ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: IMPLEMENTING FULL-TIME GIFTED AND TALENT PROGRAMS IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS: REASONS, BENEFITS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITY COSTS

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This collective-case study examined the implementation of community-based, full-time gifted and talented programs in three Title 1 schools within a large school system. It investigated the reasons for, perceived benefits of, challenges of, and opportunity costs of implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools. The findings from the study reveal that the community-based, full-time gifted program directly contrasts the pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices associated with Martin Haberman's pedagogy of poverty, which was the theoretical framework for this study. The program goes against the belief that students from low-income families need basic, low-level styles of teaching, and moves to a belief that students from low-income families need access to rigorous educational opportunities, similar to their more affluent peers (Haberman, 2010).

The community-based program started as a way to retain students in local schools, which lessened accountability pressures at the school, as well as, provided

access to gifted services for students who qualified without having to leave the community school. However, the community-based, full-time gifted program became more than a targeted program for high-ability students, as it became a culture shift across the three high-poverty schools. The full-time gifted program became an avenue to access needed rigorous, enriched, and accelerated learning opportunities which are not prevalent in many Title 1 schools in the country. The program changed instructional practices to that of high-level, hands-on, student-centered, problem-solving activities, instead of remediation and reliance on basic skills for not only the students in the full-time gifted class but across the whole school. It opened access for students who live in poverty, where typically low-income students are underserved for gifted services, which has long-term effects on their academic achievement. The schools relied on strong principal leadership and vision to guide the program, and the program was supplemented by Title 1 funds to finance staff positions that support gifted beliefs and practices, professional development, investment in curriculum resources. Across all unique cases, the budgetary and philosophy-shift challenges associated with implementing the program were outweighed by the benefits of the program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of my study – an examination of increasing student access to gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools in a large school district. While Title 1 students are seldom provided access to gifted and talented programs, in the school district that is the focus of this study, a number of principals in elementary Title 1 schools have established gifted and talented programs, including programs largely funded through reallocated school funds. In this study, I explore the reasons behind the implementation of these programs, and administrators' perceived benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of these programs on students and schools.

Within the study, I discuss the challenges associated with the education of low-income students and the major federal program that seeks to address the problem, primarily Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and subsequent reform efforts. I also discuss the lack of access to gifted services students from low-income families face. Then I discuss the purpose of the study, the research questions at the heart of the study, and the conceptual framework that guides the study. Finally, I present a brief explanation of my interest in this topic, a description of the setting for the study, and an argument for the significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Poverty has a strong influence on student academic performance and achievement (Loughery & Woods, 2010). Students who come from economically impoverished backgrounds have less access to high-quality child-care and preschool education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008), are more likely to be academically behind before kindergarten starts (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Grundel, Oliveria, &

Geballe, 2003; Wertheimer, Moore, & Hair 2003), perform lower on state achievement exams later in school (Gorski, 2013; Hanushek & Lindseth 2009; & Ladd, 2012), and have fewer high-quality experienced teachers (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004) than their wealthier peers. Also, students who attend schools in low-income neighborhoods have schools that often lack basic supplies and have buildings that are run down or in need of repair (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2004). There are clear examples of inequities between the school experiences of children who live in poverty and children who live with greater economic advantages. As a result, federal and state education policies have attempted to provide additional resources to public schools that enroll poor students to foster and nurture their academic growth, as well as, close the achievement gap between poor students and their more economically advantaged peers.

One of the major federal programs designed to address poverty is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and its subsequent reauthorizations. Title 1 Part A of ESEA attempts to address directly the educational challenges associated with low-income students, which provides additional resources to schools so as “to help students served by the program to achieve proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, “Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies,” para. 5). One of the goals of Title 1 Part A is to “provide children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including the use of school-wide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, “Sec. 1001. Statement of Purpose,” para. 8). Although no specific programs or curriculum are

described or promoted by Title 1 Part A, the additional resources are meant to help educators in schools that serve low-income students enhance the educational opportunities afforded to their students.

Despite the stated goals of the ESEA Title 1 Part A, the programs provided to low-income students often represent merely an extension of existing educational opportunities – for example, additional teachers, smaller class size or additional instructional time. Historically, in Title 1 schools, students are exposed to lower-level learning experiences, such as worksheets, drill-and-practice or lectures; generally, students in Title 1 schools have fewer opportunities for enriched learning experiences and engagement in academically rigorous activities, such as project-based instruction or constructivist learning activities, than students in schools that serve wealthier communities (Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2010; Gorski, 2013; Knapp & Associates, 1995). While Title 1 funds supplement curriculum and instruction in schools that serve low-income students, research has shown that the "school practices of management, testing, teaching, and learning are far from the intellectually ambitious and academically demanding work that the policies sought" to promote in low-income schools (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009, p. 133). Many of the programs supported by Title 1 funds are remedial in nature (Baker, 2001); indeed, few programs supported by Title 1 funds would be characterized as either enriched or accelerated, at least not in comparison to programs in schools that enroll more economically advantaged students.

Thus, coupled with an achievement gap between socio-economic classes, there is also an access gap to rigorous curriculum and instruction – also known as an excellence gap (Loveless, 2008; Plucker, Burroughs, & Song, 2010). For example, students who

attend Title 1 schools or who live in poverty have been underserved historically in gifted education because the gifted potential of these low-income students is suppressed or simply overlooked (Briggs & Renzulli, 2009; Olszewski-Kubillus & Clarenbach, 2012). Students who might benefit from participating in a gifted program, which includes learning opportunities beyond the mandated core curriculum, seldom receive such an opportunity, thereby suppressing their academic growth. The educational focus is usually on passing the basic proficiency level associated with state testing. Dr. Joyce Vantassel-Baska (1998) further highlights this point in her research where she found that resources and priorities in Title 1 schools are seldom focused on setting higher levels of rigor and going beyond the core curriculum; resources and priorities are targeted at basic and pressing needs, which usually revolve around funding initiatives that will avoid failure for a school, such as failing to reach testing goals. As a result, few Title 1 schools invest money beyond meeting state-mandated proficiency levels and, consequentially, the achievement gaps between advanced learners based on economic wealth continue to occur.

Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that low-income students also benefit from a rigorous curriculum, high expectations for learning, and constructivist teaching techniques that are often the hallmarks of gifted education programs (Knapp & Associates, 1995). Why are such programs seldom found in Title 1 schools? What are the challenges – administrative and educational – to providing gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools and what are some of the potential benefits of doing so? What opportunity costs do school face when opting to implement gifted programs? The data collection site involved in this study provides a contrast to the typical educational

opportunities provided in Title 1 schools and an opportunity to explore the answers to these and other questions about gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools.

Purpose and Research Questions

This dissertation is designed not only to examine in greater detail the educational opportunities afforded to low-income students but also to examine full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools in a large school district. This study stems from my involvement in the field of gifted education and Title 1 schools, as well as, a desire to understand more about the intersection of Title 1 and gifted and talented programs than the current literature provides.

In the age of federal and state accountability in our nation's financially impoverished schools, students in Title 1 schools are exposed to a high frequency of learning to minimum standards, which focus on remediation and low-level thinking skills, and as a result have been historically underserved, especially in the realm of gifted education. However, Murnane and Duncan (2014) maintain if accountability systems are done right, then it should promote a willingness to use resources in new ways and offer incentives to develop the skills of all students. This qualitative study investigates a willingness to use resources differently. It will examine whether full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools counter the prevalent low-level and low-quality learning experiences students are exposed to in Title 1 classrooms and schools. The study provides an in-depth examination of why principals seek to provide low-income students in low-income schools with an enriched, extended, and rigorous curriculum program, even when very limited financial incentives are provided for them to do so. It also examines the consequences of providing these programs in Title 1 schools, including the extent to

which low-income students participate in them and whether the programs have secondary effects on others in the schools.

