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Leigh Austin  
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STUDENTS WHO ARE GIFTED  
AND PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHOICES THEIR PARENTS MAKE

by

LEIGH SHIPLEY AUSTIN  
B.A. Stetson University, 1979  
M. Ed. University of Central Florida, 1988

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the College of Education and Human Performance  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

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Major Professor: Suzanne Martin

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## **ABSTRACT**

Given the many school choices available to parents, there is a need to understand the reasons parents of a child who is gifted choose to keep their child in his/her current school. Parents' satisfaction with their child's school and their academic growth is essential to continued enrollment of the child in that school (Abdulkadiroglu, Angrist, & Pathak, 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school may be influenced by factors within the school as well as those factors outside of the school. The purpose of this study was to research factors that may influence the parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school. The research studied parental perceptions of academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education for their child who is gifted and the parents' willingness to keep their child who is gifted enrolled at their current school. The target group in the study was parents of children who are gifted and enrolled in a very large urban school district but did not include parents of children who are gifted and also have a disability.

The research included the analysis of a survey and follow-up interview questions with parents of a child who is gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district. There were 683 survey responses out of 4,401 total parents surveyed with a return rate of 16%. The low return rate is considered a limitation of the study and it is recommended to conduct additional research on the majority of parents who did not participate in the survey. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected parents of children who are gifted and enrolled in the very

large urban school district. The survey and interview data was coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

There were two research questions that guided the development of the research process and the analysis of data. The first question focused on indicators of parent satisfaction that included academic needs met, social and emotional needs met, and principal support for gifted education. The survey and interview data yielded mixed results with parents split between the belief that their child's academic needs were met, social and emotional needs were met, and that their child's principal was supportive of gifted education. The second research question considered the relationship between the three indicators of parent satisfaction and the parents' willingness to consider enrolling their child in a school solely for students who are gifted. The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the parents' belief that their child's academic needs were met and the parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. However, there was a lack of evidence to establish a relationship between parent's belief about their child's social and emotional needs or the parents belief that their child's principal was supportive of gifted education.

The implications of the study are numerous. There are enough parents willing to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted to support opening the school. The majority of the survey participants had elementary school children; therefore, consideration should be focused on opening an elementary school for students who are gifted. Long range planning is needed to determine how to support the school for students who are gifted as well as the impact of transferring the students from one school zone to the school for students who are gifted. The literature reflected the diverse nature of the parents' satisfaction with academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education and revealed that

when the parents' are satisfied it does not guarantee that the parent will keep their child enrolled in their current school. The need for on-going communication between the school and the parents are critical to keeping the student enrolled in their current school.

Further research is needed to determine the beliefs of parents with children who are gifted and identify themselves as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or another race since the majority of the survey participants were White. More research is also needed to determine the reasons why large numbers of parents would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted regardless of their satisfaction levels with school support. In addition, further research needs to be conducted to determine why parents would choose to keep their child enrolled in their current school when the parents believed their academic or social and emotional needs were not met or their principal was not supportive of gifted education.

This dissertation is dedicated to the incredible people in my life who provided immense amounts of support and belief in me. You are the wind beneath my wings.

Grover W. Austin, my loving husband

Tyler Dylan Edward Austin, my amazing son

Erma H. F. Shipley and George W. Shipley, my mother and father

George E. Shipley and Mirela Shipley, my brother and sister-in-law

David A. Shipley and Debby A. Shipley, my brother and sister-in-law

Margaret G. Austin, my mother-in-law

and

Kathy A. Sronce and Garry Sronce, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law

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It is my sincere wish that I have served as a good role model for many college-bound children in my circle of life. With a bit of curiosity, a lot of motivation and nonstop persistence a doctoral degree is a real possibility.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Statement of the Problem**

Given the many school choices available to parents, there is a need to understand the reasons parents of a child who is gifted choose to keep their child in his/her current school. School choice options come in many forms, including home occupancy in a specific school zone, school transfers, school vouchers, education savings accounts, and scholarship tax credits in lieu of school vouchers. For years, parents have chosen to move to neighborhoods with desirable school zones (Henig & Sugarman, 1999). A study conducted by Falbo, Glover, Holcombe, and Stokes (2005) found that when parents exercised school choice by moving into a desirable school zone, they expressed satisfaction with their child's school and academic progress. Some of the parents sought school transfers within the district; however, their satisfaction did not increase (Falbo, et al., 2005). Other parents used school vouchers to pay for tuition at a private school; while still others in states that adopted the education savings account opted to use the funds for private school tuition and approved educational expenses (Butcher, 2013). In a review of school voucher programs, the Center on Education Policy (2011) reported that both voucher parents and public school parents in a study of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program expressed high levels of satisfaction with their child's school (Center on Education Policy, 2011). Milwaukee was the first city to offer parents access to public education funds through school vouchers (Center on Education Policy, 2011). In a study of the Washington D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, parents who used the

opportunity scholarship voucher program expressed satisfaction with their child's school as well as the safety of the school (Wolf, et al., 2010). Washington D.C. initiated the nation's first voucher program supported through federal funds (Center on Education Policy, 2011).

School vouchers have been designed to allow access to the choice of private schools for all income levels, including those of middle-to-low income parents who may not be able to afford private school tuition (Center on Education Policy, 2011). As of January 2014, school vouchers were available in Washington, D.C. and 13 states including Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin (National Conference of State Legislators, 2014b). Arizona was the first state to offer an education savings plan, followed by Florida with the Personal Learning Scholarship Account, which is considered an education savings account (Corona, 2014). Parents in states with vouchers, educational savings plans, or personal learning scholarship accounts can use the funds provided to public schools for their children for use in non-public schools.

Scholarship tax credits are available to parents of children who are gifted in selected states. As of April 2014, there were 14 states (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia) offered scholarship tax credits. (National Conference of State Legislators, 2014a). The scholarship tax credit program requirements vary by state with the shared emphasis on permitting parents and businesses to utilize state taxes for use with private schools (National Conference of State Legislators, 2014a). In addition to individual state tax credit, qualified American taxpayers are permitted to claim educational tax benefits under the

American Opportunity Credit that allows for deductions of 40% of the allowable educational expenses (Internal Revenue Service, 2014).

The very large urban school district offers numerous school choice options. In 2012-13, the very large urban school district had 29 charter schools where parents could enroll their child. Parents could have requested a transfer to another school if the specific requirements were met. Opportunity Scholarships allow students to transfer to designated schools and are available to those children who are zoned to a school that received a failing grade or three consecutive years of earning a letter grade of D. (Florida Department of Education, 2014). McKay Scholarships are available to students who are gifted and also have an identified disability or are eligible for section 504 accommodations; allowing students to take their educational funds and use them for private school tuition. Parents with children in the very large urban school district may also apply for their child's acceptance in a school district magnet program. During the 2012-13 school year in the very large urban school district there were four elementary schools, four middle school magnet programs, and 16 high schools that offered magnet programs. The Office of Pupil Assignment in the very large urban school district provided 12 different methods during 2012-13 to transfer students from their zoned school to a designated school within the very large urban school district. Private school choice remained an option for those parents who could financially cover the cost of private school enrollment.

Studies have shown that motivation to perform well academically is not directly linked with high intellectual capabilities (Gottfried, Gottfried, Cool & Morris, 2005; McCoach & Siegle, 2003; Schick & Phillipson, 2009). In spite of high intellectual ability, some students are not sufficiently motivated to display their knowledge and capabilities on the required

schoolwork. Parental involvement, however, can play a role in student motivation and may have a positive effect. Studies of the impact of motivation on high-achieving and low-achieving students who are gifted reflected the importance of parental involvement (Baker, Bridger, & Evans, 1998; Ee, Moore, & Atputhasamy, 2003; Gentry & Owen, 2004; McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Some parents of children who are gifted expressed concern that they have more responsibility for their child's academic progress than parents of children not identified as gifted (Morawska & Sanders, 2009).

It is important to recognize the fact that schools benefit from the enrollment of students who are gifted. One benefit of maintaining enrollment of students who are gifted is that, according to Hattie's (2009) meta-analyses, students can learn from each other through reciprocal teaching; gaining valuable problem-solving and critical thinking skills by working with others of varied abilities. An additional benefit is that the students who are gifted may have a positive effect on school-wide student achievement which may also positively impact the school's accountability reports (Gallagher, 2007). In Florida, the school receives credit in the calculation of its school grade for each student who scores within the proficiency range on the standardized tests (Florida Department of Education, 2014).

Schools are held accountable for the progress of all children as an outcome of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, a federal law that includes a 14-year plan with a series of high-stakes accountability measures to improve student achievement. The reauthorization of the NCLB Act was not addressed by the United States (U.S.) Congress in 2011. As a result, in 2012 the Obama administration offered states waivers and flexibility to NCLB requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). These waivers allowed states to streamline the process of monitoring and reporting of required NCLB data. NCLB has



spotlighted the inequity of student subgroup performance with the requirement that all students be making progress toward or maintain grade level proficiency. NCLB requires school districts to monitor grade-level proficiency and adequate yearly progress for all students. Not only can schools benefit from the inclusion of students who require gifted services, but school grades reflect the standardized test performance of these students. In an attempt to provide additional support for students who are struggling to achieve proficiency, school administrators may lose sight of the fact that students who are high performing also need continued support to maintain academic growth beyond grade level proficiency. Students who are gifted may need challenging content in order to continue to grow academically (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, Purcell, Leppien, & Burns, 2002). An unintended consequence of NCLB is that a school administrator may appear unresponsive to the needs of students performing below grade level if support is provided also to students who are gifted (Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). “In an attempt to level the playing field, legislators in the United States have focused on making all the students achieve at moderate levels while inadvertently handicapping the most able” (Buchanan, Fox, & Martin, 2006, p. 127). In a study of parents who changed the school placement of their children who were gifted, Hishinuma and Nishimura (2000) found that the parents’ concerns about their children’s academic progress contributed to their request to move their children to a different school setting. Findings from the same study also suggested that parental interest in increased access to school guidance counseling at a specialized school for their child who is gifted was an important component of the child’s social and emotional wellbeing (Hishinuma & Nishimura, 2000).

Hattie (2009) suggests that in addition to individual student progress, a significant positive effect (0.74) exists when students engage in reciprocal teaching where students of

mixed abilities learn and grow through collaborative interactions with their peers.

Collaboration between gifted and non-gifted students benefits all students. The academic growth of each student may result in improved percentages of students scoring proficient and/or making adequate yearly progress that are calculated in the school grade.

From the parents' perspective, research also suggests that some parents of students who are gifted are unhappy with academic as well as social and emotional support provided by their children's current school (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Paul, Metcalf, & Legan, 2005). Brulles' and Winebrenner's (2012) research noted that some parents of students who are gifted have been withdrawing their children from public schools and enrolling them in charter and private schools. When considering school options afforded under NCLB, parents of children in low-performing schools as identified by NCLB have the same concerns for their child's academic progress as parents of students in high-performing schools (Howell, 2006).

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Parents' satisfaction with their child's school and their academic growth is essential to continued enrollment of the child in that school (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school may be influenced by factors within the school as well as by those factors outside of the school. The purpose of this study was to research factors that may influence the parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school. The research studied parental perceptions of academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' willingness to keep their child who is gifted enrolled at their current school. The target group in the study was parents of

children who are gifted but did not include parents of children who are gifted and also have a disability.

A winning scenario can happen in schools when students of mixed-ability levels learn together using differentiated instruction (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010) and reciprocal teaching (Hattie, 2009). The problem, however, as research reveals, is that if differentiation of instruction is happening at all, it is most used with students who are struggling and not with students who are gifted and working at least on grade level (Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Tomlinson, & Moon, 2005; Westberg & Dauoust, 2004). The belief that gifted students do not need differentiated instruction is a mistake (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010). According to Sternberg, Grigorenko, and Kidd (2005), intelligence develops over a period of time rather than at a fixed moment on an assessment. Parents, teachers, and school administrators are instrumental in the development of the child's gifted skills and abilities. School administrators desire to keep their students who are gifted enrolled in their schools for a variety of reasons, all of which focus on improved student achievement. The challenge comes in meeting the academic as well as social and emotional needs of the students who are gifted.

Students who are gifted must be prepared to compete in a 21st century economy where innovative thinking and problem-solving will be considered minimum criteria for employment at businesses around the globe (Wagner, 2008). Curiosity and imagination are essential as the U.S. transitions from the Information Age with knowledge workers to what Pink (2005) calls the Conceptual Age where workers are creators and empathizers who create patterns and make meaning out of the avalanche of information readily available. Students who are gifted have an increased capacity to develop such skills as innovative thinking, problem solving, curiosity, and imagination.

The U.S. economy is fueled by innovations that begin with product conceptualization through product development. The Economic Analysis and Research Network released a report in 2013 that contained findings reflecting economic prosperity for states based on their share of a college-educated workforce (Berger & Fisher, 2013). To prepare students for success in careers and college, the U.S. Department of Education (2014) supports states with increased student achievement through the Investing in Innovation Fund that promotes the development of innovative practices at schools. These innovative practices at schools are intended to serve as models for students to replicate when engaging rigorous strategies to solve problems and in the development of innovative thinking. “Giftedness is highly related to innovation and the economy” (Shavinina, 2013, p. 64). Innovators of tomorrow are among today’s students who are gifted (Shavinina, 2013). Educators, policy makers, and parents need to nurture what Gallagher (2005a) calls the *innovative minority* representing students who are gifted.

