%
Left Gifted Program								
Weak at .05	0	0	1	0	5	2	8	73%
Strong at .05	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	27%

### Summary of Qualitative Data

The students who were interviewed were considered for the differences posed by those who remained and those who left the gifted program.

Overarching themes that emerged from the Structured Qualitative Interview, the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale and the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations seem to relate to students' academic achievement and retention in the gifted program.

In discussing their experiences, there was a trend in both groups of students to describe transitions as difficult, especially the transition to middle school; and described the climate of the gifted classroom to be more supportive of academic achievement and safer for student expression. A lack of home access to technology was expressed as a problem for many more students who left the program than for those who remained. In addition, significant loss or death was more of an issue for those students who left the gifted program. Moreover, both groups tended to describe the general-education classroom climate as not supportive of academic success. Finally, issues of gender and racial discrimination were concerns expressed by both groups, but were of greater concern for those gifted students who remained in the gifted program.

Although the totals of the AIRS and the MSCS were not significantly different for the two groups interviewed, there were differences between subscale results on the ipsative analysis. On both the AIRS and the MSCS results, students who remained had a greater percentage of subscale scores strong at the .05 level of confidence and a lesser percentage of subscale scores weak at



the .05 level of significance than their gifted counterparts who left the gifted program.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

Addressing the research issue of differing program formats for urban and minority, identified-gifted students is necessary in planning for the development of their full potential. As discussed earlier, an extensive review of the literature revealed no longitudinal study and little research regarding best educational practice for the urban and minority gifted student. This study attempted to fill the gap with much needed information concerning this often-underserved student group. It was also indicated earlier that this project was important because of its focus on outcomes for a relatively large group of gifted and urban, minority students, identified in early elementary as living in poverty neighborhoods, as well as those living in middle class neighborhoods. It is this author's opinion that, by far the most important implication, for this study of the course of academic achievement throughout the school career of a group of urban and minority gifted students was the high graduation rate for those identified gifted students who remained in the gifted program. This result and others presented provide a rich beginning for what is hoped to be a fruitful research agenda considering the risks and unique experience of being a gifted urban and/or minority student.

The results of this study were numerous and have been summarized in Chapters Three and Four. Due to the breadth of the study, findings deemed most significant by this author will be considered here. The following discussion

section includes a summary of significant findings for each research question, an interpretation of findings by research question, and an integration with past literature, implications and future directions. A brief summary conclusion completes the chapter.

### **Question One**

The results of quantitative question one addressed the question: Do graduation outcomes depend on time enrolled in the gifted program, race, gender and household income? Variables considered were length of stay in the gifted program, placement in twelfth grade, and graduation rate.

The majority of this group of gifted students were identified in early elementary. By third grade 75% were identified and placed. It is remarkable that 33% were identified and placed prior to or by kindergarten and that 51% were identified and placed by first grade. Therefore, the majority of students in this study were identified for the gifted program before third grade, making the question of longitudinal effects of length of stay in a self-contained gifted program on graduation rates an appropriate inquiry about this group of gifted children.

This school district implemented a very comprehensive identification procedure and successfully canvassed the community to reach families and gifted children at the beginning of their school career. Evans (1993) asserted that although such practices are rare, early gifted identification is important. It allows a gifted child to avoid the experience of low self-esteem and behavioral problems due to instruction, which is incongruent with ability or skill level, and

lack of opportunity to develop true potential that often comes with general-education placement.

According to Ford (1996), the focus of much of the literature relating to giftedness in minority populations is the issue of identification. Frasier and Passow (1994) further suggest that the referral process is an important, and often overlooked component of the identification process. The school district in this study seems to have overcome the difficulties of the identification process for minority and disadvantaged students. The nomination and referral rate was high due to community and school district involvement. The district's effort to reach this group of children is exemplary. The problem of using measures which are too narrow in focus, or which involve a score cut-off was by-passed by the comprehensive screening committee process. Their multi-faceted gifted identification process (documented in Appendix A and in the Methods Chapter, page 105) resulted in a group of early-elementary identified urban-gifted youth who, as further results indicate, are qualitatively different from their general-education peers on many measures, and who are multi-racial and representative of all income levels.

Results suggest the elementary grade in which a student is identified and placed in a gifted program did not affect when he or she left the gifted program. Instead, the majority of the gifted students left at the time of transition to middle school or to high school. In fact, non-program factors relating to the transition to middle school and high school seem to affect when gifted students leave the gifted program.

Moreover, although the majority of these gifted-program-leavers were in the program since early elementary, being enrolled for a longer period of time did not increase their graduation rate. Consideration of program identification, that is whether a student had been identified as gifted or general-education, yielded results suggesting when the students' placements in twelfth grade were considered, the gifted-program-remainers were far more likely to graduate than their gifted counterparts who left the program and their general-education peers.

In fact, only one student who remained in the gifted program did not graduate, leading to a 98.6% graduation rate for gifted-program-remainers. This particular non-graduation was due to health problems. The other 74 gifted students graduated. In comparison the gifted students who left the program to enroll in general education (gifted-program-leavers) graduated at a rate of 77%. Of these 52 students who left the gifted program, 12 did not graduate. The graduation rate for the general-education students who remained in their program through twelfth grade (general-program-remainers) was 79%. It is notable that of these 46 general-education students, 12 also did not graduate.

Therefore, the graduation rate of the students who left the gifted program was dissimilar to that of the gifted who remained. Remaining in the gifted program did increase a gifted student's chances of graduating from high school. This result suggests that gifted students are more at risk for academic failure within a general education than within a gifted setting.

The gifted program retained more African-American students than Caucasians. However, Caucasians also remained in the gifted program at a

higher rate than they did in the general-education program. Enrollment in the gifted program seemed to stem the tide of Caucasian flight from this urban school district more successfully than enrollment in general education.

Although the gifted program did have greater holding power for African-American students compared to Caucasians, a substantial group of African-American students went to the general-education program. An interesting phenomenon was the loss of African-American females from the gifted program, who subsequently all graduated while fewer African-American males who went to general education graduated. Reasons for these results may hinge upon the social and peer group pressures these students experienced. Both African-American females and males may be reacting to pressure to be accepted by their peer group.

For the females this may mean being pressured into attempting to be popular. Ultimately, there may be pressure to be involved in a significant male relationship for which there might be more opportunity in general education due to the higher ratio of African-Americans in general education program population. Whereas the gifted program was racially balanced, there was a district-wide ratio of 70% African-American, 30% Caucasian.

Fordham (1993, 1996) suggests that African-American girls are under a different type of social pressure than their male counterparts. This pressure to be accepted socially by other African-Americans, especially by males, may account for the loss of African-American females from the program. To be an adolescent African-American female in a gifted program may have social risks

that are different from those experienced by African-American males or by Caucasian males and females.

For African-American males, a similar pressure to be popular within a larger peer group may also be at play. However, the gifted males who transferred to general education did not graduate at a rate as high as that of their female peers. The graduation rate of the African-American males who left to general education was 64%. For the African-American male gifted-program-remainders, the graduation rate was 95%.

The literature suggests that African-American males may be more at risk for academic disidentification than females (Ogbu, 1986; Steele, 1992; Steele and Aronson, 1995). Academic disidentification may be a greater risk for gifted males who are in a general-education setting, which may explain their lower graduation rate, if they left the gifted program. Indeed the gifted program in this study seemed to have some academically protective factors for an gifted African-American male.

Graduation outcomes were not notably different for general-education students of low, median and high-income brackets. However, income does appear to be a factor in the graduation outcomes of gifted students. 100% of the higher-income gifted students graduated, period, end of story. The graduation rate for the median-income group of gifted was 90%, while the graduation rate for the lowest relative income group of gifted students was 85%.

When student income levels were examined for those in different placements in twelfth grade, the plot thickened. Lower-income students left the

gifted program at a rate of 58%, compared to a rate of 33% for the median-income, and 9% for the higher-income group. This result suggests that Income is one of the non-program factors that related to students' placements in twelfth grade. Higher- and median-income gifted students remained in the gifted program at a higher rate.