In this the study, I provide an in-depth description and analysis of school-wide Title 1 programs that focus on rigorous instructional practices and the implications of student access to gifted education in high-poverty schools, both for the individual students and their peers. Building on the theoretical framework of Martin Haberman's "pedagogy of poverty" and my review of the literature, the study investigates the following research question:

RQ1. What are the reasons expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff for implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools?

RQ2. What are the benefits expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ3. What are the challenges expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ4. What are the opportunity costs expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation uses a case study approach to focus on schools that provide access to high-quality, rigorous curriculum and educational experiences for students who

have been historically "locked out" from opportunities that focus on rigor, enrichment, and acceleration- which are connected to gifted education teaching practices. The study serves as a means to understand the implications of student access to rigorous curriculum and instructional strategies in Title 1 schools. It examines if full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools provide a contrast or exception to a "pedagogy of poverty," the conceptual framework that guides the study.

Baxter and Jack (2008) state that the conceptual framework "serves as an anchor for the study," (p. 553) and I use Martin Haberman's pedagogy of poverty as the anchor for this study. In 1958, Martin Haberman coined the phrase pedagogy of poverty to describe instructional practices and curriculum in most urban schools. According to Haberman (2010), students who attend low-income, urban schools are exposed to a basic, low-level style of teaching that stunts learning and widens the achievement gap. Haberman does not consider the pedagogy of poverty as an actual professional methodology or purposeful intervention; rather, he argues that it entails "certain ritualistic acts that, much like the ceremonies performed by religious functionaries, have come to be conducted for their intrinsic value rather than to foster learning" (Haberman, 2010, p. 83). It is deeply connected to what teachers believe students can or cannot do. Within the pedagogy of poverty, students are exposed to a teacher-controlled learning environment with ineffective instructional practices (Barr & Parrett, 2007). The teaching actions involve "giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments, giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking

papers, and giving grades" (Haberman, 2010, p. 82). It is mostly teacher-directed and relies heavily on student compliance.

Haberman (2010) states that educators who align themselves with the pedagogy of poverty generally adopt four syllogisms:

a) Teaching is what teachers do. Learning is what students do. Therefore, students and teachers are engaged in different activities.
b) Teachers are in charge and responsible. Students are those who still need to develop appropriate behavior. Therefore, when students follow teachers' directions, appropriate behavior is being taught and learned.
c) Students represent a wide range of individual differences. Many students have handicapping conditions and debilitating home lives. Therefore, a ranking of some sort is inevitable; some students will end up at the bottom of the class while others will finish at the top.
d) Basic skills are a prerequisite for learning and living. Students are not necessarily interested in basic skills. Therefore, directive pedagogy must be used to ensure that youngsters are compelled to learn their basic skills (p. 83).

According to Haberman, these beliefs perpetuate the pedagogy of poverty and create a school culture that often stereotypes poor students as less capable than their more economically advantaged peers and thus unable to benefit from more rigorous and engaging educational opportunities.

Contrary to the pedagogy of poverty, students who live in poverty also need access to academically rich and rigorous classrooms – the type of classrooms more often found in the schools attended by advantaged students. While students who live in poverty may have additional needs, there is ample research that demonstrates that students who live in poverty also need access to preschool, adequately resourced schools, school support services, affirming school environments, high academic expectations, quality teachers, student-centered classrooms, higher-order curricular resources and pedagogies, instructional technologies, and opportunities for family engagement and participation, opportunities differentially enjoyed by more economically advantaged peers (Cohen &

Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Knapp & Associates, 1995). Haberman (2010) describes these educational practices and policies as a "pedagogy of plenty", directly contrasting them to the low expectations and instructional practices of the pedagogy of poverty.

Haberman (2010) believes that good teaching is occurring whenever students are involved with issues that are authentic, real to their lives, and of vital concern to them. Good teaching, or the pedagogy of plenty, is a student-centered approach to learning. Poor students, like their more advantaged peers, need to have opportunities to explain societal ideals; plan a course of learning action and set goals; work in heterogeneous groups; reflect on their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do; see big ideas and major concepts by means of questioning; and learns beyond the factual level (Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995). Without access to more rigorous and enriched learning opportunities, the achievement gap between students in low-income schools and students in economically advantaged schools is likely to persist, if not grow even wider.

Haberman's pedagogy of plenty directly aligns with the pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices used in many full-time gifted programs, including the ones in this study. In this study, the examination of the implementation full-time gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools provide an opportunity to understand better the consequences of offering low-income or poor students the type of rigorous educational opportunities that Haberman contrasts to the pedagogy of poverty.

Personal Interest and Setting

Often a researcher's desire to learn more about a topic evolves from a problem, question, or obstacle that arises within the researcher's respective field. A researcher

looks into the relevant research for answers, and then “steps inside the problem” to better understand it, develops a plan of action, or generates a plan for further study. My interest in this topic indeed mirrors this process. The need of providing low-income students with rigorous educational opportunities is central to my work as an educator in the field.

Early in my gifted education career, as a graduate student and pre-service teacher, I examined reasons behind underachievement of students who showed high academic potential. One conclusion that emerged from my study was the notion of access, or, more specifically, an absence of access to meaningful educational opportunities. I identified three themes about access: (a) lack of access due to inadequate identification procedures, (b) lack of gifted services or rigorous and engaging curriculum across schools that served low-income students, and (c) lack of access due to teachers’ perceptions of giftedness (Tempel, 2002). Similarly, during my time as a gifted resource teacher in two Title 1 schools, I observed that more affluent schools had greater numbers of students receiving gifted services than the Title 1 schools in which I taught. I noticed the access themes that I had identified in my Master’s thesis resurfacing in the practical application of my career.

Using what I learned, I knew I needed to work on the access problem in both schools. For each of the schools, I started with two goals: (a) alleviate the disproportionality of gifted services within the school by working with teachers to use nontraditional methods to identify students and (b) provide more opportunities for students to receive gifted services at the whole class, small group, and individual level. Both goals were connected to each other, but I found that giving students more opportunities to receive gifted services proved to be important in reducing access gaps

amongst students in my schools. This is because when I worked with teachers to give all students access to rigorous curriculum and instructional strategies, teachers started seeing students' strengths, rather than just students' deficits, which changed the way teachers instructed students.

Our school developed a classroom for students who exhibited high ability, and the classroom teacher committed to using gifted resources with them on a full-time basis. Identification for student participation was conducted at our school and was flexible in nature. We received no additional funding to support the program; instead, we reallocated existing school resources to support the development and operation of the gifted program. Over the course of implementation, our school leadership team noticed the following effects: (a) students who would not typically qualify for standard gifted program, but were placed in the gifted class, were thriving academically, as well as socially, and (b) teachers who did not teach the full-time gifted classroom started providing more rigorous learning experiences to students in their classroom.

Over the years I have made professional connections across the field of gifted education at the local, state and federal level. I have been interested in gifted programs as an area of study, especially for students from low-income backgrounds. To better understand policies and practices in this area, I have attended professional conferences and workshops, and I have studied the topic as part of my doctoral program. These connections brought me to the purpose of why I wanted to conduct this study and contribute further research to the field of gifted education. It also led me to seek out a school system that supported the implementation of gifted education in Title 1 schools so that I could study the implications of doing so for low-income children and their schools.