The U.S. economy is dependent on growth (Berger & Fisher, 2013). Growth is contingent upon many variables, one being the skill level of the workforce. According to Gordon (2012), the U.S. faces sustained slowdown in long-term economic growth at approximately one half of the annual growth made between 1860 and 2007. Gordon (2012) identified six headwinds, including the headwind of the percentage of people who have earned a college degree, that will impact the growth of the U.S. economy from 2007-2027. At the local level, public education funding cuts coupled with state and federal accountability requirements have directed the majority of the schools’ resources to students struggling to make academic growth leaving little support for students who are gifted (Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The limited support provided by some educational leaders for programs to support

students who are gifted drives home the necessity to conduct this study of why parents of a child who is gifted choose to maintain their child's enrollment in the zoned public school.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study of parental satisfaction with educational support for their child who is gifted will involve theories of appraising emotions. The Appraisal Theory of Emotions is the basis for exploring the parents' emotional responses to the progress of their child who is gifted. The Appraisal Theory of Emotions is rooted in the assessment of the event which causes inconsistent emotional responses and can result in negative responses (Roseman, 1996). Lazarus (1991) suggests that a person may have a pre-existing relationship with a situation that results in an emotional response based on the connection to the situation. The prior relationship can be considered either an endangerment or an opportunity. For instance, a parent of a child who is gifted had a good experience with the teacher last year, predisposing the parent to perceive the next grade-level teacher with positive emotions. This example depicts a primary appraisal where the parent assessed the environment (grade-level teacher and classroom) and did not experience stress. However, if the parent had a bad experience with the prior year's teacher, then the primary appraisal of the environment could result in a negative stressor leading to a secondary appraisal of how to avoid the perceived harmful effect on the child (Arnold, Flaherty, Voss, & Mowen, 2009). Roseman (2004) noted that the appraisal of a situation can elicit different emotional responses including potential negative reactions to the situation. The Appraisal Theory of Emotions served as a theoretical framework to consider emotional responses of the parents who choose to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in the public school.

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

1. What are the indicators of a parents' satisfaction with the school's support of their child who is receiving gifted services?

2. What is the relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted?

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of the survey include participation in the survey through self-selection criteria of having a child who is gifted enrolled in the large urban school district. The low return rate of survey responses at 16% does not reflect the beliefs of the majority of parents with a child who is gifted. An additional limitation of the study is that the survey and interview responses were self-reported by the parents of students who are gifted. While it would be beneficial to gather parent perceptions of those who withdrew their child who is gifted from the very large urban school district, the data would be difficult to gather because the parent contact information is not readily available in the school district student information system. The majority of the survey participants were White. The effect is that the

results present a limited reflection of the beliefs of parents who identified themselves as Black, Hispanic, or Asian and have a child who is gifted.

### **Assumptions**

It is assumed that parents will respond to the survey and interview questions honestly and thoroughly. It is also assumed that the parents who participated in the survey and interviews represent those parents within the very large urban school district who did not participate.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used in the study and are defined as follows.

*Appraisal Theory of Emotions*: Prior to experiencing an emotional reaction, a person informally appraises the environment and then, based on prior experience, generates an emotional response (Lazarus, 1991).

*Communitarian*: Communitarian is a phrase coined by Cross (2011) referring to parents' desire to have their children blend into a larger community of mixed-ability levels.

*Gifted*: For the purposes of this study, gifted is one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance as defined by the State of Florida (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

*Gifted eligibility*: For the purposes of this study, gifted eligibility criteria in the State of Florida requires evidence of the need for a special instructional program, evidence of characteristics of the gifted, and evaluation documenting intellectual development. Districts in Florida are encouraged to create plans to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Individualist: Individualist is a term coined by Cross (2011) referring to the parents' desire to have their child who is gifted stand out from society as a unique individual.

Lived experience: Lived Experience is an experience that has been lived by a person.

NCLB: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, includes a waiver that permits flexibility to state departments of education to determine the methods to monitor accountability for all students, while requiring research-based instruction, certified teachers in content areas, and greater school choice options for parents.

Reciprocal Teaching: Reciprocal teaching is when students and teachers talk to one another about the meaning of text, taking turns leading the dialogue. The dialogue is structured to incorporate four strategies: *generating questions* about the content, *summarizing* the content, *clarifying* points, and *predicting* upcoming content from cues in the text or from prior knowledge of the topic (Palinscar, Ransom, & Derber, 1989, p. 37).

Service delivery models: A variety of scenarios are in place to deliver gifted instructional support, including gifted self-contained class, gifted resource room, advanced-content class for gifted and non-gifted, cluster grouping, support facilitation, mentorship/internship, dual enrollment/virtual courses, and consultation (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Zoned school: A zoned school is a public school that is part of a specific school zone based on criteria set by local school board policy. Examples of criteria include the location of home address or location of cluster schools identified as schools that will receive students from other school zones to participate in specific programs, such as gifted cluster schools for the very large urban school district elementary schools.



## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **History of Support for Children Who Are Gifted and Parental Influence**

Review of previous literature is a vital part of studying the research problem which targets the impact of parental concerns as related to the interest in withdrawing the child who is gifted from public school to attend a local private school, charter school, or virtual school. While many parents are concerned about their children's educational progress, limited research is available on the concerns of parents of children who are gifted that result in the parents' desire to withdraw their child from their public school. The research of literature for this study will focus on parental influence on their child who is gifted as well as the educational support extended to students who are gifted.

To frame the current state of literature on parental concerns of the child who is gifted, reflection on the historical literature is critical. In 1896 Francis Galton published the first research on giftedness and the hereditary role parents played in the child with exceptionally high ability. Galton (1896) found that giftedness frequently occurred in a direct line from father to son or grandson. Thirty years later, Terman (1926) conducted the seminal longitudinal study, including parents of children who are gifted, that identified physical and mental traits of 1,000 children who are gifted. Following Terman's study, the literature on parents and their children who are gifted was silent until Goertzel and Goertzel (1962) found that parents of the distinguished people in their study influenced decisions about both the schools to attend and the career choices. The space race that began in the late 1950's

stimulated a national focus on academic readiness and ability of students to perform in areas of math and science upon graduation. The National Defense Act (1958) was, in a sense, a declaration by the federal government that readiness to work in math and engineering fields was a matter of national security and economic stability. Students identified as gifted were among the most logical children to support in this effort to improve math and science skills. Accordingly, funding was made available to states for math and science education as part of the National Defense Education Act (1958). While this funding stimulus was beneficial in the short term, the financial aid to support the education of students who are gifted has been sparse in the best of years (Ward, 2005). Some parents of children who are gifted saw the need and stepped up to the plate to fund their child's extra-curricular enrichment activities. By the middle of the 1960s and 1970s, the educational focus had shifted to equity of education. Students with high-ability levels, including students who were identified as gifted, were already considered to have equitable access to education. The focus on excellence was moved from center stage to make room for other concerns. Enter the 1980s when the National Commission on Excellence was established, based on concerns about the skill level of America's students as compared to students around the globe. Yet, fiscal conservatism at the federal level in 1981 resulted in reductions in funding for federal block grants for education by 42% (Gallagher, 1994). Within six years, however, the U.S. Congress approved funding for the education of gifted students and further provided the means to create the Federal Office of Gifted and Talented (Gallagher, 1994). Throughout history, parents have been faced with the challenge of supplementing activities that provide opportunities for their child who is gifted to achieve their potential.

The current climate of standards-based accountability has ushered in a major shift in educational focus. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires school districts to meet specific proficiency targets in reading and math. An unintended consequence of NCLB is a shift away from support of students who are gifted to a laser focus on struggling students (Loveless, Parkas, & Duffett, 2008). NCLB has financial provisions that mandate use of school district funds for federally-funded block grant programs to focus on struggling learners. This shifts school funding away from enrichment and acceleration needed for students who are gifted. With limited academic support for students who are gifted, some parents seek other school choices (Ward, 2005).

This review, synthesis, and critique of the research literature is designed to identify what is known about parental satisfaction with support for students who are gifted, service delivery models for students who are gifted, and school support for students who are gifted. Some parents feel strongly that their children should have their academic needs met by learning with only their peers who are gifted and seek settings that reflect this belief (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Duquette, Orders, Fullarton, & Robertson-Grewal, 2011; Knotek, Kovac, & Bostwick, 2011). Other parents feel as strongly that their child who is gifted needs to function in a world of varied abilities, concluding that social connection is critical (Feldman & Piirto, 1995); therefore, they choose to keep their children who are gifted in classes with students with mixed-ability levels (Cross, 2011).

### **Parent Satisfaction with Support for Students Who Are Gifted**

Parents send their children to school with the greatest hopes and dreams for their child's success. Cross (2011) conducted a study and found that 64% of parents of students who are gifted had different opinions from each other of what they would like in education for

students who are gifted. Participants in Cross' (2011) study fell into two groups; *communitarians* who wanted their children who are gifted to blend in with society and *individualists* who wanted their children who are gifted to stand out from society.

Jolly and Matthews' (2012) critique of literature on parents of children who are gifted noted that many parents were satisfied with the quality of their children's instruction; however, they did find fault in other aspects of the school. Quality of instruction, discipline, and school safety are the most important issues for parents of all students (Howell & Peterson, 2002; Moe, 2001). The literature also focuses on the parental concerns about the quality of the school climate including the social and emotional support for children who are gifted. In a study of parents and their attitudes about teaching and learning, Snowden and Conway (1996) found parents in the study possessed skills to promote social and emotional, academic, and concrete skills for their child who is gifted. The relationship of social context and the physical environment where learning takes place has an impact on the learning process (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

In search of quality instruction, some parents opt to send their students who are gifted to schools that require competitive entrance exam scores. Abdulkadiroglu et al., (2011) studied exam schools and found little overall achievement difference when comparing students who are served in gifted magnet programs and students in exam schools. One of the primary reasons parents of students with disabilities chose to use the Florida McKay Scholarship program to move their student to a private or charter school was the perceived academic quality (Weidner & Herrington, 2006).

Generally, parents opt for school choice out of frustration with their current school and perceptions of lower standards in place framing their child's education (Bosetti & Pyryt,

2007). According to research, parents who participate in school choice are largely from the middle class and have concerns about academic qualifications of the teaching staff and how that will impact their child's progress (Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007). This focus drives these parents to select schools of their choosing (Avis, 2003; Brown, 2000) that align with their values and dispositions (Power, 2004). Parents of children who are gifted are also motivated by this imperative to select a school of their choice where their child will be challenged (Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007). Additionally, the status of placement that comes with enrollment in an enrichment program is also valued by parents of children who are gifted (Lucey & Reay, 2002).

The allure of school choice does not always meet the varied needs of parents. A study of Washington D.C. charter schools found that the academic advantages were negated when the researchers considered a cross-sectional analysis of parent satisfaction with academic as well as social and emotional needs met by the charter schools (Buckley & Schneider, 2006). The results of research concentrating on parental satisfaction are mixed. Parents who are active in the decision to enroll their child in a specific school or district generally are more satisfied than parents who did not make a purposeful choice (Bielick & Chapman, 2003; Paul et al., 2005). If a parent withdrew the child from the school district to enroll in another school district, the parent was more likely to do so at the end of elementary school; reflecting, in part, possible dissatisfaction with the upcoming services and support available in the zoned secondary school (Falbo, et al., 2005). However, if a parent moved to a neighborhood for a specific school zone, the parent was less likely to move again (Falbo, et al., 2005). School choice in some districts is linked to an application process for schools that have limited capacity which, in turn, creates competition for acceptance into the school. In a study of the

Philadelphia school district, parents were frustrated and disappointed with the application process that resulted in the majority of applications being denied, regardless of parent involvement and advocacy on behalf of their child (Neild, 2005). When considering the school choice options provided through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, it is important to recognize that when parents were happy with the child's school, regardless of its NCLB school rating, they were unlikely to transfer the child to another school (Howell, 2006). This decision to stay, however, did not necessarily mean that all of these parents were completely satisfied with their child's school. In fact, parents of students who were enrolled in schools identified as not making adequate yearly progress under NCLB were interested in options beyond the available school district transfers, including placement in alternative schools, charter schools, and private schools (Howell, 2006).

When considering school choice options for their child who is gifted, parents benefit by permitting their child to be part of the decision-making process. If a parent of a child who is gifted attempts to exert too much control, their child's motivation may be negatively impacted and could result in rebellious behavior (Maxwell, 1998). Intrinsic motivation, such as with the satisfaction that comes from participating in decision-making, will have a greater impact for a longer time on meeting personal goals of students who are gifted (Grant & Dweck, 2003; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006).