The tendency to leave the gifted program was highest for lower-income African-American females (58%). The graduation rate for lower-income African-American female gifted-program-leavers was 82%. The graduation rate for lower-income African-American female gifted-program-remainers was 100%. Mayer (1997) found that African-American children fare better on graduation rates compared to Caucasians in studies for which income was controlled. In light of Mayer's findings, this study appears to substantiate that for African-American gifted children especially, also analyzing whether kids receive special programs is crucial in determining graduation rates.

Finally, the examination of graduation rates by program did not include gifted- or general-movers, because there were no further data available concerning their academic progress. Therefore, the 98% graduation rate (n=74) for gifted-program-remainers refers only to the number of gifted students who remained.

The pattern of attrition for the gifted- and general-program-movers is beyond the boundaries of the research question posed here. However, due to the importance of such an inquiry, Table 74 and Table 75 are included here. It demonstrates the final destination of the students involved in this study. Of the



287 students involved, information for all but six is given concerning their placement in twelfth grade by program identification, race and gender.

**Table 73**

**General-Education Students' Placement in What Should Have Been Their Twelfth Grade Year**

Placement	African American				Caucasian				Total	
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Total	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Private School	1	3	0	0	3	18	3	13	7	7
Moved out of city	3	9	1	4	6	35	10	43	20	20
Moved out of state	1	3	2	7	0	0	0	0	3	3
Non-gifted neighborhood school	16	46	11	41	2	12	2	9	31	30
Alternative program	4	11	4	15	3	18	3	13	14	14
Other magnet program	8	23	6	22	1	6	2	9	17	17
Home schooled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No recorded destination	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	2	2
Withdrawn due to non-attendance	2	6	2	7	1	6	0	0	5	5
Continuation school	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	1
Gifted program	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	1
Prison or juvenile detention center	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total Number	35	100	27	100	17	100	23	100	102	100
Total Percent	34%		26%		17%		23%		100%	

**Table 74**

**Gifted Students' Placement in What Should Have Been Their Twelfth Grade Year**

Placement	African American		Caucasian		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Count	Col %
Private School	1	2	4	9	11	13
Moved out of city	7	11	6	13	32	33
Moved out of state	2	3	0	0	3	5
Non-gifted neighborhood school	17	26	9	20	1	27
Alternative program	3	5	3	7	2	8
Other magnet program	8	12	2	4	3	11
Home schooled	0	0	0	0	0	1
No recorded destination	0	0	1	2	0	1
Withdrawn due to non-attendance	1	2	0	0	3	2
Continuation school	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gifted program	25	38	20	44	47	75
Prison or juvenile detention center	0	0	0	0	3	1
Unknown	1	2	0	0	3	2
Total Number	65	100	45	100	38	100
Total Percent	35%		24%		21%	100%

## **Question Two**

The second research question considered differences in selected demographic, home, social, and school factors between gifted students who remained in a self-contained gifted placement through high school graduation, and those who did not, in comparison to their general-education peers. Results for research question two are organized by demographics, home variables, school variables and social variables.

### **Demographic Variables**

The demographic variables of race and gender were considered by educational program placement. There were no significant differences in the proportion of races or genders between the two groups, general-education or gifted students. The proportions of gifted and general-education student groups were very similar for race and gender.

### **Home Variables**

The results of home variables provide a further profile of the student more at risk to leave the gifted program and less likely to graduate. This student is more likely to be poor and from a single parent family. The group of gifted-program-leavers also tended to include more students who experienced one or more guardianship changes. In comparison, fewer of the gifted-program-remainers were from single parent families, while a higher percentage of general-movers were from single-parent families. Initial results relating family constellation to program outcome differ from Gurin and Epps' (1975) earlier research, which found that African-American students' achievement did not relate

to their family constellation. However, if further analyses to discern the percentage of African-Americans from single-parent families who were gifted-program-remainers were carried out, the results might qualify their findings.

The approach of obtaining household incomes of urban minority gifted students from census tract data by neighborhood, to identify school outcomes by income group addresses research concerns about the effects of household income on school outcomes (Wilson, 1987, Ellwood, 1988, and Smeeding and Rainwater, 1995). Researchers have long called attention to the effects of a neighborhood culture of poverty and of poverty itself on school outcomes. Our current knowledge base is inadequate in this area.

This study found household income also played a role in gifted students' remaining in the gifted program. The mean household income of \$21,504 for gifted-program-leavers was by far the lowest of all student groups. Although mean household income was not significant in predicting graduation rate among general-education students, the non-graduating gifted students were among those who lived in the poorest neighborhoods, with a mean HHI of \$18,722. Students with higher household incomes tended to remain in the gifted program, while lower-income students left, and median-income students to a somewhat lesser extent left the gifted program.

The categorical measure of poverty (below poverty level to 20% above=\$9,920 to \$17,360 for the year; and non-poverty or 20% above poverty level=\$17,361+) to the student outcomes of remaining in the gifted program and graduating adds to the portrait of risk. Living in poverty significantly increased a

gifted student's risk for leaving the gifted program. About one-fourth (23%) of the gifted-program-remainders lived in poverty, while about one-third (31%) of the gifted-movers were in the poverty group. Fifteen percent of the gifted students and 13% of the general-education students who were in the poverty group did not graduate.

Anderson (1994) has called attention to our lack of knowledge about resiliency factors for successful African-American urban students. These results suggest being enrolled in a gifted program provides an increased resiliency to a gifted student living in poverty. Enrollment in the gifted program also increased the gifted student's chances of remaining in the school district. Twenty percent of the gifted students who left the school district were in the poverty group, compared to 50% of the general-education students who left the school district

Brooks-Gunn and colleagues (1995) noted that the dynamics of social strata and student outcomes had not yet been separated. Seeley (1993) related lower achievement, especially dropping-out, to factors related to poverty, not race. According to Evans (1993) and Shade (1994) lack of analysis of school outcomes for middle-class gifted African-American and Caucasian students is a deficiency in our current knowledge base. Graham (1989) asserted that middle-class African-Americans have been ignored in literature in many areas, especially education. This study included a relatively large group of gifted, urban, minority students who at an early age were living in either poverty neighborhoods or middle class neighborhoods.

While 15% of the lower income gifted students did not graduate, an unexpected finding was that 10% of the middle class students also did not graduate. In comparison, all of the higher-income gifted students graduated.

Graham (1989) concluded that race and social class are confounded variables, when she could not account for the disparities between patterns for lower-SES African-Americans and Caucasians as compared to their higher-SES counterparts. One could ask why are the gifted students in this study, who have moderated household income relative to their group, failing to graduate at a rate similar to that of the lower-income group? Non-income risk factors, such as the risk for academic disidentification (Ogbu, 1986, 1994; Osborne, 1997; Steele, 1992; Steele and Aronson, 1995) seems to be a factor here.

The data from this study confirms initial information about patterns of achievement and possible academic disidentification of African-American girls. Median-relative income female gifted students comprised 15% of gifted-program-leavers, while only 8% were gifted-program-remainders. These indications of a different causal reason other than risk factors associated with income, for African-American girls to leave the gifted program, further validates Fordham's (1986, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1996) assertions that African-American girls are under a different social pressures than their male counterparts or other racial groups. By comparison, African-American males from the median-relative-income group were among the gifted-program-leavers and gifted-program-remainders at the same rate of 13%.

Johnson and colleagues (1991) emphasized the need to consider outcomes for inner-city students whom they considered to be mired in the deepest poverty. The next step in filling in the gap of sorely needed information about gifted-students would be to analyze this data to consider the student outcomes for the very poorest subset of urban-gifted children by race and gender.

### Social Variables

Given the fact that 55% of the identified gifted students left the gifted program by the end of seventh grade and an additional 31% left after entering high school in ninth grade, it is necessary to consider social factors relevant to those school years. For middle school participation in middle school extra-curricular arts activities only was considered, for which gifted-program-remainers, who averaged one and a half activities (1.5) per student, were most involved. General-movers (1.0) and gifted-movers (1.2) were also more involved, averaging a little over one activity per student in these groups. In comparison, gifted-leavers (0.8) and general-program-remainers (0.9) participated in less than one activity per student.