Significance

The study of poverty and education is not a new topic, and because achievement and access gaps still exist between economic classes in the United States, it remains a topic in need of further examination. This study examined why principals elect to implement a program that contrasts conventional programming in Title 1 schools. By examining the reasons why the program is implemented and the perceived benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of gifted programs in Title 1 school, I hope to contribute to research on practices and theories in gifted education, Title 1 policy, high-poverty schools, and educational leadership. Also, the study of this type of program creates a unique opportunity to examine how schools can provide rigorous and challenging instruction without a substantial infusion of additional school funds.

The study also paves an avenue to understanding the complicated relationship between poverty and rigor and offers policy makers and practitioners alternative perspectives on how to close achievement and access gaps amongst students living in poverty. The perceived benefits of these programs may motivate educators to provide rigorous instruction to low-income students in the lower grades, which can create a vertical pipeline for nurturing academic potential for more rigorous coursework as students advance through secondary and tertiary education. Finally, the study contributes to research about historically underserved gifted populations and possibly identifies effective policies and practices being used to serve this population of students.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the purpose behind this dissertation study which focuses on the implementation of gifted services in Title 1 schools. I explained the

motivating educational problem behind the study, and research questions I aim to answer. I also presented a brief overview of the literature, the conceptual framework that guides the study, what my personal interest is in the topic, and possible contributions of the study for educational researchers and practitioners. Over the next eight chapters, I provide a rich literature review, an explanation of the research methods, the presentation of four unique cases, and the collective case study and conclusions for the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The following literature review builds a research-based foundation for this study. It is broken into three main sections: poverty, gifted education, and the relationship between poverty and the access to gifted education. First, I outline the influence of poverty on education and the evolution of federal policy as it relates to the educational opportunities afforded to low-income students. Second, I provide an overview of gifted education and major policy implications of gifted education. Third, I examine how poverty influences students' access to gifted education and a rigorous academic curriculum in American public schools.

Within the literature review, I make five overarching arguments: (a) students living in poverty do less well in school than their more advantaged peers; (b) some of the reasons for under performance are inadequate school resources and access to quality educational opportunities; (c) insufficient school resources and access to quality educational opportunities are especially pronounced for high-ability, low-income students who are seldom identified for gifted programs; (d) there are barriers to the participation of high-ability, low-income students, including low expectations, culturally biased or restrictive identification procedures, and culturally biased or restrictive services; and (e) although federal funding supports research on gifted services and underserved populations, there is still a need for further research to extend the knowledge of how to close access gaps to rigorous instruction, such as those provided by gifted education programs, in Title 1 schools.

Poverty

Within this section, I provide a broad-based theoretical and research argument for the relationship between poverty[1] and the educational experiences of children. First, I give an overview of the literature on poverty and education. Second, I give a historical background to relevant federal policy, with a focus on the roots of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and its evolution over the last fifty years. Third, I outline in more detail, Title 1 – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (Title 1) – under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Fourth, I lay out major implications of Title 1 policy.

Overview of Poverty and Educational Implications

The social construct of poverty is both abstract and concrete, and it has primary and secondary implications for the education of children. Given the socially constructed nature of poverty, there is no one-accepted definition. However, the federal government attempts to construct measurements of poverty through two different agencies – the United States Census Bureau and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The United States Census Bureau sets income thresholds to determine who is living in poverty. The federal government uses these thresholds as a means of monitoring economic need in the country and establishing priorities for social policy. The Census Bureau takes into account family size, earnings, and cash benefits to determine a family's poverty status. If a family's total income is less than the established threshold, an estimate

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[1] For the purpose of the paper, the term “poverty” will mean financial poverty.

of the minimum amount of money required to feed and house a family, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Based on Census Bureau standards, in 2014 46.7 million people were living in poverty, with an official poverty rate of 14.8 percent. That same year, about 20 percent of children under age 18 were living in poverty and about 95% were school-aged children (United States Census Bureau, 2015). These trends have continued. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that currently greater than 50% of U.S. eighth graders are receiving free and reduced-price meals (Carnoy & Garcia, 2017). Also, the percentages of children who are living in poverty are higher for Blacks/African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Hispanics, and Native Hawaiians than for children of two or more races, Asians, and Whites/Caucasians. (Aud, Fox, KewalRamani, 2010).

The Department of Health and Human Services, along with other government agencies, also uses the poverty threshold to set guidelines regarding eligibility for government-sponsored services. The guidelines are used for administrative purposes, such as determining family eligibility for federal programs like Head Start, the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, Family Planning Services, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2016). Many state agencies also use the federal poverty guidelines to determine eligibility for state services and programs. Currently, the poverty threshold for a family of four is $24,300 (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2016). The U.S. Census Bureau updates the poverty threshold annually to account for changes in the cost of living index.

Although federal and state governments provide services for families living in poverty, these services do not cover all of the economic and social needs of low-income families. The primary educational implication of poverty is that low-income families lack many of the resources and goods taken for granted by more affluent families, including access to health care – physical and mental – proper nutrition, and clothing (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Low-income families are also more likely to live in neighborhoods where employment is difficult to find, public services are inadequate, there is higher crime, access to nutritious foods is limited, and housing conditions are hazardous, such as lead poisoning and structural instability (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997; Crooks, 1995; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Evans 2004; Knapp, 1995). These inadequacies, which are challenging for families to overcome, can be especially damaging to children and adolescents, causing developmental delays, and educational difficulties that can perpetuate a cycle of poverty across generations (Duncan & Murnane, 1994).

A secondary educational implication of poverty includes more direct impacts on educational opportunities and learning outcomes. Poverty status is linked with the quality of children's educational experiences, academic access and academic achievement (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997; Engle & Black, 2008; Gorksi 2013; Ladd, 2012). These impacts begin at an early age. Prior to entering school, low-income students already lag behind their more affluent peers academically, socially, and physically (Feldman, 2001; Gershoff, 2003). They have less access to high-quality child-care and preschool education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008); are more likely to enter kindergarten a full year and a half behind in language ability than

their middle-class peers (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Grundel, Oliveria, & Geballe, 2003; Wertheimer, Moore, & Hair 2003); have gaps in math and cognitive skills (Layzer & Price, 2008); and come to school with a smaller repertoire of appropriate emotional responses (Jensen, 2009). The impacts of poverty continue beyond the early childhood age. Children from low-income families have lower rates of school completion (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997); face academic achievement gaps throughout elementary school, middle school, and high school (Gorksi, 2013; Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; Ladd, 2012); and have higher rates of absenteeism (Jensen, 2009), attention problems (Ducan & Murnane, 2011); and discipline issues (Ducan & Murnane, 2011, 2014).

Moreover, families living in poverty are constrained in their choice of neighborhoods based on where they can afford to live (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Since home location often determines school boundaries, schools with boundaries in low-income neighborhoods have more significant numbers of students living in poverty (Duncan & Murnane, 2014), and schools with high levels of students from low-income families, are associated with further obstacles for student learning. Often these low-income schools lack basic supplies, have buildings that are run down or in need of repair (National Commission on Teaching America's Future, 2004), and have fewer high-quality, experienced teachers (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Gorski, 2013) – all of which impacts instructional practices and achievement rates for students. Students in these schools may also face racial and class-based discrimination, and educators may also have low expectations for the achievement (Gorksi, 2013). In general, children who live in poverty face obstacles to

learning in their neighborhoods and schools that place them at a severe educational disadvantage compared to children who come from more affluent families.