### **Service Delivery Models for Students Who Are Gifted**

School district leaders and principals implement a variety of service delivery models to meet the needs of students who are gifted (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). Principals select programs for students who are gifted based on variables that include the number of students who are gifted as well as teacher certification requirements. While school districts may have

numerous service delivery models for students who are gifted, the challenge for a school leader becomes the identification of the most appropriate service delivery model and instructional strategies for students who are gifted that will focus on specific capability and achievements to ensure growth in these areas (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2011). Research points to five specific service delivery models with varying purposes and offerings for students who are gifted. The established service delivery models for students who are gifted used in schools include self-contained programs, cluster grouping, content replacement/honors classes, pullout programs (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011), and the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010). The self-contained model involves a school-within-a-school program for gifted where a cohort of students attends classes as a group while interacting with general education peers throughout the school day (Matthews & Kitchen, 2007). This school-within-a-school program creates a tight-knit community for students who are gifted, offering social and emotional support in addition to academic rigor. Cluster grouping is another option where students who are gifted are heterogeneously grouped with general education peers. The Schoolwide Cluster Group Model provides support for students who are gifted while remaining in their zoned school (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). Cluster grouping serves students who are gifted in a general education class throughout each day with students who have mixed-ability levels. This differs from the self-contained model where students who are gifted are served in a classroom with only peers who are gifted. Content replacement and honors classes are considered accelerated learning and can serve as an option to meet the needs of students who are gifted, in response to the schools' heightened focus on struggling learners based on NCLB regulations (Blair, 2011). Students who are gifted may have access to accelerated courses online that are not always

available in classrooms at their school. When comparing the same age group of students who were gifted, those who were accelerated performed the equivalent of one grade level above those who did not have course acceleration (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004). However, educators were hesitant to accelerate students who were gifted, even though acceleration can benefit students who are gifted (Colangelo et al., 2004). Schools that offer Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs provide access to rigorous instruction taught by experts in the field at an accelerated pace (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2010).

The very large urban school district offers course acceleration for students prepared to move to the next course in the progression plan. The course acceleration is provided within the very large urban school district through advanced placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, honors courses, and dual enrollment courses through which students earn college credit while in high school. Pullout programs provide support by serving students who are gifted in a separate setting during part of their day or week. This model does not support instruction for students who are gifted in the general education classroom (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). Principals must decide which specific service delivery models are viable to support in their schools. Such decisions rest on numerous variables, including but not limited to the number of students identified as gifted, the number of teachers endorsed in gifted instruction, and the size of the classes. For a school principal to budget for a teacher, a minimum number of students must be assigned to the teacher's roster. If a school leader decides to employ the self-contained model, then the school must have enrolled the minimum number of students who are gifted to be assigned to that teacher. This budgeting concern is less with the cluster group model because the students who are gifted are assigned to the general education teacher who also has a gifted endorsement. The Schoolwide Enrichment



Model (SEM) is designed to provide enrichment for students who are gifted and talented. SEM's three goals are to foster talents in students, offer high interest enrichment activities, and provide the SEM model services as enrichment to the core curriculum using accommodations and modifications. SEM utilizes differentiated instruction through curriculum compacting (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010). The bottom line is that school leadership must first determine what is in the best interest of each student and then determine how to support or fund the best service delivery model to meet the child's needs.

Neither national nor state guidelines exist to provide guidance to school districts and principals for selection of service delivery models for students who are gifted. Each school district is responsible for providing guidance on service delivery model options to principals. Some parents may desire a service delivery model that is not available at their child's zoned school. When parents are unhappy with their child's school, the school district may offer an option to transfer their child to another school within the district. In a study of students who transferred between schools within the same school district, the students' academic achievement and the parents' satisfaction did not improve (Falbo et al., 2005). When parents opted to send their child who is gifted to a selective high school with a lottery or to a magnet program for gifted, research findings reflect that there was little impact on student academic achievement (Bui, Craig, & Imberman, 2011).

The Pupil Assignment Department within the very large urban school district determines school assignments based on home addresses within specific school zones. Most elementary schools in the very large urban school district are able to offer a service delivery model to support their students who are gifted. However, some schools have too few students who are gifted, thus making it financially difficult to fund the support necessary to best serve

those students. In those instances, the students are transported to a cluster school one day per week for specific instructional support for students who are gifted. Each middle and high school within the very large urban school district provides services to their students who are gifted; however, most students request courses that are accelerated rather than specific gifted courses that are offered.

The service delivery models for students who are gifted are determined by the school administration. As noted earlier, some parents purposefully choose to move to a desirable school zone (Henig & Sugarman, 1999), an option limited to those parents who can afford to move into another school zone. Access to quality education should not be reliant on parents' financial ability to move to a specific school zone (DiPerna, 2012).

There were only seven unique course codes for gifted instruction in the 2012-13 Florida Course Code Directory, including one in elementary school, two in middle school, and four in high school (Florida Department of Education, 2012). Students who are gifted in the very large urban school district middle and high schools are scheduled in core content courses with a teacher who has gifted endorsement. Course acceleration is available in middle schools for students who are gifted with the added benefit of earning high school credits. Most students who are gifted request advanced placement, honors, dual enrollment, or International Baccalaureate courses that support their course progression in addition to electives of interest. In the very large urban school district, it is rare that a student who is gifted requests one of the four courses specifically available for students who are gifted. What becomes evident is that education for students who are gifted is not much different from what is available for all students (Grant, 2005).

Florida Statute 6A-6.030191 requires the development of an educational plan for each student who is gifted. This educational plan must include individual student academic performance levels, measurable goals, specifically designed instruction, progress monitoring and reporting to parents, and timelines and locations of services to be provided (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

### **School Support for Students Who Are Gifted**

Students who are gifted must have their academic needs met where they spend most of their time which is in regular classes (Tomlinson, 2001). To provide further opportunities beyond the regular classroom in their child's school, some parents of students who are gifted have their child enrolled in online instruction that fosters higher levels of critical thinking and provides accelerated learning (Blair, 2011).

When parents of children who are gifted have negative attitudes towards their child's teacher or school, the child's academic progress may be at risk (Campbell & Verna, 2007). The relationship among the school, teacher, and the parents is vital to the success of the child who is gifted. Students who are gifted benefit from their teachers communicating regularly with their parents about methods of motivation which are effective for the parents to use with their child (Garn, Matthews, & Jolly, 2010). As the workload of teachers and school administrators increases, caution must be taken to not be too busy to show interest in concerns of the parents of students who are gifted (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

For community engagement to be effective, members of the community must have the ability to present opinions and consider options in an atmosphere that is free of judgment (Heierbacher, 2010). Effective community engagement must ensure that all key stakeholders are represented (Johnson & Issah, 2011). It is difficult at best for schools to maximize student

growth without support from parents, community leaders, business partners, and district staff. When schools have vibrant community involvement that values education, the schools often have high-achieving students (Snowden & Conway, 1996).

An unintended consequence of assigning teachers who are not fully prepared to teach students who are gifted is that the teachers may set their expectations too low, a phenomenon resulting in a gap between actual and potential growth of the student who is gifted (Subotnik et al., 2011). Unfortunately, states do not require pre-service teachers to be trained in effective instruction and assessment of students who are gifted (National Association for Gifted Children, 2008). The pre-service teachers are hired by school districts who must then take responsibility to provide rigorous training for teachers to be effective with students who are gifted. Effective professional development for teachers must be aligned with professional development standards that include research-based strategies, theoretical foundations, classroom management strategies to identify students who may be gifted, and the planning and implementation of extensive opportunities for learning (Van Tassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007). Research by Vidergor & Eilam (2011) revealed teachers who initially possessed limited skills in gifted education but then completed quality professional development on education for students who were gifted felt competent and ready to teach students who were gifted. Vidergor & Eilam (2011) further stated that teachers lacking relevant professional development in education for students who were gifted had difficulties in teaching content, modeling, implementing teaching strategies, and creating learning environments suitable for gifted learners.

Teacher effectiveness has a substantial impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and school effectiveness (Marzano, 2007). Differentiation for students who

are gifted requires that a teacher must be familiar with above-grade level standards, in-depth content beyond the grade-level text, advanced and extended resources, and alternative instructional strategies. The Fordham Report, *High Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB* (Loveless, Farkas, & Duffett, 2008) determined that many teachers have received little or no preparation for meeting the needs of gifted and advanced learners. As a result, many teachers ask students who are gifted to do something different, but not something that is differentiated.

Teacher standards for gifted education are necessary to ensure that the top learners in our country are adequately identified and nurtured in school settings. A standards-based approach to personnel preparation offers many advantages. Standards provide a focus and direction for new research efforts that link seminal ideas about a concept to ways of studying the concepts (Van Tassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007). The National Association for Gifted Children and the Council for Exceptional Children (2006) identified standards to provide a framework for teachers who are seeking their certificate or endorsement in gifted education and who plan to teach gifted learners.

Standards appear to have positive effects on professional competence. Darling-Hammond (2000) noted that “in all cases, teachers with full certification status are by far the most important determinant of student achievement” (p. 30). Teachers who are board-certified not only have increased knowledge and skills that relate to higher student achievement but also have greater longevity in the field of education (Hakel, Koenig, & Elliott, 2008). Gifted-endorsed teachers are more confident in their abilities, lecture less, emphasize more creativity and higher level thinking skills, demonstrate fast-pacing of instruction, conduct more discussions, implement more student-directed activities, and use strategies commonly cited in

the standards (Siegle & Powell, 2004). Students, therefore, are the ultimate beneficiaries of high standards for teachers.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 provides the guarantee of federal funding to support students with disabilities while no IDEA funds are dedicated to the support students who are gifted. However, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs issued a policy memo regarding twice exceptional students in 2013 stating that it "remains the Department's position that students with high cognition, have disabilities and require special education and related services are protected under the IDEA and its implementing regulations" (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p.1). The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Enhancement Act of 1988 provided funding for the development of innovative strategies for teachers to stimulate the academic growth of their students who are gifted. This educational funding for the support of students who are gifted was significantly less than IDEA funding for students with disabilities (Ward, 2005). Funds for the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Enhancement Act of 1988 remain precarious, requiring annual reauthorization by the U.S. Congress. In fact, all funding was cut for the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Act from 2010 - 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education fund was reauthorized in 2014 with \$5,000,000 awarded across ten universities to conduct research (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). Improvement of support for students who are gifted requires adequate funding. Without adequate funding, students who are gifted remain under-supported, calling into question the protected rights of all students under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination in public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). To

fill the funding gap and provide enrichment opportunities for students who are gifted, some state governors have dedicated funding for governor's schools for students who are gifted; however, funding for these also fluctuates from year to year. For example, the governor's program in Pennsylvania lost funding. Significant budget cuts to the governor's schools in Missouri and New Jersey have taken place. North Carolina's governor's school was saved by philanthropic donations from its alumni allowing the doors to remain open for 2013-14 school year (Winkler, Stephenson, & Jolly, 2012). Florida discontinued the governor's summer program for gifted and high achieving students in 2010. However, Florida does provide funding for supplemental services for students who are gifted through a guaranteed allocation in addition to the basic full time equivalent funding per pupil (Florida Senate, 2013).

All students who are gifted with a specific category of disability have the right to a free and appropriate education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015c). Students who are gifted do not have federally protected procedural safeguards (Zirkel, 2005); however, Florida Statute 6A-6.03313 does provide procedural safeguards for exceptional students who are gifted (Florida Department of Education, 2015). There are seven provisions in Florida's procedural safeguards including the requirement of prior written notice to parents, provision of the procedural safeguards to parents, informed parental consent, parents opportunity to examine records and participate in meetings, consideration of independent evaluations at private expense, opportunity to resolve allegations against a school district through filing a state complaint, and a due process hearing (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

Students who are gifted in the very large urban school district may easily achieve proficiency but may not continue to increase their academic knowledge. When students who

are gifted are able to answer questions correctly in class or successfully complete assigned course work, the very large urban school district teachers may assume such students have achieved to the extent appropriate and can serve as a peer mentor or be assigned independent work. However, when a student is immersed in active learning, greater academic growth is more readily achieved (Garn, Matthews, Jolly, 2012). Teachers also may expect students who are gifted to set good examples in the classroom and to be compliant (Bain, Bliss, Choate, & Sager-Browne, 2007). Teachers may similarly have misconceptions about the social and emotional functioning levels of students who are gifted, inadvertently making assumptions that can impact academic achievement (Bain, Choate, & Bliss, 2006). Parents of children who are gifted also expressed concern for their child's social and emotional wellbeing (Feldman & Pinto, 1995).

Van Tassel-Baska (2006) noted that programs supporting students who are gifted suffered from a lack of adequate resources and preparation. Little thought has been given to a staff development plan that is linked to program expectations that serve students who are gifted (Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). Vidergor and Eilam (2011) found in their research that teachers of students who are gifted should possess many of the same characteristics attributed to students who are gifted, should be competent in using different teaching and learning strategies, and should be able to apply cognitive abilities suitable for students who are gifted without neglecting the student's affective and social needs. Teachers with the gifted endorsement incorporate more differentiated practices and are more likely to align their instruction with the standards for the education of students who are gifted as provided by the National Association for Gifted Children (Johnsen, 2012).