Therefore the students in the gifted program and surprisingly, the ones who left the district (gifted-movers), regardless of program, were very involved in after school group activities. The gifted-program-leavers were least involved, suggesting some disenfranchisement from their gifted peers. They were similar in their pattern of social involvement to the general-education group that remained.



There was also a consistent difference in levels of middle school participation by race and gender. Overall, females were more involved than males. However, African-American females were two times more involved than Caucasian females. No matter which program male students were in, or whether they remained or left, African-American males' participation was double that of Caucasian males. Considering that in this school district Caucasians were the numerical minority, this result may relate to the willingness of students to become socially involved in a setting where they are the majority or minority. The students interviewed from the qualitative sample reinforced this hypothesis.

The pattern of participation in high school arts activities was different from that in middle school. All African-American students, regardless of program were more involved in an average of one to two activities per student, except for the general-movers, who were significantly less involved at a rate of less than one activity per student. A further analysis of this data that might prove beneficial for identifying appropriate interventions would be to relate income and family factors for this group of general-education African-American males who left the district.

Caucasian students, on the other hand, averaged more than three high school arts activities per student for gifted-program-remainers and gifted-movers. Clearly being enrolled in the gifted program engaged these groups socially. Caucasian general-gifted-remainers were also involved at a lesser, but fair rate of one arts activity per student. However, the most disenfranchised group apparent from this aspect of the data was the Caucasian general-program-

remainders, who averaged less than one half an activity per student and the gifted-program-leavers, who averaged a half an activity per student.

The differing patterns of involvement as they were considered by later placement in twelfth grade affirm Simmons and Blyth's (1987) findings that transitions in middle school especially, but also in high school, were very crucial points for students and that extra-curricular involvement had implications for later academic progress. Gifted students who left the gifted program were less involved in arts activities. Evans (1993) and Seeley's (1993) found that when school environments do not meet student needs a result may be a cycle lower achievement. Borland's asserts (1989) that we must find defensible programs and interventions for target-gifted populations.

Interestingly, and unexpectedly, high school sports extra-curricular activity participation did not differentiate gifted or general-education, African-American or Caucasian and male or female students.

Simmons and Blyth (1978), Osborne (1995, 1997), Ash and Huebner (1998) have suggested that middle school transition is the most critical and stressful period in a student's school career. For example, Simmons and Blyth found this to be a period of rapid lowering of self-esteem for Caucasian females. Osborne found the period between middle school transition and high school to be the period of the greatest disidentification with academics for African-American males. Therefore, all students in this study were given a survey to identify and to measure the level of their concern prior to entering middle school, on which they identified areas that concerned them the most.

Although, high to moderate level of overall concern and anxiety was evident for all students, there were differences between gifted and general-education students. Results also differentiated between different racial groups of students by program placement in twelfth grade.

All groups of gifted-program-remainers had expressed less concern about making the transition to middle school than their peers who left the gifted program prior to twelfth grade or general-education students. However, Caucasian followed by African-American gifted-program-remainers expressed the least concern. Therefore, the gifted students who remained in the gifted setting through their senior year in high school identified themselves at this early point in their academic career as confident and secure.

It is also remarkable that Caucasian, followed by African-American general-program-remainers expressed the greatest level of concern about the upcoming transition. General education at the middle school level was perceived by this group of students as very intimidating. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Caucasian gifted-movers expressed a greater level of concern than Caucasian gifted-program-leavers, while African-American gifted-movers and gifted-program-leavers shared the same level of concern. For the Caucasian students being a minority within a larger setting may have been more anxiety provoking.

These results suggest

1) African-American students were probably leaving the gifted program for different reasons than the Caucasian students, 2) Middle school students are

able to identify areas of individual concern that relate to later academic progress and placements, and 3) If middle school transition concerns are addressed and appropriate interventions are pursued, the course of a student's academic career may be changed as measured by changes in program placement in twelfth grade.

Moreover, it would be beneficial to analyze the results of the student surveys in order to understand concerns that may be associated with different races, genders, family constellations and economic stratas. Taylor (1991) reports that peer group affiliation is important in the development of self-identity. Further analysis of the "Transition to Middle School Survey" by peer group affiliation may provide more information about why gifted students remained or left their program placement.

### School Variables

Three measures of elementary academic achievement were considered, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) for fourth grade math and fifth grade science, grades (reading and math grades first through fifth, and science grades for grades fourth and fifth) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading and math percentile ranks for grades first through fifth. Each was analyzed and reported separately by gender, race and placement in twelfth grade. The expectation was that each measure would add information to complete an intact profile of the students involved and therefore were analyzed by race, gender and student placement in twelfth grade. The findings were disparate and unexpected.

One unexpected finding was that the MEAP fourth grade math test did not significantly differentiate any student group from another. The general-program-remainers' mean score was slightly higher than that of the gifted-program-remainers and the gifted-program-leavers. The lowest mean MEAP math score was attained by the gifted-movers.

The second unexpected outcome was that the MEAP fifth grade science test differentiated student groups by race only. The mean MEAP science score for African-American students (79.39%) was lower than the score attained by Caucasians (85.68%).

In contrast to the MEAP score means attained, the mean reading grades significantly differentiated student groups by their outcomes. For example, gifted students, consistently scored higher, than general-education students. It also differentiated students by race and gender. Moreover, the analysis of math grades, science grades and ITBS scores yielded similar results: there were distinctly different outcomes by student group.

Questions arise from this lack of significant differences between student groups on the MEAP math scores and the distinctions made by race only on the MEAP science scores. What is different about the MEAP fourth grade math test that causes student group outcomes to be similar on this measure regardless of consistent and significant differences by group on other measures such as grades or standardized achievement test scores? Why does the MEAP science test distinguish by race, but not by program placement?

These are important questions to answer due to the emphasis placed upon state assessments. For example by Title I regulations it is necessary for a public school to make expected progress in order to receive continued Title I funding for Title Services, such as remedial reading. When public schools do not make the expected progress, they are placed in a school improvement category. There are three improvement categories: targeted, focused and intensive. If a school continues on a course of inadequate academic progress, their status is categorized, as intensive and the school must take corrective action.

The measure of adequate yearly progress in the State of Michigan, for example, is the Michigan Educational Assessment Program's (MEAP) fourth grade scores for elementary and seventh grade MEAP scores for middle school. The intensive category is defined as three consecutive years where a school has not improved at least 10% on two or more of four MEAP tests.

With this much pressure and so much at stake, are preparations for the MEAP treated differently in the school setting? Are students more prepared for these tests than for other measures like the ITBS? If so, over-learning the test might account for like scores for all student groups on the math component. Another explanation might be that the MEAP is a criterion-referenced test, which could account for similar performance among student groups, especially if essential concepts of this high-stakes test were reinforced and over-practiced in the schools.

Over-learning may be a reasonable explanation for the MEAP math results, but how would that relate to the science test's differentiation by race?

Could it be that the MEAP science test measures more than classroom learning and achievement. If instead it measured general knowledge, prior knowledge which is environmentally sensitive, or involved interpretation of information given in standard English, would this disadvantage some groups and advantage others? Would an urban school district, where the majority of the student population has minority status such as the one in this study, be at greater risk for lack of adequate progress by state standards due to test bias? Considering the importance placed on state assessment measures, it is necessary to ask and pursue answers to these questions.

The third unexpected finding among the school variables measured was that reading and science grades differentiated consistently by program group, gender and race, while math grades differentiated by program group and race. Gifted students attained higher grades than general-education students in all subject areas. Caucasians scored higher than African-Americans on the three subject areas also. Females attained higher grades in reading and science. These results have implications for best practice in the school setting. For example, if girls are getting higher grades in science in elementary, how can schools encourage their continued interest beyond graduation? Shouldn't it follow that one would later find girls present in greater numbers working in the field of science?

Both grades and standardized test scores vary by grade, program placement, race and gender. Variation by program placement in each set of variables was expected, but differentiation by grade level, and to a greater

extent, by race and gender was not expected. Fluctuations in scores and grades by level calls into question curriculum consistency and quality. Variation by race and gender is more difficult to explain. One would certainly hope that schools do not differentiate student achievement by attributes associated with racial, ethnic or gender characteristics. Further exploration of the data may reveal more explanations for these unexpected outcomes.