Studies estimate that outside-of-school factors (e.g., neighborhood poverty or unemployment) are more powerful than inside-the school factors (e.g., class size) and account for 60% of the variance in affecting student achievement (Berliner, 2009, 2013). While school-based strategies alone will not eliminate today's stark disparities in academic success between low-income students and their more advantaged peers (Reardon, 2013), they can help to ameliorate some of these disparities and provide children with more powerful opportunities to learn. Although policies that influence the social and economic opportunities in low-income neighborhoods are critically needed, there also needs to be a rethinking and reshaping of the educational opportunities afforded to low-income students in schools.

Historical and Current Federal Policies

The purposes of education take many forms (Labaree, 1997). At the individual level, education is an investment in optimizing a person's well-being over the course of a lifetime (McMahon, 2010). At the societal level, education influences national growth (Hanushek, Wobman, & McMahon, 2010). It increases human capital inherent in the labor force, which increases labor productivity and output; it increases the innovative capacity of the economy, which helps to promote growth in technology, economical products, and manufacturing processes; it facilitates the diffusion and transmission of knowledge needed to understand and process new information (Hanushek & Wobmann, 2010). Many would also argue that education is essential for democracy (Mondale & Patton, 2001), for it creates the conditions for debate, tolerance, and mutual civic

ambitions (Labaree, 1997). Although not always in agreement about the purposes of education, local, state, and federal governments have developed and implemented policies to support and protect individual and societal interests in the proposed benefits of education. These policies have evolved with the changing political and economic demands of the country. The evolution of these policies is further explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

The 18th and 19th centuries marked the start of public education in America. Initially, education was primarily a local endeavor, with some schools being financed by local governments while other schools were funded by fees collected from parents who sent their kids to that school. This system of schooling varied by locality and operated under no regulations by the state or federal government. If publicly financed education was not available, students who could not afford the fees did not attend the school, which caused gross inequities in access to education between students from different social classes (Mondale & Patton, 2001). At the time, educational opportunities were highly inequitable, and schooling was more exclusive than inclusive.

During the 19th century, Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann urged for a form of education that would be financially supported by the people and protected by government regulations. Thomas Jefferson advocated for systematically run, widespread schooling based on the belief that the good of the country depended on educated citizens (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Horace Mann's crusade was to neutralize financial inequities so all students could attend and receive a common body of knowledge in pursuit of an equal chance in life (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Jefferson’s and Mann’s philosophy and actions, although controversial at the time due to the increase in government control and

investment required by their beliefs, laid the foundation for state and federal education policy reforms which occurred over the next two centuries and still shape today's public education agendas. The system of local and state control of schools continued into the 19th and mid-20th centuries.

Around the 1950s, criticism about the quality of education began mounting and hit a tipping point in 1957 after Russia launched the first satellite, *Sputnik*, into space. The launch "generated fears that the United States was falling behind in the development of new technologies and underscored the importance of education to national security" (McGuinn, 2006, p. 28). Questions arose whether the states and localities were able to address education failures on their own (McGuinn, 2006), and a call for more federal involvement was made. Congress responded to Sputnik and the Cold War competition by passing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. The federal investment in NDEA amounted to about 2% of the total education spending at the time, which included funding for the collection of statistics, specialized research, vocational assistance, and the school lunch program (McGuinn, 2006). The government provided federal funding to revise curriculum in math, science, and foreign-language fields; aid testing procedures to identify "highly intelligent" students through the use of psychological testing; support school construction, and encourage higher levels of post-secondary education (McGuinn, 2006; Mondale & Patton, 2001).

In May of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson gave a speech stating that "The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time" (LBJ Library Archives Staff, 2009, "1964," para. 1). His speech set a tone to end poverty, promote equality, improve

education, rejuvenate cities, and protect the environment (Mondale & Patton, 2001); such efforts were later dubbed *The War on Poverty*. "The underlying hope of the War on Poverty was that investments in high-quality schools could overcome deficits originating in the home and enable students to build a life for themselves and their families better than their parents had" (Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009, p. 15).

The goals brought forward in Johnson's speech set forth a three-pronged approach to address equity and equality issues and to be more competitive with other countries. The reform efforts included the amended NDEA, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In 1964 Congress amended the NDEA to broaden curricular areas eligible for support beyond math science, engineering, and modern foreign language; it also eliminated support for identifying "intellectually talented" students and created a provision for supporting the preparation of educators willing to work with economically disadvantaged youth. In the same year, the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) focused on local community and economic opportunity. It included social programs to help improve the education, health and general well-being of the economically underprivileged, including job training, adult education, and loans to small businesses (LBJ Library Archives Staff, 2009). The third prong was the ESEA of 1965. ESEA provided a strategy for improving education outcomes, especially for low-income students, and it played a significant role in financing compensatory education for poor and minority children (Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; McGuinn, 2006).

ESEA was created to solve the problem of inequity in schools (Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009) by focusing on the social and educational disadvantages students,

providing additional resources to the school's disadvantaged students attended and set forth federal mandates to help achieve the goal (McGuinn, 2006). ESEA diverted power away from local agencies and shifted it towards state and federal control. At the time, ESEA was considered to be a “powerful equity rationale for federal government activism to promote greater economic opportunity through more equal access to more equally funded schools” (McGuinn, 2006, p. 25). It also acted in a way to promote and protect core values on which the United States was founded. ESEA reinforced the state role in implementing federal policy, expanded the capacity of states to monitor and implement policy, and affirmed a set of national priorities to promote the equalization of educational opportunities across the nation.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published a report called, *A Nation at Risk*. This report played upon fears about national security during the Cold War against the Soviet Union. It touted that the United States educational systems are going through a learning crisis because schools have forgotten the purpose of schooling (Mondale & Patton, 2001; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). It also was backed by research reports that compared achievement results from schools in the United States to schools in other developed countries, which showed substantial comparative deficiencies for schools in the United States (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009). The report catalyzed changes in how the federal government approached federal education funding. Funding moved from fiscal compliance and the equalization of resources to a heightened concern for program excellence and raising student achievement. The report promoted overall school improvement versus assuring equitable access to educational opportunities for poor and minority students (McGuinn, 2006). The

report emphasized advanced skills, required schools to examine test scores, and expected schools that didn't make progress to develop a school improvement plan or face the consequences (Puma & Drury, 2000), but it did little to support schools to implement these recommendations (Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990). Ironically, *A Nation at Risk* dramatically increased federal influence over local education despite President Reagan's attempts to reduce "big" government involvement and a proposal to dissolve the Department of Education.

Another turning point in ESEA's history came in early in the 1990s after the release of the *Final Report of the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program*. The report noted the investment of federal funding did not do what it was intended to do (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). It found that the:

> progress of participants on standardized tests was no better than that of nonparticipants with similar backgrounds and prior achievement levels; students in high-poverty schools were exposed to a "watered-down" and non-challenging curricula as compared with other students;… and a focus on compliance and regulatory matters occupied much of states' and districts' efforts in administration of funds (in Puma & Drury, 2000, p. 4).

The research supported the need to change the goals of ESEA, particularly if the intent of the legislation was to prompt better outcomes for economically disadvantaged students. Providing additional federal dollars was not enough.