## **Appraisal Theory of Emotions**

The experience of parenting can be charged with emotional decision-making based on the underlying desire for the child to be successful in school and in life. When considering the perceptions that lead to parents' satisfaction with their child's educational support, the Appraisal Theory of Emotions serves well as a theoretical foundation to explore the parents' emotional response to their child's progress. The Appraisal Theory of Emotions is based on the concept that a person first appraises a situation and then experiences emotional responses which can vary based on the appraisal of prior experiences (Roseman, 1996). If the prior experience triggers a negative reaction, then the emotional response may also be negative (Lazarus, 1991). If the initial appraisal of the situation causes stress, then the immediate reaction following the appraisal may be one of avoidance of the harmful effect (Arnold et al, 2009). Each negative situation presents a new opportunity to draw upon different emotions, all dependent on the environment where the situation occurs (Roseman, 2004). In other words, one bad experience does not mean that the person will always be destined to have the same emotional response. The Appraisal Theory of Emotions will be used in this study to analyze the emotional responses of the parents who choose to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their public school.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will address the methods that will be used to answer the research questions. Included in this chapter is the research design accompanied by the rationale, the research questions, a discussion about the sampling of the population in the study, procedures to be used when conducting the research, instrumentation, data collection processes, data analysis procedures, discussion about reliability and validity of the study, and closing the chapter with the limitations of the study.

### **Research Design**

The study is an analysis of a very large data set including a survey with follow-up interviews. The survey results are quantitative and the interview results are qualitative. The value of using both surveys and interviews is that it capitalizes on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research methods while minimizing weaknesses (Creswell, 2012; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Salehi & Golafshani, 2010). The survey was used to examine the relationship between variables where the subjects cannot be randomly assigned to different conditions (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). The research study will analyze the relationship between survey variables including parental consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, parental satisfaction with academic as well as social and

emotional support for their child who is gifted, and parental perception of principal support for gifted education at their child's school.

The qualitative research will be based on the results from the follow-up interviews and observations of parents of children who are gifted. The follow-up interviews provided the researcher with meaningful interpretations of the experiences of a parent of a student who is gifted (Lunenberg & Irby, 2008). Because the research questions are focused on the parental satisfaction of educational support for their child who is gifted, the follow-up interviews were selected to analyze their perceptions. This study will detail common *lived experiences* of participants. In this study, the interviews can shed light on particular circumstances that have shaped the parents' beliefs and attitudes that may influence the choices they make to support their child's education (Hays & Wood, 2011).

The study involved two phases. The first phase was the analysis of the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey with parents of children enrolled in the very large urban school district. Permission was obtained from the authors, Dr. Jennifer Jolly with Louisiana State University and Dr. Michael Matthews with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, to modify their national survey titled Parents of Gifted Learners Survey. The second phase was the analysis of follow-up interviews conducted in 2013 with selected parents of children who are gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district. The follow-up interviews served as an opportunity to expand upon questions in the survey to gain further insight into the level of satisfaction and observations of the parents' experiences with their child's academic, as well as social and emotional support in their school.

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

1. What are the indicators of a parents' satisfaction with the school's support of their child who is receiving gifted services?

2. What is the relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted?

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted.

## **Selection of Participants**

This research study was conducted at the very large urban school district which had 11,576 students who are identified as gifted in 2012-13; of which 4,229 were in elementary school, 3,542 were in middle school, and 3,805 were in high school. The participants were parents of students who were eligible for gifted services and enrolled in the very large urban school district during 2012-13. There were 9,317 parents of students who are gifted and were enrolled in the very large urban school district during 2012-13. Some of the parents had more than one child identified as gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district which accounts for fewer parents than students identified as gifted in this study. Of the 9,317 parents of students who are gifted, a subset was identified of 4,401 parents of students enrolled in the very large urban school district who are gifted. These 4,401 parents of children who are gifted gave the very large urban school district permission to be contacted by phone and email and

provided consent to be surveyed. This research study included the total population of the 4,401 parents of students who are gifted in the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey and the interviews. Table 1 contains the criteria for identification of survey participants.

Table 1: Criteria for Choosing Final Survey Participants

Criteria
Must be parent of a child who is gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district
Must have parent approval to be contacted by phone and email
Must be randomly chosen from a purposive sample selected using IBM SPSS Statistics
Must provide consent to participate in the survey

For the selection of interview candidates, a randomized selection of the parents with children who are gifted and were enrolled in the very large urban school district in 2012-13 was identified using IBM SPSS Statistics software. The sample size for interviews varied based on the type of research design (Creswell, 2007). The recommended sample size for follow-up interviews based on survey data already collected was 10 participants (Riemen, 1986). The randomized selection criteria were set to identify 20 names of parents who gave permission to be contacted by phone and email. The list of 20 names was used in sequential order as each parent was interviewed until 10 parents were interviewed. Table 2 contains the criteria for identifying the interview participants.

Table 2: Criteria for Choosing Final Interview Participants

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Criteria
Must be parent of a child who is gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district
Must have parent approval to be contacted by phone and email
Purposive sample randomly selected using IBM SPSS Statistics
Must provide consent to participate in the interview

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### **Procedures**

The research procedures involved a series of tasks. Approval from the University of Central Florida (UCF) and the very large urban school district Institutional Review Boards was obtained prior to proceeding with the research for this dissertation.

#### **2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey**

The survey procedures began with obtaining permission from the original authors, Jolly and Matthews, to modify and use the national Parents of Gifted Learners Survey. Modifications were made to the national survey including the removal of national references, deletion of the questions regarding family income, addition of district-specific service delivery models for students who are gifted, the addition of questions regarding interest in a school solely for students who are gifted, and inclusion of questions regarding parental need for transportation to a school solely for students who are gifted. The survey questions were first pilot tested with an expert panel and then with parents of students who are gifted to establish validity and reliability of both the survey questions and the corresponding responses. The survey items were revised based on the results of the pilot test. The online survey was developed using Qualtrics, available through UCF. Approval from UCF and the very large

urban school district Institutional Review Boards was obtained prior to releasing the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey. An amendment to the title of the research was approved by the UCF IRB. Written and oral communications were prepared to deliver to participants including participant consent, an email invitation to participate, a ConnectEd automated voice message system invitation to participants, a reminder email and voice message to participate, and an online thank you for participation in the survey. Approved distribution lists of parents of students who are gifted who gave permission to be contacted by phone or by email were obtained. The ConnectEd voice message invitation to participate in the survey was delivered and followed immediately by the email invitation to participate in the survey. Upon entry to the online survey, the participant was asked to read a brief description of the survey and required to provide a digital signature on a consent form to participate in the survey. If consent was not obtained, the survey questions were not accessible to the participant. The survey window was open for 14 days. An email reminder was sent home on days 5 and 10. The survey data were downloaded on days 5, 10, and at the close of the survey on day 14. Qualtrics automated reports were generated. The raw data from Qualtrics were exported to IBM SPSS Statistics and identifying internet protocol (IP) addresses were coded to protect participant identity in future analysis. The survey closed on day 14 to any further participation. An automated statement from Qualtrics appeared if a participant attempted to open the survey after day 14. Table 3 includes the tasks involved in the survey procedures.

Table 3: 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey Procedures

Task	Survey Procedures
1	Obtain permission to use the national Parents of Gifted Learners Survey
2	Modify the survey to meet the school district needs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Remove national references</li> <li>b. Add specific information regarding school district service delivery models</li> <li>c. Add question regarding need for transportation to a school solely for students who are gifted</li> </ol>
3	Determine validity and reliability of the survey items through pilot testing survey with an expert panel and parents of students who are gifted
3	Revise survey questions based on results on pilot test with an expert panel and parents of students who are gifted
5	Create the online survey using Qualtrics
6	Obtain IRB approval from the university and the school district to conduct the survey
7	Prepare written and oral communications with participants <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participant consent</li> <li>b. Email invitation to participate</li> <li>c. ConnectEd automated voice message system invitation to participate</li> <li>d. Reminder email to participate in the survey</li> <li>e. Reminder ConnectEd to participate in the survey</li> <li>f. Online survey participant consent to continue with the survey</li> <li>g. Thank you for participation in the survey</li> </ol>
8	Obtain the approved distribution lists for parents of children who are gifted from the school district to send the email and leave the automated voice message
9	Send ConnectEd voice message invitation to participate
10	Send email invitation to participate
11	Survey window open for 14 days
12	Send email reminder to participate on day 5 and day 10 of the survey window
13	Send thank you to the participants which is included at the participant's completion of the survey
14	Monitor survey participation rate on day 5, day 10, and day 12.
15	Download survey data on day 5, day 10, and upon survey closure on day 14
16	Generate survey automated reports from Qualtrics
17	Download survey responses from Qualtrics and export to IBM SPSS Statistics for further analysis
18	Inform by automated message that survey closed on day 14 to any further participation should possible participant inquire

### Follow-up Interviews With Parents of a Child Who Is Gifted

The 10 interview questions were developed based on the results of the survey questions in an attempt to clarify survey responses. The determination of the validity and



reliability of the interview questions was obtained by conducting pilot interviews with an expert panel. The interview questions and prompts were revised to improve the validity and reliability of the participant responses. Since the interviews were conducted by the researcher and two additional employees in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department within the very large urban school district, training was provided on the procedures for conducting the interviews and the process of recording the participant responses. The interviewers were trained on how to enter the interview responses in the digital template, save the interview responses under a specific naming convention with the initials of the interviewer followed by the first initial and last name of the interview participant, and post the completed interview responses in a shared online storage program. Training included the requirement to contact the interview candidates in the order as they appeared on the provided list. A script was provided to the interviewers that included an introduction, the purpose of the study, and a request to conduct the interview or schedule an appointment to conduct the interview at an agreed upon time. Training also included discussion about setting a welcoming atmosphere for the interview and the requirement that the interview questions be asked in the same order. As part of the training process, a pilot interview was conducted by all three interviewers to discuss data collected and revise the process as needed to obtain reliable interview responses.

Approval from UCF and the very large urban school district Institutional Review Boards was obtained prior to conducting the interviews. Written consent was developed for completion prior to conducting the interview of each participant. Twenty interview candidates were randomly assigned from the approved list of parents of students who are gifted and who gave approval to be contacted by phone. The randomized sample was obtained using IBM SPSS Statistics. While the plan included interviews of 10 parents, the list was generated for

20 parents, allowing for some of the initial 10 parents on the list to decline to be interviewed or be unavailable for an interview. The researcher was assigned the first four parent names on the randomized list. The very large urban school district ESE Parent Support Team interviewers were each given three parent names to interview. If an interviewer was unable to complete the assigned number of interviews, then the interviewer was assigned the next name on the randomized list of 20 parents. The interviewers contacted the interview candidates by phone to participate in an interview. If the parent agreed to the interview, the interviewer obtained the required written consent to participate from the parent. The interviewer then scheduled the interview at a convenient time for the parent. The interviews took place by phone. The participants were asked the same interview questions in the same order, and anecdotal information was noted when provided by the parents. The interviewer recorded the interview responses along with behaviors of the participant. The participant responses were recorded in an online template for ease of data collection. Upon completion of the interview, the participants were thanked for their time and valuable feedback. The interview responses were then coded to protect participant identity in reporting. Each interview participant was coded an alphanumeric code as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Coding of Follow-up Interview Participants

Participant	Recoded participant
1	A10
2	B 9
3	C 8
4	D 7
5	E 6
6	F 5
7	G 4
8	H 3
9	I 2
10	J 1

The number of interviews was monitored until ten interviews were completed. Table 5 contains a summary of the procedures used to conduct the interviews of parents of students who are gifted.

Table 5: Follow-up Interview Procedures

Task	Follow-up Interview Procedures
1	Develop interview questions based on results of 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey to add clarification to selected survey items
2	Determine validity and reliability of the interview questions through pilot testing with an expert panel
3	Revise interview questions based on results on pilot test with an expert panel
4	Develop a script for use by interviewers to ensure consistency of interview procedures
5	Train all interviewers on the interview procedures
6	Conduct pilot interviews of members of the ESE Parent Support Team by interviewers to obtain inter-rater reliability
7	Obtain IRB approval from the university and the school district to conduct the survey
8	Prepare written consent from participants
9	Randomly select 20 interview candidates using IBM SPSS Statistics
10	Assign interview candidates to interviewers
11	Contact interview candidates, obtain written consent, and schedule phone interview date and time
12	Conduct the interviews; questions in same order; anecdotal information noted by interviewer about the participants behavior during the interview
13	Write the participant responses in the online template, including notes about participants behavior, when applicable; thank the participant for taking part in the interview
14	Code the interview responses to protect anonymity
15	Monitor the participation rate of interviews to ensure ten interviewers conducted

### **Instrumentation**

This study adapted a national Parents of Gifted Learners Survey developed by Jolly & Matthews (2009). The adaptation included questions focused on interest in a school for the gifted and is referred to in this study as the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey. The 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey included multiple choice items, forced choice items, ranked items, and open-ended responses. A panel of experts was engaged in the review of the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey questions. The panel of experts included a middle school assistant principal, a school district administrator, an elementary school teacher and a middle school teacher serving students who are gifted, and a school district parent liaison. These

people were selected based on their knowledge and experience with parents of students who are gifted. The Delphi Technique was used to obtain their opinions and agreement (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000) from the panel of experts on the quality of the survey questions prior to distribution of the survey. The Delphi Technique involves gaining consensus through a series of expert reviews called *rounds* (Hasson et al., 2000). The expert feedback was provided anonymously to promote critical feedback (Williams & Webb, 1994). The Delphi Technique for this study required two rounds where the initial feedback was reviewed by the researcher and survey questions that lacked consensus were revised and distributed to the expert panel. The second round of expert reviews resulted in consensus on the survey questions.