The fourth unexpected finding is informal, going beyond the scope of analyses initiated here. Although analyzing the covariance of grades and standardized test scores was beyond the scope of the present study, at first glance, the apparent difference in grades compared to ITBS scores by student group in this initial review suggests that each may be measuring a different outcome. It appears that the pattern of grades and ITBS scores do not relate consistently. Grades and standardized test scores seem to vary in an inconsistent pattern across groups. Further analysis would be beneficial to consider more carefully the relationship of grades to standardized test scores for student groups by race and gender. Grades may reflect the teacher's attitude towards a student's behavior in the classroom, rather than academic progress only. The fact that grades may vary within each grade level and from standardized tests by race or gender poses a troubling question about what the grades recorded in this study really measured.

Patterns of absence and retention were evident by program placement in twelfth grade, with gifted-program-remainders missing the least number of days and all groups of gifted students having a lower retention rate. This result



suggests that gifted students were invested and eager to be present. It has implications for how gifted students felt about their peer group, the curriculum and their commitment to optimal education. It suggests that gifted students enrolled in a self-contained gifted program for even a portion of their academic careers have better overall outcomes. This is an important result.

### **Question Three**

The richness of the information and perspectives on a multiplicity of issues, solicited and non-solicited from gifted students who were interviewed for the qualitative piece of this study was highly revealing. The insight gained from interviewing thirteen young people about their school and life experiences was invaluable. It clarified findings and trends in the quantitative results and posed new questions not previously considered by this researcher.

All gifted students interviewed, and especially African-American students, described greater peer acceptance of the pursuit of high academic achievement in the gifted classroom setting. The interviews confirmed Coleman's (1995) assertion that research of self-contained settings, which were encouraged, would find that reinforcement of the group identification with like peers who value intellectual pursuits together leads to positive academic outcomes for gifted students. Moreover, the students' comments confirmed Whitmore's (1980) earlier findings about the successful Cupertino project for gifted students: building gifted peer support for academic achievement leads to identification with like peers and with high academic aspirations. For many students the forced choice dilemma (Cross et al., 1993; Gross, 1989, Tannenbaum, 1993) refer

concerning gifted students choice between acceptance by average peers and pursuit of high achievement was a real issue when they were in general classroom settings, but became a non-issue in the gifted classrooms.

The 100% agreement among all interviewees about the difficulty of the transition to middle school supported the quantitative finding that this is the critical period when the majority of students left the gifted program. The interviews describe changes in the program structure, which should be examined more carefully. The students seemed to view it as a period of time when they were less supported by staff. Moreover, the sharing of non-academic classes with general-education students was a new experience for many, perhaps one for which they were not prepared. Whatever the reasons, middle school was qualitatively different for most of the students interviewed. This should be considered with careful scrutiny in future analyses of these data and in future research.

The individual life stories tied in personal loss, family difficulties and health issues with the fabric of quantitative results describing group outcomes. The stories described for some how the school neglected to intervene, or that it lacked the resources to meet expressed needs. One thing is sure. The interviews provide evidence that defining at-risk students and then intervening at an individual level would result in retention of more students and assurance of better overall outcomes.

One final and troublesome outcome of the interviews was the repeated reference to subtle differences in treatment of students by race and gender.

Gifted students described their experiences and concerns somewhat, but mainly described differential treatment of students in general education. Students painted a portrait of differing behavior patterns by racial and ethnic identity that in turn elicited differential responses from staff. There seems to be an urgent need for further research consideration to determine the role of institutional expectations upon student outcomes such as grades.

## **Conclusion**

The self-contained homogeneous placement of urban and minority gifted students in a gifted program provided a secure setting for self-expression and an academic climate encouraging of achievement. Overall academic outcomes such as grades, standardized test scores, attendance and grade promotion were higher for gifted students who were enrolled in the program sometime during their school career than for general-education students. Overall graduation rate was higher for gifted students who remained in the gifted program than for those gifted who left for general-education classes, or for general-education students.

Non-program factors related to dropping out of the gifted program and to lower graduation rates. For example, poor gifted students had lower graduation rates and dropped out of the gifted program at a higher rate. Gifted students' retention in the program and graduation rates varied by race and gender. At an individual level, family support and access to technology in the home seemed to be a factor in program retention. Transition to middle school was especially problematic for gifted students, while transition to high school is also stressful.

The majority of the gifted students, who exited the program, did so at these critical points. There is little school intervention in these areas.

This study affirms that enrollment of gifted students in a self-contained gifted program has positive benefits for self-esteem, academic achievement and graduation rate. Quantitative and qualitative results affirm these overall findings. Moreover, results clarify the reasons why addressing the issue of appropriate and effective academic program formats for identified urban and minority gifted students is necessary in planning for the development of their full potential. Future research should include further thoughtful consideration by gender and race of factors associated with urban and minority-gifted students' risk and resiliency for school outcomes highlighted by this study.

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

**OVERVIEW OF THE GIFTED MAGNET SELECTION/PLACEMENT PROCESS  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (KINDERGARTEN/ FIRST GRADE),  
ELEMENTARY (SECOND-SIXTH GRADE)  
AND MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL (SEVENTH -TWELFTH GRADE)**

**OVERVIEW OF THE GIFTED MAGNET SELECTION/PLACEMENT PROCESS  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (KINDERGARTEN/ FIRST GRADE),  
ELEMENTARY (SECOND-SIXTH GRADE)  
AND MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL (SEVENTH -TWELFTH GRADE)**

**Overview of the Selection Process for  
Kindergarten/First Grade  
Gifted Magnet Program**

**I. Search**

To locate eligible Kindergarten and First Grade Students for the gifted program the School Magnet Office distributes a flyer throughout the community asking for nominations/referrals of bright preschoolers for the program. The flyer is sent to all Pre-K teachers, day care centers, church schools, the public library, the institute of arts and other organizations, which have contact with 4-6 year-olds. The flyer is also made available in Spanish and other languages.

**II. Nomination**

A. Parents, Pre-K and day care providers, teachers, administrators, grandparents, physicians, etc. can nominate/refer a student for the Gifted/Talented Magnet Program.

B. All nominations/referrals are to be sent to the Magnet Programs Office.

C. The Magnet Office will provide information regarding the application.

**III. Screening Process**

A. Parents will fill out an application form and a Parent Questionnaire. Phone interviews are available for parents needing assistance. Bilingual assistance is available.

B. The teacher will complete a Teacher Questionnaire on each nominated child.

C. A review sheet is prepared for the selection committee. Personal information (such as, name, address, school, race and gender) is coded and removed from the review sheet. The review sheet includes the following:

1. Scores from the Parent Questionnaire and a summary of parents' comments.
2. Scores from the Teacher Questionnaire and a summary of the teacher's comments.
3. Intelligence and achievement test scores from a licensed psychologist. (When necessary on the committee's recommendation.)
4. Student's birthrate.

#### IV. Identification/Selection

A. The selection committee is made up of twelve (12+) members. Committee members serve approximately three years. Every effort is made to achieve ethnic and gender balance of the committee. The committee composition includes the following representatives:

Administrators (2 or 3), Community members (1 or 2), Teachers (6 to 8) and Parents (1 or 2).

B. Committee members review information compiled from parent and teacher questionnaires, and test scores when available. Based on the information provided, the committee may decide that the student is eligible, not eligible, not eligible at this time, or that more information is needed.

C. Students are declared eligible by consensus of the selection committee.

D. If the committee decides that more information is needed before a recommendation can be made, they may request that a psychological assessment be made or that the child be interviewed by a specialist in young gifted children. Information from the assessment and/or the interview is then sent to the committee for consideration.

E. Students are declared ineligible by consensus of the selection committee.

1. Parents receive a letter indicating that the student is ineligible at this time.
2. Parents can ask for a conference and can reapply at a later date.

A folder for each applicant, eligible, or ineligible, is kept on file in the Magnet Office until the student completes ninth grade.



## **V. Placement**

A representative from the school contacts the parents of eligible students inviting them into the program. Students are placed with concern for race and gender balance in keeping with guidelines for the Gifted Magnet. Parents can arrange to visit a child's classroom by contacting the school ahead of time.