The next reauthorization of ESEA, Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, emphasized standards-based reform and accountability, school-wide programs, and greater local flexibility (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; & U.S. Department of Education, 1995). The Act encouraged states to set rigorous education goals, develop measurements to see that schools are meeting the goals and provide localities with the flexibility to decide how schools will achieve the goals (McGuinn, 2006). IASA adopted the philosophy that all

children can succeed in mastering higher-level thinking skills and that students need far more challenging material than was previously offered to them (Puma & Drury, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1995). It called for the creation of rigorous standards to be used as a central component of school improvement plans (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). The IASA also required the alignment of curriculum and instruction, professional development, school leadership, and accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

An issue arose with the implementation of the IASA when states created rigorous standards, but extraordinary weak schools were not ready for them. As a result, schools reverted to practices of management, testing, and teaching that were far from best practices (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009). The law subjected schools to corrective actions and financial sanctions, which was the first time in ESEA history that the federal funding was used to hold schools accountable for educational outcomes (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009). Although no state ended up facing monetary sanctions, even though only sixteen states fully met the law's requirements, the Act resulted in the most significant change since the start of ESEA in 1965 (McGuinn, 2006) because it focused on achieving equitable outcomes for students rather than the equitable distribution of resources (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009).

IASA and its key features of reliance on standards, tests, and accountability paved the road for expanded federal involvement in the next reauthorization of ESEA. In 2002, President G.W. Bush reauthorized ESEA under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB, according to its proponents, "represented a significant step forward for our nation's children… particularly as it shined a light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language, or background" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a, "A

New Education Law," para 4). The goal of NCLB was to close the achievement gap by promoting accountability, flexibility, and choice so that no child would be left behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

As compared to the original authorization of ESEA in 1965, NCLB embraced a much larger role in education for the federal government – it included all children and schools (i.e., Title 1 and non-Title 1), it focused on measured outputs by means of standardized achievement scores, and it was incredibly prescriptive (McGuinn, 2006).

> The law significantly increased federal education spending, mandated that states design and administer proficiency tests to all students in grades three through eleven, required states to put a qualified teacher in every classroom, and promised to hold states accountable for the performance of their public schools by mandating a variety of corrective measures from schools that do not make adequate yearly progress towards 100 percent student proficiency (McGuinn, 2006, p. 1).

NCLB, unlike IASA, substantially ratcheted up the pressure on state officials, school leaders and teachers comply with ambitious reform goals.

NCLB required schools to follow schedules for compliance, promoted widespread testing across grades and subject areas; required test scores to be disaggregated by race, gender, class, and disability status; and by 2014, 100% of all students were to meet state proficiency benchmarks (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009). Schools that did not meet proficiency benchmarks faced corrective action based on the number of consecutive years of failure to meet standards. The actions were as follows: a) after two years, schools were subject to receive technical assistance from the district and students were allowed school choice; b) after three years, schools were required to offer supplemental education services chosen by the parents; c) after four years, corrective actions like staff replacement and new curriculum were to be adopted; d) after five years, schools went into reconstitution and

were required to set up an alternative learning structure (McGuinn, 2009). States that did not enforce sanctions faced withholding of federal funds. As the year 2014 approached, it became more evident that the goals set forth by NCLB were too aggressive, that there were undesirable consequences associated with failure to acknowledge differences between schools in available resources and challenges, and that most schools would not meet the proficiency goals set by the states (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

The current reauthorization of the ESEA is called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This most recent reauthorization of the ESEA is meant to fix issues that arose during the time of NCLB. According to proponents, ESSA,

> rejects the overuse of standardized tests and one-size-fits-all mandates on our schools, ensures that our education system will prepare every child to graduate from high school ready for college and careers, and provides more children access to high-quality state preschool programs" (Office of the Press Secretary, 2015, "Fact Sheet: Congress Acts to Fix No Child Left Behind," para 4).

The act was signed into law by President Obama in December of 2015 and was created with bipartisan support, and no updates have made to the law since that time.

Like IASA and NCLB, ESSA seeks to ensure educational opportunity for all students. There are six strategies to achieving this aim: a) ensure states set high standards for all students to succeed in college and careers; b) maintain accountability for when students fall behind by providing resources to help them improve; c) empower state and local decision-makers to develop school improvement plans based on their own needs; d) reduce the burden of over testing without sacrificing yearly information parents and educators need to make sure children are learning; e) provide high-quality early-childhood preschool education; and f) establish new resources that drive opportunity and outcomes for students (Executive Office of the President, 2015). ESSA is in the preliminary stages of implementation and impacts from its goals are unknown.

Over the last fifty years, the ESEA has taken a more significant role in the education of students, and it has adapted to fit the growing political, social, and education needs of the nation. During its evolution, federal education policy began as a plan of action to increase quality, then to end the cycle of poverty, and finally, it moved to a system of high standards and accountability for all schools. Throughout the past fifty some years, federal funding for education started with small grants to improve the quality of education, particularly in the areas of science and technology, then increased funding to compensate schools with inadequate resources to educate low-income students, and currently to provide funding that promotes standards-based education, local flexibility, and greater accountability.

Title 1

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is a complex policy that affects many aspects of public education, including topics on special populations, 21st-century learning, educator training, and grants. The portion of the ESEA that has the most financial backing is Title 1. Title 1 policy is nationwide and targets local education agencies (LEAs) that have high numbers or percentages of students from low-income families. It provides extra funding to schools to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between economically disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Title 1 is an attempt to equalize education opportunities and provide additional funds to deliver additional programs and services in schools. The policy aims to meet the educational needs of children in our nation's highest-poverty schools – schools that also

enroll the highest number of limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Native American children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). This goal has been the central theme of Title 1 since President Johnson's War on Poverty; its impetus is the belief that without federal intervention the educational needs of poor and minority students would continue to be neglected by local and state policymakers (McGuinn, 2006).

Since 1965, Title 1 has gone through many modifications to tighten its rules and regulations regarding the use of federal monies (Cohen & Moffitt, 20009; Puma & Drury, 2000). In the beginning, modifications dealt with how the policy was implemented, specifically the use of funding. The policy moved from targeting individual “at-risk kids” to provisions for a school-wide model, which allowed high-poverty schools to use monies for broad-based school improvement (Puma & Drury, 2000). Over time, Title 1 funding has moved from resource allocation to fiscal compliance to a heightened concern for program excellence and improved student achievement (Cohen & Moffitt, 20009; McGuinn, 2006; Puma & Drury, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004c).

The primary goal behind Title 1 has always been to “ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessment” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c, “Sec 1001. State of Purpose,” para. 1). Recent reauthorizations of Title 1 include twelve goals, including ten goals relevant to this study: a) align state academic standards to instruction and accountability measures; b) meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in the

highest-poverty schools; c) close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children and disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers; d) hold schools and states accountable for improving achievement, and provide alternatives for schools that do not; e) distribute and target resources to meet the greatest needs; f) use state assessment systems to ensure proper distribution of resources; g) give greater decision-making authority to schools in return for higher accountability for achievement; h) provide an enriched and accelerated educational program; i) promote schoolwide reform based on scientifically-based instructional strategies and challenging academic content; and j) offer evidence-based opportunities for professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c).

Intertwined with the goals of Title 1 are the financial means to achieving (or leveraging) them. Part of the federal government's involvement in public education includes contributing substantial funds to support local schools. A substantial portion of federal education funding goes into funding Title 1 – Title 1 allocations were close to 14.4 billion dollars in 2014 (National Title 1 Association, 2015). Title 1 schools with enrollments of students from low-income families of at least 40% may use Title 1 funds, along with other federal, state, and local funds, to operate a "school-wide program." The goal of the school-wide program is to upgrade the instructional program for the whole school. Title 1 schools with less than the 40% enrollment or schools that choose not to operate a school-wide program offers a "targeted assistance program" in which the school identifies students who are failing or most at risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards (US Department of Education, 2011).