The follow-up interview questions were developed to clarify or expand upon prior interview responses. The follow-up interview questions were refined through a process of pilot testing the interview questions with a panel of experts (Creswell, 2007). Based on the expert panel feedback, the interview questions were revised. Following the expert review, the follow-up interview questions were revised. Definitions were added to one question to provide a common understanding of gifted service delivery models within the district. Two questions were combined based on similar responses from the pilot. As a result of the pilot testing of the follow-up interview questions, 10 follow-up interview questions were refined with each one having one core question with prompts available to the interviewer if the participant sought clarification on the focus of the interview question. The follow-up interview questions that supported the research questions included gathering demographic information about the person being interviewed and the student who is gifted; parental perceptions of academic, social and emotional, and principal support for gifted education at

their child's school; the school's service delivery model for gifted education available to their child; parental interest in a school solely for students who are gifted; and the need for transportation to attend a school solely for students who are gifted.

### **Reliability**

Thorough descriptions with specific details of the research methodology promote the ability of the reader to replicate the study which, in turn, raises the credibility of the study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). To ensure reliability of the survey results, all of the survey questions were pilot tested by an expert panel (Hasson et al., 2000). The results of the pilot survey responses from the expert panel were reviewed to identify survey items that were left blank or were flagged as confusing. The survey items were revised based on the results of this pilot survey. The survey was then pilot tested with three parents of students who are gifted. Revisions to the survey were made based on the results of the parent responses.

The reliability of the interview questions were assessed by conducting pilot interviews to identify changes needed to the interview questions or procedures to obtain meaningful responses aligned to the purpose of the survey (Ary et al., 2010). Three interviewers were trained in the interview process. It became clear during the training that Interviewer A was unable to conduct the interview without adding personal opinions while conducting the interview. To eliminate potential bias, Interviewer A was replaced with another interviewer. Training was provided for the replacement interviewer. The pilot interviews were conducted by the three interviewers without signs of bias. The three interviewers then met to correlate their information to obtain inter-rater reliability (Ary et al., 2010) before beginning the interview process. The results of the process to conduct the pilot interviews were analyzed, and it was determined that inter-rater reliability was obtained based on the consistent use of

the scripted questions accompanied by suggested prompts to be used for clarification of the interview question, if needed.

### **Validity**

The survey and interview questions were pilot tested by experts to establish construct validity to determine if they measured what was intended to be measured (Ary et al., 2010). The methodology of the original authors of the national Parents of Gifted Learners Survey included the use of an expert panel to review and edit survey questions, pilot test the survey with a sample group of parents of children who are gifted, then reconvene the expert panel to review and revise the responses to improve the validity of the survey questions. As a result of the adaptation of the national Parents of Gifted Learners Survey, the researcher also assembled a panel of experts to review and confirm the construct validity of the adapted survey questions in the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey and follow-up interview questions. The review of the construct validity confirmed that the survey and follow-up interview questions measured what was intended to be measured (Ary et al., 2010). The survey and follow-up interview questions were aligned to answer the research question focused on parent satisfaction rooted in the theoretical framework of the Appraisal Theory of Emotions. Revisions were made to the survey and follow-up interview questions to ensure that the questions were perceived as relevant by the participant (Ary et al., 2010). In addition, the time spent with the participants and the rich details gathered during the interviews added to the “value or accuracy” (Creswell, 2007, p. 207) of the study.

## **Data Collection**

The survey data were collected using Qualtrics online data collection tools. There were 683 parents out of 4,401 total parents who participated in the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey who were surveyed resulting in a return rate of 16%. Qualtrics data were exported to IBM SPSS Statistics. The multiple choice questions, forced choice questions, and ranking questions were counted. The open-ended responses were categorized and coded for interpretation. Coding was necessary to categorize the responses (Ary et al., 2010). The categories included demographics for race, parental role, and school level of participant's children who are gifted, parental perceptions, and school relationships. The survey was conducted anonymously with the computer internet protocol addresses coded to protect participant identification. The data collected were protected and remained confidential in a secure database maintained by the researcher. The external hard drive storing the database was in possession of the researcher or was secured in a locked cabinet.

The interview responses were recorded directly to an online template for data collection. Interviewer observations of the participant behavior while being interviewed were also recorded on the template. The names of the participants in the interviews were coded to protect their identity. The qualitative analysis can require a significant amount of time (Ary et al., 2010). The option to have the interviews recorded was made available although no participants agreed to being recorded.

## **Data Analysis**

The quantitative analysis of the survey results involved the use of IBM SPSS Statistics cross-tabulation for descriptive statistics and Pearson Chi-Square analysis to determine if



there is a statistical significance between variables (Borg, 1987). In this study the variables included the cross-tabulation with Pearson Chi-Square analysis of parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, and the parents' belief about their child's academic needs being met, social and emotional needs being met, and principal support for gifted education at their child's school. Survey questions that supported the research questions were aligned with the following reporting categories: parent's consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, parent's perception of their child's academic needs, social and emotional needs, and principal support for gifted education at their child's school. The qualitative analysis of interview data involved analyses of similarities and differences between the interview responses. The interview responses were transcribed, coded, and then placed into reporting categories by themes following each interview. Selected excerpts from interview responses representing varied parental perceptions were quoted in the final report. The results of the survey and interview data collected included parent perceptions and the parent-school connection (Bernhardt, 2004).

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the survey include participation in the survey through self-selection criteria of having a child who is gifted enrolled in the large urban school district. The low return rate of survey responses at 16% does not reflect the beliefs of the majority of parents with a child who is gifted. An additional limitation of the study is that the survey and interview responses were self-reported by the parents of students who are gifted. While it would be beneficial to gather parent perceptions of those who withdrew their child who is gifted from the very large urban school district, the data would be difficult to gather because

the parent contact information is not readily available in the school district student information system. The majority of the survey participants were White. The effect is that the results present a limited reflection of the beliefs of parents who identified themselves as Black, Hispanic, or Asian and have a child who is gifted.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

Chapter Four discusses the results of the analysis of the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey and the follow-up interviews with selected parents of students who are gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district. The analysis includes the demographic profile of the participants and the survey and interview responses that are relevant to the two research questions. Chapter Five will contain conclusions based on the research as well as make recommendations for future research.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Parents' satisfaction with their child's school and their academic growth is essential to continued enrollment of the child in that school (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school may be influenced by factors within the school as well as those factors outside of the school. Schools need to provide the quality of support expected by parents of students who are gifted to keep such students enrolled at their zoned schools. Parents' satisfaction with their child's school and their academic growth is essential to continued enrollment of the child in that school (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The purpose of this study was to research factors that may influence the parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school. The research study focused on parental perceptions of

academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education at their child's school and the parents' willingness to keep their child who is gifted enrolled at their current school. The target group in the study was parents of children who are gifted but did not include parents of children who are gifted and also have a disability.

### **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

1. What are the indicators of a parents' satisfaction with the school's support of their child who is receiving gifted services?

2. What is the relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for gifted?

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for gifted.

### **Participant Demographics**

The survey demographic data were gathered from 683 survey participants who were parents of children who are gifted and were enrolled in a very large urban school district in 2012-13 school year. The survey demographic data provides information that describes those parents who participated in the survey. The majority of survey respondents were White (69.4%, n=474), followed by Hispanic (13.9%, n=95), Asian (6.9%, n=47), Black (5.7%, n=39), Other (3.7%, n=25) and three (0.4%) of participants who did not complete the survey question. Mothers (85%, n=581) represented the majority of respondents with fathers representing 14.5% (n=99) and 0.5% (n=3) representing guardians. The 683 parent

participants in the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey had a total of the 841 children who were gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district. The analysis by school levels reflected that 55.6% (n=468) were in elementary school, 26.9% (n=226) were in middle school, and 17.5% (n=147) were in high school.

The follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected parents of students who were enrolled in a very large urban school district. The following interview demographic information was gathered during the interviews. Mothers (90%, n=9) represented the majority of respondents with fathers representing 10% (n=1). The 10 interview participants had a total of 12 children who are gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district. The analysis by school levels reflected that 50% (n=6) were in elementary school, 25% (n=3) were in middle school, and 25% (n=3) were in high school.

When comparing the survey and interview demographics, the parental roles of participants were similar. The parental role of the participants in the survey and the interview were mainly mothers with 85% mothers who participated in the survey and 90% mothers who participated in the interviews. There were 14.5% fathers who participated in the survey and 10% fathers who participated in the interviews. Slight differences in the demographic results existed for the school level of the participant's child who is gifted. The survey participants had slightly higher percentages of elementary and middle school children than the interview participants. There were 55.6% survey participants and 50% interview participants with elementary school children and 26.9% survey participants and 25% interview participants with middle school children. The results of participants with children in high school differed with slightly lower percentages of survey participants with children in high school than the

interview participants. There were 17.5% survey participants and 25% interview participants with high school children in gifted programs.

There was one demographic variable that was not provided during interviews and therefore, cannot be compared with survey demographics. When asked to talk about themselves and their children, the interview participants did not disclose their race and therefore cannot be compared with the survey participants with these two variables.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the indicators of a parents' satisfaction with the school's support of their child who is receiving gifted services?

#### **2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey Results**

The following analysis was performed to answer Research Question 1 and was based on the results from the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners. A frequency analysis was conducted to address Research Question 1.

##### *Academic Needs*

When asked if the academic needs were met for their child who is gifted, the majority (54.2%, n=370) of the parents said no, 10.5% (n=72) of the parents were unsure, and 35.3% (n=241) of the parents said yes. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Academic Needs Met in the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners

Academic needs met for the child who is gifted	n	%
Yes	241	35.3
No	370	54.2
Unsure	72	10.5
Total	683	100

*Social and Emotional Needs*

When asked if the social and emotional needs were met for their child who is gifted, a significant majority (76.4%, n=522) of the parents said yes, followed by 23% (n=157) of the parents who said no, and 0.6% (n=4) of the parents who did not complete this question. The results are shown on Table 7.

Table 7: Social and Emotional Needs Met in the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners

Social and emotional needs met for the child who is gifted	n	%
Yes	522	76.4
No	157	23.0
Missing	4	0.6
Total	683	100

*Principal Support*

When asked if the parent respondents believed the principal of their child’s school was supportive of gifted education, there were a significant majority (68.8%, n=470) of the parents who said yes, followed by 18.7% (n=128) of the parents who said no, 11.9% (n=81) of the

parents who said the question was not applicable, and 0.6% (n=4) of the parents who did not complete this question. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Principal Support for Gifted Education in the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted

Learners

Principal support for gifted education at the child's school	n	%
Yes	470	68.8
No	128	18.7
Not applicable	81	11.9
Missing	4	0.6
Total	683	100

### **Follow-up Interview Results from Parents of a Child Who Is Gifted**

#### *Academic Needs*

The following analysis was performed to answer Research Question 1 and was based on the results from the follow-up interviews of 10 parents with a total of 12 children who were being served in programs for students who are gifted. When asked if the academic needs were met for their child who is gifted, half (50%, n=6) of the parents said yes, 33.3% (n=4) of the parents said no, and 16.6% (n=2) of the parents did not provide the response. The results are shown on Table 9.



Table 9: Academic Needs Met in the Follow-up Interview of Parents of a Child Who Is Gifted

Academic needs met for child who is gifted	n	%
Yes	6	50.0
No	4	33.3
Missing	2	16.6
Total	12	100

*Social and Emotional Needs*

When parents were asked if the social and emotional needs were met for their child who is gifted, the responses were similar with 50% (n=6) of the parents indicating their child’s social and emotional needs were met and 42% (n=5) of the parents expressing their child’s social and emotional needs were not met. One parent (8%) expressed that their child’s social and emotional needs were partially met. The results are shown on Table 10.

Table 10: Social and Emotional Needs Met in the Follow-up Interview of Parents of a Child Who Is Gifted

Social and emotional needs met for child who is gifted	n	%
Yes	6	50
No	5	42
Partially	1	8
Total	12	100

*Principal Support*

When asked if the parent respondents believed the principal of their child’s school was supportive of gifted education, half (50%, n=5) of the parents said yes, 40% (n=4) of the

parents said no, and 10% (n=1) of the parents said they had not met the principal. The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Principal Support of Gifted Education in the Follow-up Interview of Parents of a Child Who Is Gifted

Principal support for gifted education at the child's school	n	%
Yes	5	50
No	4	40
Not met principal	1	10
Total	10	100

### Comparison of Survey and Interview Responses

The comparison of results of the survey responses varied from the interview responses on each of the three questions about academic needs met, social and emotional needs met, and principal support for gifted education. The majority (54.2%, n=370) of the survey participants believed their child’s academic needs were not met, while 33.3% (n=4) of the interview participants believed their child’s academic needs were not met. The opposite is true for the interview participants with the majority (50%, n=6) of the interview participants believed their child’s academic needs were met and 35.3% (n=241) of the survey participants believed their child’s academic needs were met.