All efforts will be made to enroll students the week before school begins. If the child is currently in a regular kindergarten or first grade, parents should withdraw the student from the home school before enrolling in the new school.

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

### Teacher Questionnaire for Early Childhood Screening

The school is committed to helping each child develop to his/her  
greatest

potential.

The child whose name appears on the enclosed questionnaire has been nominated in a search for young children with advanced abilities.

We would appreciate your assistance by filling out the enclosed questionnaire that will provide us with more information on this child. Please read each of the following questions and circle the best response. **Add narrative comments that will elaborate on your observations, if you wish.**

This questionnaire needs to be returned as soon as possible and no later than: \_\_\_\_\_.

To: Magnet Programs

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Soc. Sec. Number \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

School (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not the child's parent, how long have you known the child? \_\_\_\_\_

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Questionnaire**

1. Does the child express self will?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the child remember easily what he/she has learned?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the child recognize words without help?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the child learn new concepts more quickly than agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the child have an early interest in books and stories?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the child demonstrate language skills at an early age?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the child get involved in projects of his/her own choosing for long periods of time?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Does the child like to do things well and set high standards for self?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the child appear curious and ask meaningful questions about many topics?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is the child concerned about fairness, justice, right and wrong?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the child question your decisions?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is the child sensitive to the needs of others?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the child have an unusual awareness of his/her surroundings and what is going on around him/her?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does the child enjoy "grown up" things and playing with older children?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does the child tend to organize playmates, activities and situations?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Does the child have an unusual sense of humor?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the child suggest imaginative ways of doing things?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does the child like to find a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does the child use common materials in ways not typically expected?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

- A. List any special talents that you have observed in the child.

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- B. What other things would you like us to know about the child?

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- C. Please describe any early indications of high ability that you observed in the child.

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- D. Can this child's needs be adequately met in his/her home school's program? Please explain.

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- E. Are there any siblings in a gifted program now, or were there in the past? Where?

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**PARENTS:**

- F. If your child meets the criteria for the gifted program, are you interested in a possible placement? \_\_\_\_\_

**Overview of the Selection/Placement Process for  
ELEMENTARY (2-6 Grades) GIFTED MAGNET PROGRAM**

**I. IDENTIFICATION/NOMINATION**

- A. Students are nominated for the gifted program by parents, teachers, administrators or are discovered by a district-wide search of test scores.
  - 1. Nominations by parents are usually made by telephone or in person.
  - 2. Teachers and administrators in the elementary schools can nominate students by sending a memo to the Enrollment Technician.
  - 3. Nominations have been received from interested others, such as, pediatricians, ophthalmologists, psychologists, grandparents, etc.
  - 4. The Magnet Enrollment Technician searches through the results of the standardized test scores for the names of students who show academic potential.

**II. SELECTION PROCESS**

- A. Parents are notified by mail and are asked to fill out an application form and a Parent Questionnaire.
- B. The classroom teacher receives a Teacher Questionnaire which is to be filled out and returned to the Magnet Office.
- C. A review sheet is prepared for the selection committee. It includes the following:
  - 1. Scores from the Parent Questionnaire and a summary of parent comments.
  - 2. Scores from the Teacher Questionnaire and a summary of teacher comments.
  - 3. Grade equivalency and percentile ranks from previous standardized test scores.
- D. Personal information, such as name, address, school, race and

sex, is coded and removed from the review sheet.

- E. Selection meetings for elementary (2-6) take place four (4) times a year—August, October, January, and May.

**III. SELECTION COMMITTEE**

- A. The selection committee is made up of twelve (12+) members.
  - 1. Administrators (2 or 3)
  - 2. Teachers (6 to 8)
  - 3. Community members (1 or 2)
  - 4. Parents (1 or 2)

- B. Committee members serve approximately five years.

IV. SELECTION DECISION

- A. Students are declared eligible on consensus of the committee.

- 1. Parents are notified that the student is eligible.
  - 2. The names of the students are placed on a "waiting" list.

- B. If the committee decides that more information is needed before a

recommendation can be made they may request that a psychological assessment be made, that a portfolio of the child's work be submitted or that the child be interviewed by a specialist in gifted children. Information from further assessment is then sent back to the selection committee for further consideration.

- 1. Parents receive a form letter indicating that the student is ineligible at this time.
  - 2. They can ask for a conference and can re-apply at a later date.

- C. A folder for each eligible and ineligible student will be kept on file in

the Magnet Office until the student is finished with ninth grade.

V. PLACEMENT

- A. In keeping with the guidelines for all Magnet Programs the Magnet Officer will monitor the placement of students in an attempt to ensure a balanced program by race and sex.

The following criteria will be used for placement --

- 1. Date of application/selection.
  - 2. Space in the program.
  - 3. Race and gender balance in the classrooms.

**B. A representative of the schools will contact the parent by phone or**

**by letter when space is available.**

- 1. If a sibling is accepted into the program placement will be given special consideration.
  - 2. Students who have been in a gifted program in another city/state should be referred to the Magnet Office of possible placement. When a student has been in a program which has a comparable selection process, she/he can be placed as soon as there is space.



Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MAGNET APPLICATION/REFERRAL**

**ELEMENTARY FULL-TIME – GIFTED PROGRAM**

**STUDENT SOC. SEC. #** \_\_\_\_\_ **STUDENT #** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Middle

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City/State

Zip Code

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Home)** **CURRENT GRADE LEVEL:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Work)** **DATE OF BIRTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MALE** \_\_\_\_\_ **FEMALE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of:**

**Race:** B \_ W \_ I \_ L \_ O \_

**MOTHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**FATHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDDLE SCHOOL AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** please read the overview of the selection process for elementary gifted students.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent Questionnaire for Gifted Program Screening

The school is committed to helping each child develop to his/her  
greatest potential.

The child whose name appears at the bottom of this page has been nominated in a search for children with advanced abilities.

We would appreciate your assistance by filling out the enclosed questionnaire which will provide us with more information on this child. Please read each of the following questions and circle the best response. **Add narrative comments which will elaborate on your observations, if you wish.**

This questionnaire needs to be returned as soon as possible and no later than: \_\_\_\_\_.

To: Magnet Programs

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Soc. Sec. Number \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

School (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Questionnaire**

1. Does the child express self well?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the child remember easily what he/she has learned?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the child reading beyond agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the child learn new concepts more quickly than agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the child have an early interest in books and stories?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the child demonstrate language skills at an early age?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the child get involved in projects of his/her own choosing for long periods of time?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Does the child like to do things well and set high standards for self?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the child appear curious and ask meaningful questions about many topics?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is the child concerned about fairness, justice, right and wrong?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the child question your decisions?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is the child sensitive to the needs of others?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the child have an unusual awareness of his/her surroundings and what is going on around him/her?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does the child enjoy "grown up" things and playing with older children?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does the child tend to organize playmates, activities and situations?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Does the child have an unusual sense of humor?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the child suggest imaginative ways of doing things?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does the child like to find a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does the child use common materials in ways not typically expected?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

- A. List any special talents that you have observed in the child.

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- B. What other things would you like us to know about the child?

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- C. Please describe any early indications of high ability that you observed in the child.

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- D. Can this child's needs be adequately met in his/her home school's program? Please explain.

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- E. Are there any siblings in a gifted program now, or were there in the past? Where?

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**PARENTS:**

- F. If your child meets the criteria for the gifted program, are you interested in a possible placement? \_\_\_\_\_

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

### Teacher Questionnaire for Gifted Program Screening

The school is committed to helping each child develop to his/her  
greatest

potential.

The child whose name appears at the bottom of this page has been nominated in a search for young children with advanced abilities.

We would appreciate your assistance by filling out the enclosed questionnaire which will provide us with more information on this child. Please read each of the following questions and circle the best response. **Add narrative comments which will elaborate on your observations, if you wish.**

This questionnaire needs to be returned as soon as possible and no later than: \_\_\_\_\_.