The Title 1 goals are somewhat open-ended, which gives schools some discretion in how schools can use federal funds. Although the criteria for allocating funds to LEAs are specific in nature, the use of funds can be open to interpretation. Schools may use this financial assistance in a variety ways, including but not limited to, working with children individually or through a school-wide program; providing enrichment to students enrolled in private schools; and fostering parent and school relationships (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The program's flexibility allows schools to have some discretion in how to achieve the aims of the policy. However, the trade-off for this flexibility is expanded accountability for school performance (McGuinn, 2006).

Policy Impacts and Current Practices

The enacted ESEA,[2] and more specifically Title 1, is meant to provide additional educational supports for students who come from families living in poverty. It is an attempt to "ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to learn, develop, and thrive" (Reardon, 2013 p. 14). Despite fifty years of these policies, students who live in poverty still face greater academic challenges and deficits in learning as compared to their more affluent peers. Across the United States, studies and reports have shown that while students living in poverty have made academic gains, there continues to be significant achievement gaps between low- and high-income students on most measures of academic success, including standardized test scores, grades, high school completion

[2] ESSA's authorization is in the preliminary stages of implementation and impacts from its goals are unknown, so the policy impacts during this section of the literature review will focus on No Child Left Behind.

rates, or college enrollment and completion rates (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009; Reardon, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

The ESEA and Title 1 policies are genuine attempts to support children in their learning because inequities in achievement are often based on inequities in opportunities and access (Breen and Johnson, 2007; Gorksi, 2013). The belief that all students should have access to challenging academic standards, curriculum, and instructional materials, valuable academic assessments to determine learning needs and academic growth, and high-quality teachers are what instructional leaders and researchers view as good practices in education. In addition to those school supports, there needs to be accountability for the work that these funds back. Although educational growth has occurred as a result of these policies, so have unintended outcomes. Over the next few pages, the literature review outlines areas of concern and growth based on the elements of accountability, curriculum and instructional practices, teacher effectiveness, and comprehensive school reforms as it relates to schools serving high numbers of students living in poverty.

Accountability.

At the onset of Title 1 funding, schools were given money for resources without having to justify if the funds were effective in how they were used. However, over the last twenty years of Title 1 policy, greater accountability has been added to the requirements for school systems to follow if they wish to receive Title 1 funds. Policymakers believe that enhancing the academic achievement of disadvantaged students can be achieved by:

> holding schools, local educational agencies, and states accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-

> performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students, including providing alternatives to low-income students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c, “1001 Statement Purpose” para 5).

Accountability requirements were meant to create incentives for schools to make changes in the ways that they worked, so as to improve student learning (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Elmore, Abelmann, & Fuhrman, 1996; Fuhrman, 1999); and the federal government attached stipulations to funds in the form of proof of student achievement through the use of accountability measures to assure that the funds were used effectively and schools did actually improve (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009).

Because the U.S. Department of Education has the power to impose sanctions on schools that do not meet core subject criteria, it can leverage Title 1 funding to achieve its goals, and the repercussions for schools that do not meet the accountability standards are high. If a school does not adhere to ESEA's guidelines, states can reduce or eliminate Title 1 funding, which can be grave for schools that are already financially impaired. Local schools are hard-pressed to turn down federal monies because schools are consumed with fixed costs supported by local and state funds, and the federal dollars can supplement programs and reform efforts, which makes the consequences of non-compliance difficult (McGuinn, 2006).

Over the years, the effectiveness of accountability requirements has been a source of debate – the ongoing questions revolve around school effectiveness in educating students and determining the federal government’s ability to promote student achievement (Duncan &Murnane, 2014). Although Title 1’s goal is to “ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement

standards and state academic assessment" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c), it is fair to say that many wonder whether passing high-stakes achievement tests has supplanted the goal of promoting high-quality education. According to Duncan and Murnane (2014), compliance has become the "dominant concern in virtually all high-poverty schools" (p. 129); concerns about compliance have influenced instructional practices, curriculum choices, and teacher effectiveness, including the quality of teachers hired and retained and a tendency to blame schools that enroll higher numbers of low-income students for the failure to attain mandated proficiency levels. Some schools attempt to move beyond the fear of meeting mandates and use federal funding to develop new programs that go beyond remediation. However, Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers (1990) caution that,

> While these programs may be useful and effective, they end up as "add-ons" to a school's curriculum, instruction, or organization. Limited time and resources coupled with high pressures to raise tests scores do not allow schools to coordinate deep, long-lasting, and comprehensive changes to curriculum, instruction, and organization. When members of the school community seek to improve the school, they typically focus on only one of these three areas (p.6).

In the next few paragraphs, I describe common themes of challenges and best practices that arise when it comes to curriculum, instruction, and the organization within a Title 1 school.

Curriculum and instructional practices.

In 1958, Martin Haberman wrote about a type of ritualistic teaching style that happened in many urban, high-poverty schools; he called it the pedagogy of poverty. The style of teaching consists of a basic, low-level approach that stunts learning and widens the achievement gap. The teaching actions involve "giving information, asking questions, giving directions, making assignments, monitoring seatwork, reviewing assignments,

giving tests, reviewing tests, assigning homework, reviewing homework, settling disputes, punishing noncompliance, marking papers, and giving grades" (Haberman 2010, p. 82). Teachers who follow this pedagogy believe that students need basic skills before they can move to more advanced skills, and the pedagogy appeals to people who believe that teaching is a set of common sense actions rather than thoughtful analysis of student needs (Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995). The pedagogy of poverty focuses on learning deficits and how to remedy those deficiencies through the use of discrete skills; it relies heavily on teacher direction and students compliance; and it is often not connected to the real-world application (Haberman, 2010).

Despite Title 1's goal of providing children with "a high-quality education" – that is, an enriched and accelerated educational program and access to effective, scientifically-based instructional strategies and challenging academic content (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c) – the rituals of the pedagogy of poverty still occur in schools. Unfortunately, the accountability requirements of recent reauthorizations of ESEA have tended to reinforce the achievement gap between students attending Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, because enforcement has focused on achieving state-mandated proficiency levels for students rather than providing rigorous learning opportunities for students attending Title 1 schools. Studies have shown that low-income children often lack access to rigorous, quality curriculum and instructional practices (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990; Knapp and Associations, 1995), partly because there is misalignment between tests, curriculum, instructional strategies, learning standards, and the quality of teachers (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Gorski, 2013; Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

Student learning is an interconnected web of rigorous learning standards, the curriculum and instructional strategies used to meet the learning standards, and the assessments developed to determine if the learning standards were met. The misalignment of standards, instructional strategies, curriculum and assessments impacts accountability, and accountability in the absence of strong curriculum and instructional strategies leads to an inappropriate focus on test preparation (Duncan & Murnane, 2014).

Since accountability in ESEA is measured by achievement on high-stakes standardized state tests, the means by which teachers work with their students to pass the test are varied. Students in Title 1 schools across the county face more exercises in root memorization, test-taking skills, and lower-level thinking, which narrows learning and creates superficial knowledge (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Jones, 2007; Knapp, 1995). These exercises focus instruction on student weaknesses and lack of skills (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006), which further perpetuates the pedagogy of poverty. Also, subjects and standards that do not count against accountability measures are neglected because teachers are teaching only the standards that will be on the test (Jones, 2007; Palmer & Rangel, 2011). Educators' fears of not passing the test supersedes the need to challenge students academically, and these fears holds students back from a curriculum that is enhanced and challenging, which only further perpetuates the pedagogy of poverty and prolongs the inequities between students Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Haberman, 2010).