A different picture is presented when comparing responses of the survey participants and of the interview participants regarding the social and emotional needs of the participant’s child. Over three-quarters (76.4%, n=522) of survey participants believed their child’s social and emotional needs were met and half (50%, n=6) of the child’s social and emotional needs

were met for the interview participants. Of those participants who did not believe their child's social and emotional needs were met, 42% (n=5) were interview participants and 23% (n=157) were survey participants. A similar trend presented in the analysis of the principal support for gifted education. As with the social and emotional support, there was a higher percentage (68.8%, n=470) of survey participants than interview participants (50%, n=5) who believed the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education. Also there was a higher percentage of interview participants (40%, n=4) than survey participants (18.7%, n=128) who believed the principal of their child's school was not supportive of gifted education.

## **Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted?

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted.

### **2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners Results**

The following analysis conducted to answer Research Question 2 is based on the results from the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners. A descriptive analysis is included to assist in describing the parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Following the descriptive analysis is a cross-tabulation that was

conducted to analyze the relationship between the parents’ satisfaction with the academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for their child who is gifted, and the parents’ consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted.

**Parent Consideration to Send Child to School Solely for Students Who Are Gifted**

To fully analyze this correlation, it is important to review the overall results of parents’ consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The results from the survey and the follow-up interviews are included below. When analyzing the entire 683 survey responses to the question regarding parent consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, over half (56.7%, n=387) of the parents said yes, 23.9% (n=163) said they were unsure, 19.2% (n=131) of the parents said no, and 0.3% (n=2) of the parents did not complete the question. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Parent Consideration to Send Their Child to a School Solely for Students Who Are Gifted From the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey

Parent consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted	n	%
Yes	387	56.7
No	131	19.2
Unsure	163	23.9
Missing	2	0.3
Total	683	100

Of the 10 parents interviewed as follow-up to the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey, there were 80% (n=8) of the parents who said yes and 20% (n=2) of the parents who said no. These results are aligned with the survey results. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Parent Consideration of a School Solely for Students Who Are Gifted From the Follow-up Interviews

Parent consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted	n	%
Yes	8	80
No	2	20
Total	10	100

#### *Academic Needs*

Table 14 contains the analysis of the relationship between the variable of parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for gifted and the variable of parents' satisfaction with the academic support. Of the 131 parents of a child who is gifted and who were not willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the parents' perception of their child's academic needs being met were split between 45.8% (n=60) of the parents who believed their child's academic needs were being met and 48.1% (n=63) of the parents who believed their child's academic needs were not being met. There were also eight (6.1%) parents who were unsure if their child's academic needs were being met out of those parents who expressed that they would not consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

Table 14: Academic Needs and Consideration of a School Solely for Students Who Are Gifted

Would you consider sending your child to a school solely for gifted learners?	Perception of academic support							
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Unsure</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	122	31.5	224	57.9	41	10.6	387	100
No	60	45.8	63	48.1	8	6.1	131	100
Unsure	59	36.2	82	50.3	22	13.5	163	100
Missing	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	100
							683	100

Of the 387 parents of a child who is gifted and who were willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (57.9%, n=224) of the parents did not believe their child’s academic needs were being met, while 31.5% (n=122) of the parents believed their child’s academic needs were being met, plus an additional 10.6% (n=41) of the parents who were unsure if their child’s academic needs were being met.

When 163 parents said they were unsure if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (50.3%, n=82) of the parents believed their child’s academic needs were not being met, followed by 36.2% (n=59) of the parents who believed their child’s academic needs were being met. In addition, of the parents who

were unsure if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, there were 13.5% (n=22) of the parents who were also unsure if their child's academic needs were being met.

There were also two parents who did not respond to the question about their willingness to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Of those parents, one parent believed their child's academic needs were not being met and one parent was unsure if their child's academic needs were being met.

A Pearson Chi-Square Test was used to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between parent perception of academic support for their child who is gifted and parent consideration for sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The Pearson Chi-Square results of  $\chi^2(6, n = 683) = 15.483, p < .017$  reflected a statistical significance between the two variables of academic support and parent consideration of a school solely for students who are gifted. A relationship exists between the parents' perception of academic support for their child and the parents' willingness to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

### *Social and Emotional Needs*

Table 15 contains the analysis of the relationship between the variable of parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for gifted and the variable of parents' satisfaction with the social and emotional support of their child who is gifted. Of the 131 parents of a child who is gifted and were not willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (77.1%, n=101) of the parents believed their child's social and emotional needs were being met, followed by 21.4% (n=28) of the parents who believed their child's social and emotional needs were not being met. There were also

two (1.5%) parents who did not respond to the question about their child’s social and emotional needs being met.

Table 15: Social and Emotional Needs and Consideration of a School Solely for Students

Who Are Gifted

Would you consider sending your child to a school solely for gifted learners?	Perception of Social and Emotional Support							
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Missing</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	298	77.0	87	22.5	2	0.5	387	100
No	101	77.1	28	21.4	2	1.5	131	100
Unsure	121	74.2	42	25.8	-	-	163	100
Missing	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-	2	100
							683	100

Of the 387 parents of a child who is gifted who were willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (77%, n=298) of the parents believed their child’s social and emotional needs were being met, while 22.5% (n=87) of the parents did not believe their child’s social and emotional needs were being met. There were also two (0.5%) parents who did not respond to the question about their child’s social and emotional needs being met.



When 163 parents said they were unsure if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (74.2%, n=121) of the parents believed their child's social and emotional needs were being met, followed by 25.8% (n=42) of the parents who believed their child's social and emotional needs were not being met,

There were also two parents who did not respond to the question about their willingness to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Of those parents, one parent believed their child's social and emotional needs were not being met and one parent believed their child's social and emotional needs were being met.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test was used to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between social and emotional support and parent consideration for sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The Pearson Chi-Square results of  $\chi^2(6, n = 683) = 4.450, p > .616$  reflected no statistical significance between the two variables of social and emotional support and parent consideration of a school solely for students who are gifted. The parental perception of their child's social and emotional support has no relationship to the parent's consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

### *Principal Support*

Table 16 contains the analysis of the relationship between the variable of parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for gifted and the variable of parents' perception of the principal's support for gifted education at their child's school. Of the 131 parents of a child who is gifted who were not willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (65.6%, n=86) of the parents believed the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education, followed by 24.4 (n=32)

of the parents who believed the principal of their child’s school was not supportive of gifted education. There were also 9.9% (n=13) of the parents who stated the question regarding principal support for gifted education at their child’s school was not applicable.

Table 16: Principal Support and Consideration of a School Solely for Students Who Are Gifted

Would you consider sending your child to a school solely for gifted learners?	Perception of principal support for gifted education									
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Not applicable</u>		<u>Missing</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	270	69.8	70	18.1	45	11.6	2	0.5	387	100
No	86	65.6	32	24.4	13	9.9	-	-	131	100
Unsure	113	69.3	26	16.0	22	13.5	2	1.2	163	100
Missing	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0	-	-	2	100
									683	100

Of the 387 parents of a child who is gifted who were willing to consider sending their child to school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (69.8%, n=270) of the parents believed the principal of their child’s school was supportive of gifted education, while 18.1% (n=70) of the parents who participated in the survey did not believe the principal of their child’s school was supportive of gifted education. There were also 11.6% (n=45) of the

parents who stated the question regarding principal support for gifted education at their child's school was not applicable. In addition, there were two parents (0.5%) who did not respond to the question about the principal's support of gifted education at their child's school.

When 163 parents said they were unsure if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted, the majority (69.3%, n=113) of the parents believed the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education, followed by 16% (n=26) of the parents who believed that the principal of their child's school was not supportive of gifted education. There were also 13.5% (n=22) of parents who stated the question regarding principal support for gifted education at their child's school was not applicable. In addition, there were two parents (1.2%) that did not respond to the question about the principal's support of gifted education at their child's school.

There were also two parents who did not respond to the question about their willingness to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Of those parents, one parent believed the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education and one parent stated it was not applicable if the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test was used to analyze the relationship between the parents' perception of the principal support for gifted education at their child's school and the parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

The Pearson Chi-Square results of  $\chi^2(9, n = 683) = 8.959, p > .441$  reflected no statistical significance between the two variables of principal support and parent consideration of a school solely for students who are gifted. There is no relationship between the parents'

perception of principal support for gifted education and the parents' willingness to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 included demographic results as well as data analysis of the 2013 Survey of Parents of Gifted Learners and the Follow-up Interviews with parents of children who are gifted. Two research questions guided the study and data collection used in the analysis. A frequency analysis was done to address Research Question 1. The indicators of parental satisfaction with the school where their child who is gifted received gifted services are found in the results of the parents' belief of their child's academic needs being met, social and emotional needs being met, and the parents' perception of the principal support of gifted education at their child's school. A cross-tabulation was conducted to analyze the relationship in Research Question 2 between the parents' belief about their child's academic needs, social and emotional needs, the principal support of gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to send their child to a school for students who are gifted. The alternative hypothesis was partially proven by the survey data establishing that a relationship exists between the parents' belief about their child's academic needs and the willingness of the parents to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The alternative hypothesis could not be proven for the remaining variables of social and emotional needs or principal support for gifted education when compared with the parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The analysis reflected that there was no relationship between the parents' belief about their child's social and emotional needs being met and the willingness of the parent to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Similarly, the analysis reflected that no relationship exists

between the parents' belief about the principal's support for gifted education at their child's school and the consideration by the parent to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose of the Study**

Parents' satisfaction with their child's school and their academic growth is essential to continued enrollment of the child in that school (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Van Tassel-Baska, 2006). The parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school may be influenced by factors within the school as well as those factors outside of the school. The purpose of this study was to research factors that may influence the parents' decision to keep their child who is gifted enrolled in their current school. The research studied parental perceptions of academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support for gifted education for their child who is gifted and the parents' willingness to keep their child who is gifted enrolled at their current school. The target group in the study was parents of children who are gifted but did not include parents of children who are gifted and also have a disability.

### **Discussion**

The following section discusses the findings from the analysis of the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey and the follow-up interviews with parents of a child who is gifted as it relates to the two research questions in this study. While the survey return rate was low at 16%, there were 683 parents who participated in the survey out of 4,401 total parents surveyed. The majority of the survey and interview participants were White mothers of a child

who is gifted and enrolled in the very large school district in the 2012-13 school year. The survey and interview racial demographics are similar to the national demographics of students who are gifted. Nationally, the majority of students are White who are identified as gifted (Gallagher, 2005b; Michael-Chadwell, 2013; Oakland & Rossen, 2005). A plan is in place at the very large urban school district to identify students who are gifted and Black, Hispanic, Asian, or another race through an alternate method of identification which has resulted in increased identification of students who are gifted and Black, Hispanic, Asian, or another race. The survey results and the interview results of parents with children who are gifted and enrolled in the very large urban school district had slightly more than half of the students who are gifted in elementary school with the remainder of the students in middle school and high school. This higher percentage of parents who completed the survey or participated in the interviews who had elementary school children who are gifted may be attributed to the greater parental involvement in a child's education during elementary school followed by a decrease in middle and high school (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap, & Hevey, 2000; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 analyzes the parents' satisfaction with their child's support at school with gifted educational needs. Research Question 1 follows. What are the indicators of a parents' satisfaction with the school's support of their child who is receiving gifted services?

The parents' responses to three survey and three interview questions regarding their child's academic needs, social and emotional needs, and principal support for gifted education at the child's school served as indicators of parent satisfaction. The study yielded mixed results between the survey responses and the interview responses for the question regarding

the parents' belief about their child's academic needs being met. More than half of the parents who completed the survey believed their child's academic needs were not met. The opposite occurred with the interview participants where half of the parents believed that their child's academic needs were met. A different trend emerged in parent responses with the analysis of questions regarding the social and emotional needs and principal support for gifted education for their child. A significant majority of the parents who participated in the survey believed their child's social and emotional needs were met and that the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education. Half of the parents who participated in the interviews believed their child's social and emotional needs were met and that the principal of their child's school was supportive of gifted education.

The reasons behind the range of responses from parents when asked if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted regardless of the parents' satisfaction with support for their child can be found in the body of research literature. Parents' perception of their child's academic needs being met may be based on several factors which may account for the mixed results in the study. The parent's choice of a service delivery model for gifted education for their child may not be available at their child's school (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). The parents' expectations of their child may impact their child's academic progress (Dweck, 2008; Rubenstein, Siegle, Reis, McCoach, & Burton, 2012). Parents' overall attitudes about schools and their functions can also influence their child's academic progress (Wentzel, 2002). The parent may be unhappy with their child's teacher which can result in a negative belief about their child's academic progress and their child's social and emotional well-being (Campbell & Verna, 2007). Parental involvement may also have influence on their child's social and emotional needs being met (Baker et al., 1998).