To: Magnet Programs

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Soc. Sec. Number \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

School (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known the child? \_\_\_\_\_

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Questionnaire**

1. Does the child express self well?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the child remember easily what he/she has learned?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the child reading beyond agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the child learn new concepts more quickly than agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the child have an early interest in books and stories?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the child demonstrate language skills at an early age?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the child get involved in projects of his/her own choosing for long periods of time?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_



8. Does the child like to do things well and set high standards for self?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the child appear curious and ask meaningful questions about many topics?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is the child concerned about fairness, justice, right and wrong?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the child question your decisions?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is the child sensitive to the needs of others?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the child have an unusual awareness of his/her surroundings and what is going on around him/her?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does the child enjoy "grown up" things and playing with older children?
- |        |              |       |               |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
| Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Almost always |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------------|
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Does the child tend to organize playmates, activities and situations?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Does the child have an unusual sense of humor?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the child suggest imaginative ways of doing things?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does the child like to find a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does the child use common materials in ways not typically expected?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

- A. List any special talents that you have observed in the child.

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- B. What other things would you like us to know about the child?

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- C. Please describe any early indications of high ability that you observed in the child.

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- D. Can this child's needs be adequately met in his/her home school's program? Please explain.

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- E. Are there any siblings in a gifted program now, or were there in the past? Where?

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MAGNET APPLICATION/REFERRAL**  
**ELEMENTARY FULL-TIME GIFTED PROGRAM**

**STUDENT SOC. SEC. #** \_\_\_\_\_ **STUDENT #** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Middle

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City/State

Zip Code

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Home)** **CURRENT GRADE LEVEL:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Work)** **DATE OF BIRTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MALE** \_\_\_\_\_ **FEMALE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of**

**Race:** B \_\_ W \_\_ I \_\_ L \_\_ O \_\_

**MOTHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**FATHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**ELEMENTARY AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDDLE SCHOOL AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Please read the overview of the selection process for elementary gifted students.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Questionnaire**

1. Does the child express self well?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the child remember easily what he/she has learned?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the child recognize words without help?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the child learn new concepts more quickly than agemates?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the child have an early interest in books and stories?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the child demonstrate language skills at an early age?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the child get involved in projects of his/her own choosing for long periods of time?

Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Does the child like to do things well and set high standards for self?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the child appear curious and ask meaningful questions about many topics?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is the child concerned about fairness, justice, right and wrong?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the child question your decisions?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is the child sensitive to the needs of others?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the child have an unusual awareness of his/her surroundings and what is going on around him/her?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does the child enjoy "grown up" things and playing with older children?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always
- Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does the child tend to organize playmates, activities and situations?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Does the child have an unusual sense of humor?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the child suggest imaginative ways of doing things?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does the child like to find a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does the child use common materials in ways not typically expected?
- Seldom                      Occasionally                      Often                      Almost always

Please give example: \_\_\_\_\_

- A. List any special talents that you have observed in the child.

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- B. What other things would you like us to know about the child?

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- C. Please describe any early indications of high ability that you observed in the child.

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- D. Can this child's needs be adequately met in his/her home school's program? Please explain.

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- E. Are there any siblings in a gifted program now, or were there in the past? Where?

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**PARENTS:**

- F. If your child meets the criteria for the gifted program, are you interested in a possible placement? \_\_\_\_\_



**Overview of the Selection/Placement Process for**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL GIFTED MAGNET PROGRAM**

**I. NOMINATION**

- A. Students are nominated for the gifted program by parents, teachers, administrators or other students, or are discovered by a district-wide search of test scores.
  - 1. Nominations by parents are usually made by letter or telephone.
  - 2. Teachers in the elementary schools are asked to refer 4 or 5 sixth grade students.
  - 3. The Magnet Enrollment Technician searches through the results of the standardized test scores for the names of students who show academic potential.

**II. SELECTION PROCESS**

- A. Parents are notified by mail and are asked to fill out an application form and a Parent Questionnaire.
- B. The classroom teacher receives a teacher checklist (Characteristics of the Able Learner) which is to be filled out and returned to the Magnet Office.
- C. A review sheet is prepared for the committee. It includes the following:
  - 1. Scores from the Parent Questionnaire and a summary of parent comments.
  - 2. Scores from the teacher checklist that includes Creativity, Leadership/Social Awareness, Motivation and Learning Ability. Teacher comments are also summarized.
  - 3. Grade equivalency and percentile ranks from the fourth and fifth grade standardized test (Iowa Test of Basic Skills).
  - 4. Any other valid test scores.
- D. Personal information, such as, name, address, school, race and

sex, is coded and removed from the review sheet.

- E. The selection meeting for middle school takes place in late February or early March of each year. Students can be considered at other times of the year, but this is done on an individual basis.

**III. SELECTION COMMITTEE**

- A. The selection committee is made up of twelve (12+) members.
  - 1. Administrators (2 or 3)
  - 2. Teachers (6 to 8)

3. Community members (1 or 2)
  4. Parents (1 or 2)
  - B. Committee members serve approximately five years.
- IV. **SELECTION DECISION**
- A. Students are declared eligible if they receive 60% or more votes.
    1. Parents receive a form letter stating that the student is eligible.
    2. The names of the students are placed on a "waiting" list.
  - B. Students are ineligible if they receive less than 60% of the votes.
    1. Parents receive a form letter indicating that the student is ineligible at this time.
    2. They can ask for a conference and can re-apply.
  - C. A folder for each eligible and ineligible student will be kept on file in the Magnet Office until the student is finished with ninth grade.

V. **PLACEMENT**

- A. The district offers a Gifted Magnet for middle school students at two sites. Sixth grade students, who are enrolled in the elementary gifted program at two of the district schools are automatically qualified for placement in the middle school classes. In keeping with the guidelines for all Magnet Programs, the Magnet Office will monitor the placement of students in an attempt to ensure a balanced program by race and sex.

The following guidelines will be used in the assignment of students to the two (2) program sites:

1. Students whose home schools are district schools will be placed in the program in their home school.
2. Students from other middle school attendance areas will be assigned by school to either program based on availability of space and program balance.
3. Whenever possible, consideration will be made to place children in the same family in the same program.
4. As a general rule, in order to maintain a balanced program, students from W and H will be assigned to W and L and M at L.

**B. Special Considerations**

1. Students who have been in a gifted program in another city/state should be referred to the Magnet Office for possible placement. When a student has been in a program,

- which has a comparable selection process, s/he can be placed in the program.
2. Students who have been through the selection process but have never been placed in the elementary program can re-apply for the middle school program.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**MAGNET APPLICATION**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL – GIFTED/TALENTED**

**STUDENT SOC. SEC. #** \_\_\_\_\_ **STUDENT #** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Middle

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City/State

Zip Code

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Home)** **CURRENT GRADE LEVEL:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Work)** **DATE OF BIRTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MALE** \_\_\_\_\_ **FEMALE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of**

**Race:** B \_ W \_ I \_ L \_ O \_

**MOTHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**FATHER OR GUARDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**ELEMENTARY AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**MIDDLE SCHOOL AREA** \_\_\_\_\_

**LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Once a student has been declared eligible for the gifted program,  
students are selected randomly by middle school quotas and by race.

No applications will be accepted for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade before August 1 of the  
School year in which the student will be a sixth grader.

Parent Signature

Date

## **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL FORM**

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sending School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Referral Date \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Age \_\_\_\_ Sex: F M

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
(circle one if step or foster parent)

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Present Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
(circle one if step or foster parent)

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Child entered Kindergarten at  
Age \_\_\_\_\_

### **STANDARDIZED TESTS**

#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Arithmetic</u>
<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<u>% Equivalent</u>	<u>% Equivalent</u>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Test-Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Test-Date

Many criteria should be considered in recommending students for the Gifted/Talented Program. Achievement scores in reading and math and scores on tests of intellectual potential should indicate the student has superior capability. In addition, please consider other qualities suggested with the recommendations for testing and referral.

### **GROUP TESTS OF INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Test – Date Given Scores: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Test – Date Given Scores: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **INDIVIDUAL TESTS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Test – Date Given Scores: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Why is this student being referred? Please list specific characteristics which indicate unusual potential:**

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**\*It is recommended that at least two teachers agree on reasons for referring the student. Use other side if needed.**

**Teacher Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Teacher Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ABLE STUDENTS\*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Able pupils evidence superior ability in one or more of the five areas listed below. No pupil is expected to demonstrate ability in all areas, but an analysis of strengths may indicate potential. It is important to note that these characteristics can be evidenced in both positive and negative ways and either manifestation is an indicator. Examples of negative indicators have been enclosed in parenthesis.