Some researchers note that there is a need to improve instruction in high-poverty classrooms. Barr and Parrett (2007) maintain that "the most significant element separating high-achieving, high-poverty schools and their low-performing counterparts is

a willingness to change the manner in which instruction is delivered" (p. 183). Poor students, like their more advantaged peers, need to have opportunities to explain societal ideals; plan a course of learning action and set goals; work in heterogeneous groups; reflect on their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do; see big ideas and major concepts by means of questioning; and learn beyond the factual level (Haberman, 2010; Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990; Knapp & Associates, 1995). Knapp and Associates (1995) also believe good teaching, particularly in low-income schools, is when teachers concentrate on assets rather than deficits; focus on advanced skills of reasoning, problem-solving, comprehension, and composition; emphasize meaning, and pose cognitively demanding tasks early-on and build skills through those demands. Haberman (2010) calls these attributes of instruction a pedagogy of plenty, where he believes that good teaching is going on whenever students are involved in real-life issues; engaged in concept-based instruction; actively planning and goal setting; applying ideals of fairness, justice, and equity; building upon the ideas of others and self; revising and polishing work; reflecting on their work and their peers' work; and using technology to access information.

In addition to positive results that stem from higher-level thinking for students, studies have shown that higher-level thinking activities promote positive and long-term educational benefits for students. In a fifteen-year study conducted by the University of Connecticut in conjunction with Southeast Elementary School in Mansfield, Connecticut, researchers found that teaching critical thinking and problem-solving strategies resulted in students reaching higher levels of success in their classrooms and on high-stakes tests because it enabled students to think creatively, solve problems, and to focus on strengths

and talents (Fisher-Dorion & Irvine, 2009). With a broader adoption of these practices, low-income students receive a more equitable education (Gorski, 2013; Knapp 1995). Without access to more rigorous and enriched learning opportunities, the achievement gap between students in low-income schools and students in economically advantaged schools is likely to persist, if not grow even wider.

Teacher effectiveness.

Access to higher-order pedagogies and engaging curricula are not the only variables in an education equation of how to promote higher levels of success for low-income students. The equation also includes the quality of the teacher, and the beliefs teachers hold about students (Gorksi, 2013), and both of these variables are related to teacher effectiveness. Numerous studies have shown that teacher effectiveness is a strong predictor of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008; Silva Mangiante, 2011; Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

Under NCLB's and ESSA's version of ESEA, one goal is to have highly-qualified, effective teachers employed within the schools. Within the policies, the knowledge of the importance of high-quality teachers is present, but the policy does not always procure what it aims to achieve. For instance, federal policy requires that teachers have strong content knowledge so that they can give that content knowledge to students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). But teaching, as a number of scholars have noted (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Haberman, 2010), is not about "giving" students' knowledge, it is about understanding that learning is a process of developing usable knowledge that builds on previous knowledge, experience, and understanding that is framed around bigger concepts, not isolated facts (National Research Council, 2000). It is

the interchange between content, pedagogical methods, characteristics of learners, and the environments in which students learn (Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

On any given day, teachers need to analyze data, plan and implement lessons, attend to the social-emotional needs of students, collaborate with peers, complete paperwork, and assess student learning. In addition, high-quality teachers have a deep understanding of academic knowledge, can implement curriculum well, have strong classroom management skills, and have high expectations for students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Teaching is an enormously complex task, and although it is not the only influence on how students achieve, it is an important factor in improving student achievement (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006).

Schools with high numbers of students living in poverty remain at a disadvantage when it comes to teacher quality and effectiveness. There are a variety of reasons why. First, schools with high levels of students living in poverty have troubles attracting high-quality, effective teachers (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). This can be due to safety concerns, location preferences, poor working conditions, and high turnover in staffing (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Second, students who come from poverty are five times more likely than affluent peers to be instructed by teachers who have little to no experience in the classroom (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Schools have a challenging time attracting high-quality, effective teachers, but end up hiring people who are less qualified so positions can be filled. Third, schools with high levels of student poverty have troubles retaining highly qualified teachers (Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

One reason is that high-stakes accountability policies set forth by federal and state government add stress to the job, especially for teachers required to substantially raise student test scores to demonstrate their effectiveness (Duncan and Murnane, 2014).

The second area of teacher quality is the expectation-level teachers hold for students. From the perspective of Haberman's pedagogy of poverty (2010), teachers often have fears and low expectations for minority students and students from low-income families. These low expectations can be rooted in stereotypes about what children from poverty can and cannot do. The most common stereotypes include: poor people do not value education; poor people are lazy; poor people are substance abusers; and poor people are linguistically deficient (Gorski, 2012). The negative power of these stereotypes has an impact on the way policymakers and educators approach teaching (Haberman, 2010), for “what we believe about people in poverty, including our biases and prejudices, informs how we teach and relate to people in poverty” (Gorski, 2013, p. 24). When this occurs, teachers react in a manner that lowers expectations for student success (Howard, Dresser, & Dunklee, 2009).

Teachers who are highly effective in low-income schools believe that their students are competent and capable of excellence (Gorski, 2013; Knapp & Associates, 1995; Silva Mangiante, 2011); they also believe that it is the teacher’s responsibility to help students achieve excellence (Gorski, 2013; Silva Mangiante, 2011). Highly effective teachers believe that people who are poor are not so due to personal deficiencies but rather opportunity inequalities (Rank, Yoon, & Hirschl, 2003). Also, there is a belief that educational opportunities need to be fair or equitable. Under these views, teachers move instruction from a deficit model to an asset model by focusing on higher-level and

relevant learning (Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995), because they believe that low-income students can benefit from the same rigorous instruction as their more advantaged peers.

Comprehensive school reform.

Over the years, there has been various attempts or reforms to provide comprehensive changes to curriculum, instruction, and organization. One such comprehensive school reform is the Accelerated Schools project, which started in the 1990s and sought to counter the pedagogy of poverty mentality that seemed to exist in the nation's highest needs schools. I bring this program forward because it has some of the basic tenants that align with gifted education, which is the focus of this dissertation study.

The Accelerated Project started at the elementary level and focused on having high expectations for students; closing achievement gaps; adopting curriculum that moves at a faster pace and is based on higher-level thinking concepts; and utilizes a teamwork approach from parents, community members, and teachers to design and implement interventions for students (Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990). “At its heart is the notion of doing for low achieving students what we presently attempt to do for gifted and talented students, striving to accelerate their progress rather than slow it down” (Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990, p.7).

The program is a school-wide reform, with students heterogeneously grouped across the school. When implemented correctly and with time, there is evidence that the program benefits learners with the highest academic needs (Bloom, Ham, Melton, O'Brien, 2001). As with many comprehensive school reforms in low-income schools, the

effects on achievement and student performance vary by program fidelity, student population, local buy-in, and administrative support (Cross, 2004).

Section Summary

Students who live in poverty face many obstacles compared to their more affluent peers. Social programs are provided for low-income families to counteract some of these challenges. One such program is the commitment to free education for all students in the United States. Policies and laws have been created to construct more equitable opportunities for students, including federal funding provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and subsequent reauthorizations, particularly Title 1. However, as implemented, the ESEA has fallen short of providing the educational opportunities envisioned by many of its authors. More specifically, accountability requirements included in recent reauthorizations of ESEA have been associated with instructional practices that encourage lower-level thinking, weak and ineffective teaching practices, and the narrowing of the curriculum in essential subject areas.