Principal support of gifted education is essential in teaching preparation and training (Van Tassel-Baska & Johnson, 2007; Vidergor & Eilam, 2011). The effectiveness of the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and the effectiveness of the school (Marzano, 2007) can impact parents' perception of the principal's support for gifted education. The implementation of high standards by the principal can have a positive effect on the parents' belief about their child's academic support and principal support for gifted education (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Parental satisfaction with their child's educational support may be rooted in the Appraisal Theory of Emotions (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman 2004) where a parent's prior experience that evokes an emotional response may influence the parent's response to the survey and interview questions.

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 analyzes the relationship between indicators of parent satisfaction with their child's educational experience and the parents' willingness to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. The following is Research Question 2 and the alternative hypothesis. What is the relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted?

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a relationship between the parents' satisfaction of academic support, social and emotional support, principal support for gifted education at their child's school, and the parents' consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted.

The study analyzed the relationship between the individual variables of academic support, social and emotional support, and principal support when compared to the variable containing the indication of parent consideration to transfer their child to a separate school for students who are gifted. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the parents' belief about their child's academic needs and the parents' consideration of sending their child to a school for gifted. However, the statistical significance does not continue with the relationship between the parents' belief about their child's social and emotional needs and the parent's consideration of sending their child to a school for students who are gifted. Nor does the statistical significance continue with the relationship between the parents' belief about their principal's support of gifted education at their child's school and the parents' consideration of sending their child to a school for students who are gifted.

There were a large percentage of parents who believed that their child's academic as well as social and emotional needs were met but were still interested in sending their child to a school for gifted. This may be explained through the literature that reflects some parents' beliefs that their child should be educated in a setting with similar ability peers who are gifted. (Abdulkadiroglu, et al., 2011; Duquette et al., 2011; Knotek et al., 2011). Parents may believe that gifted students learning together will encourage their child to challenge themselves academically (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). A school solely for students who are gifted could fulfill the belief that their child will be challenged academically. Also, in the research study there were parents who expressed that they would not consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. This aligned with the literature on parents who wanted to keep their child enrolled in a traditional school with a wide range of student ability levels regardless of their belief about the academic or social and emotional needs of their

child or the principal support for gifted education (Cross, 2011). The Appraisal Theory of Emotions may account for some of the mixed beliefs about their child's support in school in relationship to the parents' consideration to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. In the Appraisal Theory of Emotions, a person may experience an emotional response to an event based on the person's prior experience with that event (Roseman, 2004). The parents in the study may have experienced an emotional reaction to the survey and interview questions based on prior experiences with the educational system that influenced the parents' responses. During the follow-up interviews, the parents freely expressed their reasons behind their interest in keeping their child enrolled at their current school, as did those parents who were very frustrated and vocal in their desire to send their child to a school for students who are gifted. The following is a sentiment expressed by several parents when asked during the interview if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. "Yes, emphatically and absolutely. We want her to attend a gifted school where she will be challenged, free to learn, and safe." (B9, 2013). On the opposite end of the range of parent responses is the representative comment from another parent who was interviewed and asked if they would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. "My kids benefit by being in the regular classroom to develop school relationships across the group. It develops a better work ethic. I don't want a school for 100% gifted for my children but would support one for others" (F5, 2013).

The findings in this study align with prior research indicating parents are divided on the belief about where their child's needs are best met. Some parents want their child to learn only with similar ability level peers who are gifted (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2011; Cross, 2011; Paul et al., 2005). Other parents want their child to be educated with peers of mixed ability

levels similar to what they will encounter in the community (Cross, 2011; Feldman & Piirto, 1995). While some parents are satisfied with the quality of the teaching at their child's school, they are not satisfied with other school supports (Howell & Peterson, 2002; Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Moe, 2001). Ward (2005) found that some parents look for alternatives to their child's school due to the limits of academic support available to their child. The research reflects the wide range of interests by parents when making decisions about the school their child should attend.

### **Final Summary**

The research focus for this study was requested by the superintendent of a very large urban school district. The results will be used to make informed decisions about meeting the needs of students who are gifted in the school district. The parents who gave their time to complete the survey or to be interviewed have provided a wealth of feedback about the status of the parents' satisfaction with their child's experience in the gifted program at their school. The analysis of the survey and interview data provided a statistical foundation that yielded mixed findings. Nearly one-fifth of the parents who participated in the survey or interview did not want to consider sending their child to a school where only children who are gifted would be served. Slightly more than half of the parents who participated in the survey or interview were interested in sending their child who is gifted to a school solely for students who are gifted. There were also nearly one quarter of the parents who were surveyed that were unsure if they wanted to send their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. These mixed results mirror prior research studies where parents differ in their beliefs and desires for their child's education. When parents are active in the selection of their child's school, they tend to be more satisfied overall (Bielick & Chapman, 2003; Paul et al., 2005).

The Appraisal Theory of Emotions provided a framework for analysis of the influence a prior emotional connection had on parents' who would or would not consider moving their child to a school solely for students who are gifted based on parent's prior experience with their child's school (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 2004). In other words, when a parent has had a positive or negative experience with their child's school, the parent's emotional response can be rooted in that experience regardless of the nature of the next experience with the school. This Appraisal Theory of Emotions may account for the parents who participated in the survey or interviews who were not interested in sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted even though they felt their child's academic or social and emotional needs were not met. Similarly, the Appraisal Theory of Emotions may also account for those parents who were satisfied with their child's academic or social and emotional support but remained interested in sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted.

Parents play a vital role in making decisions about their child's education. When considering how to support their child's education, parents of children who are gifted in the state of Florida have resources available to assist in supporting their child's academic as well as social and emotional needs through the required educational plans for their child (Florida Department of Education, 2013). While Van Tassel-Baska (2006) noted that communication with parents was found to be problematic on most gifted program issues, Florida's Educational Plans include provisions for ongoing communication with parents of children who are gifted. Interview participant D7 (2013) summed up a shared belief among parents who were interviewed by saying, "I think support for the gifted program is most important because most people assume these kids will be fine. But, if they aren't challenged and nurtured they will wither away."

## **Implications and Recommendations for Further Research**

This research study has built upon the body of previous research focused on parents of children who are gifted. Parents are a vital component in the success of their child's education. Although the survey return rate was low, there was enough interest from parents to consider opening a school solely for students who are gifted while continuing with the current service delivery models at the schools within the very large urban school district. Long-range planning will be needed to prepare for support of a school solely for students who are gifted and the impact of the student transfers from their zoned school to a school solely for students who are gifted. Based on the majority of interest from the parents of elementary children who are gifted, it is recommended that the first school should serve elementary school students. The results of this research study highlight the need for on-going communication between educators and administrators with the parents of children who are gifted in order to keep informed of the child's needs for further enrichment to maximize the child's academic potential. Parent satisfaction with their child's academic progress or social and emotional support or principal support for gifted education does not always mean the parent is content with the school as revealed by the prevalence of parents who were satisfied with their child's academic or social and emotional support or principal support for gifted education yet willing to consider moving their child to a school solely for students who are gifted. Brulles and Winebrenner (2011) noted that parents perceive that a school solely for students who are gifted will inherently encourage their gifted learner to take more academic risks and achieve more through competition with gifted peers.

Given the mixed survey results when parents were asked about their children's academic needs, social and emotional needs, and principal support for gifted education, more

research needs to be done to determine the extenuating circumstances that would result in a parent who not would consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted but has a child whose academic needs are not met. Similarly, more research needs to be done related to the circumstances that would result in parents willing to consider sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted even though their child's academic needs are met. Further research also needs to be conducted to learn more about the characteristics and underlying reasons influencing parents who were interested in keeping their child enrolled at their school rather than sending them to a school solely for students who are gifted. In addition, future research is also needed to understand the fundamental reasons influencing the large number of parents who were interested in sending their child to a school solely for students who are gifted regardless of their satisfaction with their child's support from the school. Since the majority of the parents who participated in the survey identified their race as White, future research needs to focus on the beliefs and satisfaction of parents of children who are gifted and are identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian or another race.

Parents make decisions about the choice of schools where their children who are gifted are enrolled based on many factors. Some of the reasons may be immediately evident and other reasons may be unseen based on prior experiences with a school system or other factors. The majority of the parents who participated in the study expressed an interest in changing the site where their child who is gifted is educated. In this era of school choice, the public school system is now in a position where it has to compete for enrollment of students who are gifted as well as promote the added value a public school offers to students who are gifted.

**APPENDIX A: 2013 PARENTS OF GIFTED LEARNERS SURVEY**



## 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey

We are seeking your opinions about gifted education as parents of a gifted learner. The survey should only take about 15 minutes to complete. Please check the box providing parental consent to begin the survey. You may print a copy of the consent for your records. By continuing on with the survey, you give consent to have your responses used in future research. All responses will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be used. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Leigh Austin at [REDACTED] for further information.

1. Person completing this survey:

- Mother
- Father
- Other

Questions 2-7 pertain to the person completing the survey.

2. Zip Code

3. Ethnicity

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- Other

4. Country of Birth

5. Gender

- Male
- Female

6. Please indicate the highest degree attained

- Did not graduate from high school
- High school diploma / GED
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

7. Occupation

8. How many of your children are currently in a gifted program?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

9. What are the ages, grade, and gender and primary language of your gifted learner(s)?

	Current age	Current grade	Gender	Primary Language (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, etc.)
Gifted Learner 1				
Gifted Learner 2				
Gifted Learner 3				
Gifted Learner 4				
Gifted Learner 5				

10. Which type of school does your child currently attend?

- Public school
- Charter school
- Private school
- Home school
- Other

11. What traits do you think are the most relevant in academic giftedness?

12. The very large urban school district defines gifted as a student who scored two or more deviations above the mean on an IQ test, has a majority of the gifted characteristics identified on a standardized checklist, has a demonstrated need for gifted services, and when the learner is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted learners. To what extent do your personal ideas agree with the school district's definition of giftedness?

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. To what extent are you familiar with Florida's regulations governing gifted education?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Neutral
- Somewhat unfamiliar
- Very unfamiliar

14. Who initially recommended your child for gifted screening?

- Parent
- Teacher
- Counselor
- Other

15. Who administered the instrument(s) to assess your child's giftedness?
- Private psychologist
  - School district psychologist
16. Are your child's academic needs met by regular education classes?
- Yes
  - No
    - a. Why not?
  - Unsure
17. What gifted education services are your gifted learner receiving?
- Full-Time Model
    - a. (gifted learners stay in the gifted program for reading/language arts, math, science and social studies)
  - Gifted Clusters
    - a. (gifted learners grouped together in classrooms)
  - Home-School Based Resource Room
    - a. (gifted learners attend gifted class one or more days at their local zoned school)
  - Center-School Based Resource Room
    - a. (gifted learners attend gifted class one day per week at a school, transportation provided from local zoned school to center school)
  - Subject-Area Academic Classes
    - a. (gifted learner attend gifted subject-area class for part of day)
  - Gifted Academic Classes
    - a. (gifted sections of academic classes with only gifted students)
  - Gifted Clusters for Academic Classes
    - a. (gifted learners grouped in sections for academic content)
  - Gifted Elective Classes in Middle School
    - a. (Advanced Academics and Career Planning)
  - Gifted Elective Classes in High School
    - a. (Studies of Students who are Gifted, Research Methodology for Students who are Gifted, or Externship for Students who are Gifted)
  - Consultative Services
    - a. (monthly face-to-face meetings between gifted endorsed teachers and regular education teachers to plan and review progress toward gifted standards and educational plan goals)
  - Unsure
18. Are your child's social and emotional needs met by his or her teacher?
- Yes
  - No
19. Do you feel the principal of your child's school is supportive of gifted education?
- Not applicable
  - Yes
  - No

20. Have you met with your child's teacher or other school staff this school year? For what reason?
- Yes
  - No
  - Reason for meeting?
21. Did you receive gifted services as a child?
- Yes
  - No
  - Comment
22. How has your own schooling experiences influenced the decisions you make for your child's education?
23. Do you belong to any associations that educate, promote, or advocate on behalf of the gifted students?
- Yes
    - a. If yes, which one(s):
  - No
24. What is the greatest challenge you face as the parent of a gifted learner?
25. Does your child receive special education services (other than gifted education programming)?
- Yes
    - If yes, for what? How often?
  - No
26. Does your child participate in extracurricular activities?
- Yes
    - If yes, what types?
  - No

27. How important are the following?

least important ←————→ most important

	1	2	3	4	5
Public support for gifted education					
Interaction with other parents of gifted learners					
Administrative support for gifted education services					
Emotional support for gifted learners					
More teacher training in gifted education					

28. Rank the following in priority with 1 being the top priority and 4 the lowest priority

Separate school for the gifted	
Full day separate classes for the gifted	
Part time classes for the gifted (inclusion with students not identified as gifted)	
Gifted students attending their zoned school	

29. Are you homeschooling your gifted learner?

- Yes
- No

(Programming note: if Yes, then continue with question number 30.)