The classroom teacher who works daily with pupils is best qualified to make these observations. Place an X on the line beside each statement which BEST describes this pupil. If behavior has not been observed, leave line blank.

### A. CREATIVITY

- Displays intellectual playfulness; fantasizes; imagines; manipulates ideas by elaboration or modification. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is a high-risk taker; is adventurous and speculative. (Has different criteria for success.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Displays a keen sense of humor reflective of own cultural background. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is individualistic; does not fear being different. (Departs from peer norm in action and behavior.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Predicts from present information. \_\_\_\_\_
- Displays a curiosity about many things; has many hobbies. \_\_\_\_\_
- Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions. \_\_\_\_\_
- Responds emotionally to stories, events, and needs of others. \_\_\_\_\_
- Shows ability in oral expression. \_\_\_\_\_
- Demonstrates exceptional ability in written expression; creates stories, plays, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is sensitive to color, design, arrangement and other qualities showing artistic appreciation and understanding. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is sensitive to melody, rhythm, form, tonal coloring, mood and other qualities showing music appreciation. \_\_\_\_\_
- Demonstrates exceptional ability in one of the fine arts (underline area of strength): dancing, painting/drawing, sculpturing/clay modeling, instrumental or vocal music, role playing/drama. \_\_\_\_\_
- Demonstrates unusual ability in one of the practical arts (underline area of strength): handicrafts, wood, metal, print, design, mechanics. \_\_\_\_\_
- Demonstrates exceptional skill and ability in physical coordination activities. \_\_\_\_\_
- Shows interest in unconventional careers. \_\_\_\_\_



- Improvises with commonplace materials. \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. LEADERSHIP/SOCIAL AWARENESS**

- Accepts and carries responsibility; follows through with tasks and usually does them well. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is self confident with age peers; is usually well understood by them. (Can be self assertive and dominant.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Seems well liked by classmates and is looked upon as a Leader. (Needs peer approval and acceptance.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Shows developing understanding in how to relate to teachers and classmates. (Sometimes has a rebellious attitude.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Tends to dominate others and generally organizes and directs activities when involved in a group. \_\_\_\_\_
- Adapts readily to new situations; is flexible in thought and actions and is not disturbed when normal routine is changed. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is resourceful in solving day-to-day problems. \_\_\_\_\_
- Seems to enjoy being with other people; is sociable and prefers not to be alone. (Sometimes is a loner.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Takes initiative and shows independence of action. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is a social leader on playground and off campus. \_\_\_\_\_
- Deals effectively with deprivations, problems, frustrations or obstacles caused by the complexities of living conditions. \_\_\_\_\_

## **C. MOTIVATION**

- Evidences power of concentration. \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefers to work independently with minimal direction from teachers. (Resists directions.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Has tendency to organize people, things and situations. (Resists opinions of others; wants own way.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Is concerned with right and wrong, good and bad. (Makes decisions with little tolerance for shades of "gray".) \_\_\_\_\_
- Takes advantage of opportunities to learn and enjoys challenge. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is self-critical and strives for perfection. (Sometimes critical of others and not self.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Often is self-assertive. (Can be stubbornly set in ideas.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Requires little drill to grasp concepts; seeks other than routine tasks. (Needs to know reasons for activity.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Becomes absorbed and involved in certain topics or problems. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is persistent in task completion. (Sometimes unwilling to change tasks.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Likes structure and order but not rote procedures. (Is frustrated by lack of individual or group progress.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Is also motivated by a wide range of non-school subjects. \_\_\_\_\_

D. LEARNING

- Demonstrates verbal proficiency in small group problem solving tasks. \_\_\_\_\_
- Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level. \_\_\_\_\_
- Has verbal behavior characterized by "richness" of expression, imaginary, elaboration, and fluency in any language.(Sometimes Rambles on and on.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics beyond the usual interests of age peers. \_\_\_\_\_
- Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; tries to discover the how and why of things; asks many provocative questions; wants to know what makes things or people "tick". (Can be an annoyance in persisting to ask questions.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Has a ready grasp of underlying principles; can quickly make Valid generalizations about events, people or things. (Sometimes skeptical.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Looks for similarities and differences. \_\_\_\_\_
- Reads independently; does not avoid difficult material; may show a preference for biography, autobiography, encyclopedia, atlas, travel folk tales, poetry, science, history and drama. \_\_\_\_\_
- Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out and sees logical and common sense answers. \_\_\_\_\_
- Catches on quickly; retains and uses new ideas & information. \_\_\_\_\_
- Has a facility for learning English if bilingual. \_\_\_\_\_
- Is a keen and alert observer; usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc. than others. \_\_\_\_\_

\*Obtained through Allyn Arnold, Director, Los Angeles Unified School District, Mentally Gifted Minors, and Al Hatch.

List any special talents or skills you have observed in this student.

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General comments regarding this student.

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Teacher Signature

**PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Middle School Gifted Program**

**PLEASE RETURN  
AS SOON  
AS POSSIBLE**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following questionnaire by placing an X in the appropriate place according to the following scale of values.

1. If you have seldom or never observed this characteristic.
2. If you have observed this characteristic occasionally.
3. If you have observed this characteristic to a considerable degree.
4. If you have observed this characteristic almost all of the time.

Characteristic	1	2	3	4
1. Shows ability in oral expression.				
2. Asks a lot of questions.				
3. Likes to be involved in projects.				
4. Is able to organize ideas.				
5. Enjoys playing challenging games (chess) or solving puzzles				
6. Likes to be a leader.				
7. Is a conformist (Wants to be like other students).				
8. Has a well-developed sense of humor.				
9. Comes up with unusual solutions to problems.				
10. Can concentrate for long periods of time on one thing.				
11. Describes or explains things well.				
12. Is a keen and alert observer.				
13. Shows a sensitivity to the feelings of others.				
14. Likes to know <u>why</u> things happen.				
15. Can <u>complete</u> long or complicated tasks.				
16. Sees familiar things or situations in unusual ways or in greater depth.				
17. Gets along well with adults.				
18. Likes to read.				
19. Wants things his/her way.				
20. Is self-critical and strives for perfection.				
21. Capable but not using full potential.				
22. Has a large vocabulary.				
23. Gets along well with other children.				
24. Has difficulty getting started on new tasks.				

Characteristic	1	2	3	4
25. Is concerned with right and wrong, good and bad.				
26. Is a high risk taker, is adventurous.				
27. Spends time on school-related projects or activities which are not required.				
28. Improvises with commonplace materials.				
29. Becomes absorbed and involved in certain topics or problems.				

- a. List special talents or skills you have observed in your child.

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- b. Does your child have special lessons or training, such as music, art, dance, athletics, etc? \_\_\_\_\_

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- c. What is his/her attitude toward school? \_\_\_\_\_

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- d. How does your child spend his/her leisure time? \_\_\_\_\_

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e. What other things would you like us to know about your child? \_\_\_\_\_

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f. Why are you recommending that your child be considered for this program?

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**FOR THE STUDENT**

Answer one of the two questions below.

Why do you want to be in the middle school gifted program?

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**Name**

**OR**

Why do you think you were nominated for the middle school gifted program?

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**Name**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION**



## QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION

Dear Parents:

This is an important year for your sixth grade child, because this is the final preparation for Middle School. Planning is currently underway for a program to be held during the school day that will focus upon the transition to middle school. All sixth grade students in your child's classroom will participate in the Transition Day Program. Information about date and time will be published in the school newsletter.

To better evaluate the effectiveness of this program and of future sixth grade transition programs, students and parents are being asked to participate in an evaluation study. The school district would also like to research new methods to improve the entire school experience. You are invited to give permission for your son or daughter to be involved in this study.

Students who have parental consent will complete a questionnaire about making the transition to middle school. The questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. It will focus upon concerns about going to middle school and will help the district know more about issues that need to be addressed to help students make this important transition. Also to evaluate the effectiveness of our district in meeting the academic needs of all students, the academic progress, school activity participation and school enrollment information of students volunteering for the follow-up study, will be considered from time of enrollment through their school career. No identifying information of any student will be presented in any report or publication of results.

Information gathered will be used to increase our understanding of how to improve school programs to better meet the needs of our children. Results may be published and will be reported as a group, not individually. Participation in the study is voluntary. If you and your son or daughter consent to participation, please return the permission slip to his or her teacher. Students who do not return a signed permission slip will not be involved in the study. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Elizabeth Rose at \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely, Elizabeth Rose

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I give permission for my son\daughter \_\_\_\_\_ to be involved in the evaluation study.

I understand that this research will be used to better understand how the to improve the overall school experience of students and also, to understand how to better prepare them for the adjustment and transition to middle school.

I understand that results will be treated with confidence and that my child will remain anonymous in any published or unpublished report.

I understand that my child's participation in this study is purely voluntary and is not a school requirement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(parent signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

I agree to be a participant in this project.

I understand that my responses and personal information will be kept confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(student signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

## **APPENDIX C**

### **TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY**

## TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY

1. DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE ABOUT GOING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL?  
CIRCLE THE NUMBER.

<u>VERY</u>	<u>NOT AT ALL</u>
1          2          3          4          5	

2. DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS GOING TO THE SAME MIDDLE SCHOOL YOU ARE GOING TO?

<u>MANY</u>	<u>NONE</u>
1          2          3          4          5	

IF YES, ARE THEY FROM YOUR SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO  
ARE THEY FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

3. WHICH AREAS WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?  
PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER.

	<u>VERY INTERESTED</u>	<u>NOT INTERESTED</u>
MAKING FRIENDS	1   2   3	4   5
HOW TO AVOID FIGHTS	1   2   3	4   5
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	1   2   3	4   5
HOW TO STUDY TO GET BETTER GRADES	1   2   3	4   5
CHOOSING CLASSES	1   2   3	4   5
WHAT TEACHERS ARE LIKE	1   2   3	4   5
HOW MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS DESCRIBE IT	1   2   3	4   5
DIFFICULTY OF CLASSES	1   2   3	4   5

4. PLEASE CIRCLE ANY AREAS YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT  
IN MIDDLE SCHOOL:

	<u>VERY CONCERNED</u>	<u>NOT CONCERNED</u>
VIOLENCE	1   2   3	4   5
MAKING FRIENDS	1   2   3	4   5
NEW TEACHERS	1   2   3	4   5
GRADES, DIFFICULT CLASSES	1   2   3	4   5
FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND	1   2   3	4   5
DRUGS	1   2   3	4   5
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	1   2   3	4   5
CHOOSING CLASSES	1   2   3	4   5

## **APPENDIX D**

### **QUALITATIVE COMPONENT PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION**

## QUALITATIVE COMPONENT PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION

Dear Parents:

The ----- Schools is conducting interviews with a representative group of students from the Academically Talented/Gifted Program. This is part of the long-term study of which your child became a part, at the end of his/her sixth grade year. The purpose of this part of the project is to evaluate the program's effectiveness in meeting individual student's needs. We are asking for your permission to have an interview with your son or daughter to discuss aspects of the program we might improve.

*In order to participate you and your son or daughter must sign the consent form below. If you consent, please return the signed permission slip in the envelope provided.* Your son or daughter will be contacted by letter or by telephone for a time, date and place for the interview.

The interview will last less than an hour, and will include filling out questionnaires about your son's or your daughter's experience in the program. Each participant has the right to stop at any time during the interview or to pass over any questions that he or she does not wish to answer. Most interviews will take place at school or in a conference room at the Main Library, whichever is more convenient. Complete anonymity will be maintained in any published or unpublished reports.

*In appreciation of the time your son or daughter will be spending, a gift certificate to Border's Booksellers will be given to him or her.*

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Elizabeth A. Rose, at \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_, or Dr. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

-----  
I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ to be involved in an interview about his/her overall experiences with school and experiences with the Academically Talented/Gifted Program.

I understand that this research will be used to understand how the Academically Talented/Gifted Program may better meet students' needs.

I understand that information gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality .

I understand that participation in this study is purely voluntary and is not a school requirement.

---

parent signature

student signature

date

## **Appendix E**

### **STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW (SIQ)**



## STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW (SIQ)

### School

How would you rate your educational experience?

1	2	3	4	5
great	good	OK	poor	very poor

Prompt: (average to below) What could be better?

Prompt: (good or great) What made it so good?

Did your view of school change from elementary school to middle school, or from middle school to high school? How?

How were your teachers?

Is there one particular who stands out as very important to you? What did that person do?

Were there any events in high school or in middle school that interfered with your school performance? Was there one positive or one negative incident that changed you in some way?

What could the school do to improve the gifted program for bright students like yourself?

Prompt: (if no longer in the program) What could the school have done to have kept you from leaving the gifted program?

### Gifted Placement

At what point in your life were you defined as gifted and who identified your giftedness?

How do you think staying or leaving the gifted program in the Flint Schools made a difference in your education? ...in your life?

If you stayed in the gifted program, what helped you remain?

If you left the gifted program, how do you see it as an advantage, or as a disadvantage?

If you had a gifted child what would you do the same for him or her? What would you do differently?

### Peer Group

Has being in the gifted program helped you be accepted by your Caucasian friends and your African- American friends?

Where would you say most of your friends are from? School/ neighborhood/ other?

Of your close friends, who is the most like you? Why? Which friend is the most different from you? Why?

Some researchers say that one thing which interferes with high school performance is whether a student thinks it will make him or her more accepted by friends? What do you think about that? Has the opinion of your friends helped or hurt your school success?

### Family Structure and Stability . SES

Who lives in your household now?

Has the number of people in your household changed from elementary, middle school, or high school?

Prompt: If there was a change what was it?

What occupation do your parents or legal guardian have?

Prompt: Your mother, or your father?

Prompt: If not apparent, then your legal guardian?

Did anyone in your family go to college? If so, who?

### Future Aspirations from Home

If your parents were here and I could ask them, what would they say is their dream for you?

### Extra-curricular Activities

Are you working? How many hours? What is the primary reason why you are working?

What school-related activities were you in elementary/ middle school/ high school?

### Parent Participation

In what way were your parents involved in any of these activities?

How often did they come to see you?

Prompt: In what ways did-----participate?

Prompt: What did -----do in Elementary/ middle school/ high school?

Prompt:(if there was a change) What increased or decreased their involvement?

### Educational Supports At Home and in Community

What educational materials have been most important or most useful to you at home?

Which person in your family was most involved in your school activities? in your homework?

Who else cares about how well you did?

How did they encourage you?

Who would be most likely to financially support you in college?

What is your relationship to that person?

Were you the only one of your brothers and sisters in the gifted program?

Prompt: (If yes...) Did that help or hurt you in getting along with them?

### Security

If you were in a car accident, or in trouble, who would you call first? Who else would you call?

Do you ever feel unsafe at home or at school?

When was the first time, the most recent time and the worst time?

### Health/Attendance

Have you had any health problems growing up?

How often are you sick?

Prompt: times per week/ times per month/ times per year?

What is your school attendance like?

Compare your attendance in elementary, middle school and high school.

Prompt: Why did it change?

### Racial Prejudice

Do you think that there is a difference between the way minority and majority students are treated in school?

Did you experience racial prejudice in school? Could you describe one incident?

### Gender Differences

If you were a female instead of a male (or vice versa) how would it have been an advantage or a disadvantage?

### Talents

How do you see yourself in comparison to the average high school student in terms of ability?

What else, outside of school, are you really good at?

### Future Hopefulness

What do you hope to be doing in five years?

What do you plan to be doing in five years?

### Transition to Middle School and High School

Did you attend a transition to middle school program? What was it like?

What do you remember about making the transition to middle school? What kind of experience was it? Did anything prepare you for that experience?

What do you remember about your transition to high school? What kind of experience was it?

Did anything prepare you for that experience?

How was the transition to middle school different from the transition to high school?

### Identity

Who have you been told you are the most like and why?

Who are your heroes?

If your life could have been changed in any way, what would that be?

Other

What haven't I asked you that you would like to tell me?

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