30. Would you consider sending your gifted learner who is homeschooled to a local zoned school to receive gifted services?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

31. What are your perceived benefits of a school that is solely for gifted learners?

32. Would you consider sending your child to a school solely for gifted learners?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

(Programming note: If yes, then continue with question number 33)

33. If the very large urban school district had a school solely for gifted learners, what offerings do you think should be available?

- STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)
- Science Fairs
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Performing arts
- Extracurricular activities
- Debate
- Self-paced classes
- Independent study
- Blended learning with some virtual and face-to-face classes
- Accelerated courses
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure

34. Would you be willing to provide transportation to a school that is solely for gifted learners?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

35. What type of magnet programs would you be interested in for your gifted learner?

- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Advanced Engineering
- Criminal Justice, Law, and Finance
- Hospitality Management
- Aviation and Aerospace Engineering
- Center for International Studies
- Digital Media and Gaming
- STEM (science, engineering, science, and technology)
- Global technologies
- International Baccalaureate
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure

Thank you for participating in the 2013 Parents of Gifted Learners Survey.

Adapted survey questionnaire from Parents of Gifted Learners Survey (2009) Louisiana State University and University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Retrieved from [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=6xXR\\_2bBfWykCmgtRPCqQMrg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=6xXR_2bBfWykCmgtRPCqQMrg_3d_3d)

**APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO USE PARENTS OF GIFTED LEARNERS  
SURVEY**



**From:** Matthews, Michael [<mailto:Michael.Matthews@uncc.edu>]

**Sent:** Thursday, November 20, 2014 1:27 PM

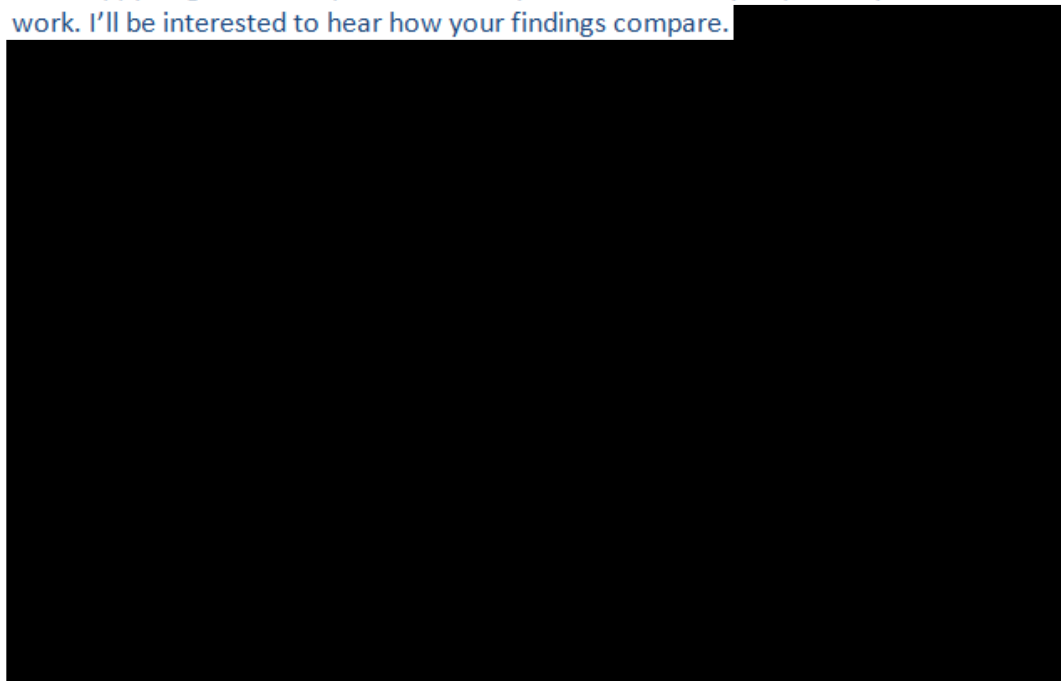
**To:** Austin, Leigh R.

**Cc:** 'jjolly@lsu.edu'; 'j.jolly@unsw.edu.au'

**Subject:** RE: Request permission to use Parents of Gifted Learner Survey and copy of your survey results

Hi Leigh,

I am happy to give formal permission for you use our survey as part of your dissertation work. I'll be interested to hear how your findings compare.



Best,

Michael

**From:** Jennifer Jolly [mailto:[j.jolly@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.jolly@unsw.edu.au)]

**Sent:** Friday, November 21, 2014 7:12 PM

**To:** Austin, Leigh R.

**Subject:** Re: Request permission to use Parents of Gifted Learner Survey and copy of your survey results

Hi Leigh,

I just wanted to let you know that I grant permission for you to use the survey in your dissertation.

Best of luck with your studies,  
Jennifer

Jennifer L. Jolly, Ph.D.  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Education  
John Goodsell Building  
The University of New South Wales  
Sydney, NSW 2052 Australia  
Fax: [+61 2 9385 1946](tel:+61293851946)  
Email: [j.jolly@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.jolly@unsw.edu.au)

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

***Blueprint Showing the Relationship among Evaluation Questions and Data Collected from the Interview and Survey Items***

Categories	Interview Questions	Survey Questions
Are the participant demographics related to perceptions about a school for the gifted?	<p><b>Tell me a little bit about your gifted child.</b>            Prompts: What is your child interested in? What are your child’s strengths in school? Does your child speak a second language? What extracurricular activities does your child like to do? How old is your gifted child? Does your child attend public school, private school, charter school or do you home school your child?</p> <p><b>Now tell me about a few things about yourself.</b>            Prompts: place of birth, occupation, highest degree earned, number of gifted children, their ages and grade levels, primary language spoken at home</p>	1-10, 26
What are the parents’ personal experiences with gifted education?	<p><b>Were you identified as a gifted learner? Did you go to gifted classes?</b>            Prompts: How has your own experience affected the choices you make for your child’s education? What were some classes that you recall? What did you like about them? When did you start going to gifted classes? Describe your gifted classes.</p>	21-22
What are the parents’ perceptions about gifted education?	<p><b>What is exciting about being the parent of a gifted child? What do you feel is most important for educating your gifted child? (Can be more than one thing)</b>            Prompts: What are the greatest challenges you face as a parent or family member of a gifted learner? What do you think would be the benefits of opening a school solely for the gifted? Are the following important to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*public support of gifted education</li> <li>*interaction with other parents of a gifted child</li> <li>*administrative support for gifted education services</li> <li>*emotional support for gifted learners</li> <li>* more teacher training in gifted education</li> </ul>	11, 23-24, 27, 31

Evaluation Questions	Interview Questions	Survey Questions
How was the child determined to be eligible for gifted services?	<p><b>Can you describe for us how your child was identified as a gifted child? Does your child get other Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services?</b> Prompts: Who recommended your child for gifted screening? Who administered the gifted evaluation to your child? What did your child need to do to determine the level of giftedness? Do you know the very large urban school district's definition of gifted? If so, do you agree with it? How familiar are you with the Florida regulations about gifted education?</p>	12-15, 25
How was the gifted child served in the gifted program?	<p><b>When thinking of your child's educational plan, what is the current model your child receives?</b> Prompts: Full-Time Model (gifted learners stay in the gifted program for reading/language arts, math, science and social studies), Gifted Clusters (gifted learners grouped together in classrooms), Home-School Based Resource Room (gifted learners attend gifted class one or more days at their local zoned school), Center-School Based Resource Room (gifted learners attend gifted class one day per week at a school, transportation provided from local zoned school to center school), Subject-Area Academic Classes (gifted learner attend gifted subject-area class for part of day), Gifted Academic Classes (gifted sections of academic classes with only gifted students), Gifted Clusters for Academic Classes (gifted learners grouped in sections for academic content), Gifted Elective Classes in Middle School (Advanced Academics and Career Planning), Gifted Elective Classes in High School (Studies of Students who are Gifted, Research Methodology for Students who are Gifted, or Externship for Students who are Gifted), Consultative Services (monthly face-to-face meetings between gifted endorsed teachers and regular education teachers to plan and review progress toward gifted standards and educational plan goals). Are your child's academic as well as social and emotional needs met at school?</p>	16-18, 28

Evaluation Questions	Interview Questions	Survey Questions
What does the parent of the gifted learner need in order to get their child to a school solely for the gifted?	<p><b>Would you be willing to provide transportation to a school for the gifted?</b></p> <p>Prompt: The very large urban school district does not provide transportation to all school choice programs. Do you have the ability to drive your child to and from school?</p>	34
What is the relationship between the parent of a gifted child and the school regarding the gifted program?	<p><b>Please tell me about your relationship with the school where your gifted child attends?</b></p> <p>Prompts: Is the principal supportive of gifted education? Have you met with your child’s teacher this year? For what? If child is home schooled: Would you consider gifted services for your gifted child at your local zoned school?</p>	19-20, 29-30
How strong is the parental interest in sending their child to a school for gifted learners?	<p><b>Would you consider sending your child to a school solely for gifted learners?</b></p> <p>Prompt: Yes, No, Not Sure If yes then ask next question.</p>	32
What kinds of classes would parents like to have offered for their gifted learner in a school solely for the gifted?	<p><b>If the very large urban school district had a school solely for gifted learners what offerings do you think should be available?</b></p> <p>Prompts: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), Science Fairs, Odyssey of the Mind, performing arts, extracurricular activities, debate, self-paced classes, independent study, blended learning with some virtual and face-to-face classes, accelerated courses</p>	33

Evaluation Questions	Interview Questions	Survey Questions
What type of overall program is the parent most interested in for their gifted learner?	<p><b>What type of magnet program would you be interested in for your gifted child?</b></p> <p>Prompts: performing arts, visual arts, advanced engineering, medical services, law and finance, hospitality, aviation and aerospace engineering, center for international studies, digital media and gaming, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), global technologies, International Baccalaureate.</p>	35

## **APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**





University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Leigh Austin and Co-PI: Ingrid Karin Cumming**

Date: **April 05, 2013**

Dear Researcher:

On 4/5/2013, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: Parental Interest in a School for the Gifted  
Investigator: Leigh Austin  
IRB Number: SBE-13-09292  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewska, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 04/05/2013 02:41:56 PM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

IRB Coordinator



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Leigh Austin and Co-PI: Ingrid Karin Cumming**

Date: **May 07, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 05/07/2015, the IRB approved the following minor modification to human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Modification Type: The study title has been changed from "Parental Interest in a School for the Gifted" to "Students who are gifted and public school enrollment choices their parents make." NOTE: This study has no expiration date, therefore, you do not need date range of the research extended.  
Project Title: Students who are gifted and public school enrollment choices their parents make  
Investigator: Leigh Austin  
IRB Number: SBE-13-09292  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 05/07/2015 03:32:13 PM EDT

IRB manager

Submit this form and a copy of your proposal to: **Public Schools**  
 Accountability, Research, and Assessment

**RESEARCH REQUEST FORM**

RECEIVED MAR - 8 2013

Your research proposal should include:

- Project Title
- Purpose and Research Problem
- Instruments
- Procedures and Proposed Data Analysis

Requester's Name Leigh Austin + Ingrid Cumming Date 3/8/13  
 E-mail Leigh.Austin@ Ingridcumming Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City, State Zip

Institutional Affiliation UCF  
 Project Director or Advisor Dr. Anna D. Diaz Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Sought: (check one)  Associate  Doctorate  Bachelor's  Not Applicable  Master's  Specialist

Project Title: Parental Interest in a school for the Gifted

ESTIMATED INVOLVEMENT			
PERSONNEL/CENTERS	NUMBER	AMOUNT OF TIME (DAYS, HOURS, ETC.)	SPECIFY SCHOOLS BY NAME AND NUMBER OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, ETC.
Students			
Teachers Parent liaisons	5	16 hrs	ELL
Administrators			
Schools/Centers			
Others (specify) Parents	12,000	30 min. for interview 15 min. for survey	N/A

Specify possible benefits to students/school system: The superintendent and Deputy superintendent will use the results of this research to further analyze the needs of gifted services.

**ASSURANCE**

Using the proposed procedures and instrument, I hereby agree to conduct research in accordance with the policies of the Orange County Public Schools. Deviations from the approved procedures shall be cleared through the Senior Director of Accountability, Research, and Assessment. Reports and materials shall be supplied as specified.

Requester's Signature Leigh Austin Ingrid K. Cumming

Approval Granted:  Yes  No Date: 3-12-13

Signature of the Senior Director for Accountability, Research, and Assessment Debra Cantor

NOTE TO REQUESTER: When seeking approval at the school level, a copy of this form, signed by the Senior Director, Accountability, Research, and Assessment, should be shown to the school principal who has the option to refuse participation depending upon any school circumstance or condition. The original Research Request Form is preferable to a faxed document.

Reference School Board Policy GCS, p. 249 *Make sure there is an informed consent.* OCPS1044ARA (Revised 2/10)

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