Gifted Education

This section of the literature review is about gifted education in U.S. schools. First, I give an overview of gifted education, which includes a historical timeline, and contains accepted definitions, policies, and research over the last century. Next, I outline current policy initiatives and funding structures. I then set the stage for discussing widely used identification techniques and types of programming services used across the country. I will conclude the section with a discussion of the equity issues that relate to access to gifted education services and resources.

Overview and History of Gifted Education

Students vary along a range of characteristics – for example, age, interests, language, and intellectual ability. Schools use these differentiators to tailor programs and services to meet the needs of their students, and gifted education is an example of a customized program for advanced learners. Gifted education has a long and evolved history within the American education system, and its shifts in theory and application are based on the political demands, resource capabilities, and educational beliefs of the country.

The concept of giftedness began to take traction in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States; the concept stemmed from earlier research on the inheritance of intelligence, the development of instruments to measure both the sub- and supernormal characteristics of intelligence, and a growing belief that grade schools could not adequately meet the needs of all children, particularly gifted children (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015a). During this time, the use of intelligence testing increased, and psychometricians and psychologists used these tests to characterize the intellectual ability of individuals or an individual's intelligence quotient (IQ) (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Many educators and the public continue to equate a high IQ score as an indicator of an individual's giftedness (Reis, 2015).

In 1957, the launch of the Russian satellite, Sputnik, generated fears among policymakers and the public that the United States was falling behind Russia in the development of new technologies, which many interpreted as a threat to national security (McGuinn, 2006). In response, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, which, among other things, sought to strengthen science, mathematics,

and engineering education in the United States. Playing off of research and practices of the 1920s, Title V of NDEA emphasized the use of intelligence testing in elementary and secondary schools to identify gifted individuals for these fields to promote technological innovations and make the country more competitive against other nations, particularly Russia.

The launch of Sputnik served as a stimulus for research and development efforts to improve services for gifted and talented students in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country. While programs for gifted and talented students expanded somewhat during the next decade, interest in gifted and talented programs was overshadowed by federal investments and legislation to promote more equitable educational opportunities, especially for poor and minority students and students with special needs (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 largely supplanted NDA, shifting legislative focus away from curricular development in mathematics and science for gifted students to an emphasis on compensatory education for poor students and students at risk of failure.

Federal involvement for gifted education reached a turning point in 1969 when pressures from state and local governments gave way to renewed federal attention and leadership supportive of gifted programs (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015a; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). At the time, ESEA was amended to include the Education of the Handicap Act (EHA), which focused on meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities, but EHA also recognized the unique needs of gifted learners (Piirto, 1991). EHA required legal implementation of special services for those who have special learning needs, including the gifted, but it did not specify gifted services or

guarantee that gifted students would receive appropriate services (Spielhagen & Brown, 2008). The lack of commitment to gifted services was further highlighted in a congressionally authorized study to determine the extent in which schools were meeting gifted and talented needs. Secretary of Education, S.P. Marland conducted the study and in 1971 released the *Education of the Gifted and Talented* report, also known as the *Marland Report*. The report found that existing services to the gifted did not reach a large number of students, including minority and the disadvantaged students; that special programming was a low priority at all levels of government; that the federal role in supporting gifted education was all but nonexistent; and that an enormous individual and social loss existed because the talents of the gifted were undiscovered and undeveloped (Gallagher, 2002). Also, students capable of high achievement were not being served due to a lack of funds, leadership, trained personnel, and public understanding (Piirto, 1999).

The *Marland Report* also outlined the first formal definition of giftedness, providing educators with a more nuanced description of the abilities of children who might qualify as gifted and talented:

> Gifted and talented individuals are those identified by professionally qualified persons who are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and/or psychomotor ability (Marland, 1971, p. 5).

The report moved the field of gifted education away from understanding giftedness as a high IQ score to an understanding that giftedness is multidimensional (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). The report encouraged schools to define giftedness broadly, to consider the academic and intellectual talent that touched upon a range of areas of strength, not only

students' academic achievement (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015b). Although the definition of giftedness widened to include a multifaceted view of intelligence, the idea of who was included within the gifted population remained narrow, with around 3-5% of the population estimated by the report as fitting under even a broader definition of giftedness (Marland, 1971). Also, the implemented school practices of identification continued to rely heavily on intelligence and achievement tests (Pirrto, 1999).

The *Marland Report* also argued that not providing appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented students could be harmful to their development. The report noted that,

> gifted and talented children are, in fact, deprived and can suffer psychological damage and permanent impairment of their abilities to function well which is equal to or greater than the similar deprivation suffered by any other population with special needs served by the Office of Education. (Marland, 1972, pp. xi-xii)

Education, it further argued, is not based on equal services for all, but fair and just services for each. So, in addition to providing a definition, *The Marland Report* recommended a range of services, including a) a differentiated curriculum using higher cognitive concepts and processes; b) instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of gifted and talented and curriculum content; and c) grouping arrangements such as special classes, honor classes, seminars, and resource rooms (Marland, 1971).

With the report's recommendations in mind, the federal government, under the Department of Education, opened the Office of Gifted and Talented in 1974. The goal of the office was to support programs for the gifted, and although there was little funding for the office, it was tremendously influential in bringing awareness to the needs of gifted and talented students and developing guidelines for services (Gallagher, 2002;

VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Despite the fact that the Office of Gifted and Talented closed during the Reagan administration in 1981, state support for programming did not diminish, as every state in the nation dedicated at least one state-level education position to the support of gifted programs (VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

In 1983, the *Nation at Risk* report renewed interest in greater rigor in math and science education, after the report claimed that the United States schools were watering down curriculum and expectations in these subject areas, especially for high ability students. The report was a catalyst for additional commission reports and seminars that focused on gifted and talented students (Gallagher, 2002), which subsequently helped increase traction for the inclusion of gifted services in the next reauthorization of the ESEA. Under Section IV of the 1988 ESEA, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, Congress renewed its commitment to gifted education. Included in the reauthorization were claims that gifted children were vital for U.S. national security and well-being; that gifted and talented students needed to be identified and served at the elementary and secondary levels to nurture their potential contributions to society; that state and local agencies lacked resource required to plan services and identify students adequately; and that the federal government's involvement, although limited, should focus on stimulating research, developing and training gifted and talented personnel, and serving as a source of information on how to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented (Gifted and Talented Act, 1988).

Like the *Marland Report*, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act reaffirmed a broad understanding of gifted and talented education, and it

argued that serving gifted and talented students required special services and programs. The act defined gifted and talented students as,

> children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. (Gifted and Talented Act, 1998, p. 111)

The definition further emphasized the potential or "capacity" for high levels of performance in multiple subject areas and justified a need for services beyond the normal general education curriculum.

As part of the ESEA's reauthorization, the federal government provided funds for research and program development, including expanding its research and development centers to create the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, which was a consortium of universities focusing on research about gifted and talented education. In the 1988 ESEA, the federal government highlighted that "gifted and talented students from economically disadvantaged families and areas, and students of limited English proficiency are at greatest risk of being unrecognized and of not being provided adequate or appropriate educational services" (Gifted and Talented Act, 1988, p. 110), as a result, much of the research funded by the federal government focused on gifted students from low economic families and minority families.

In 1993, a second study was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education to look at gifted education. The report, called *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talents*, served as another call for the field of gifted education to be more inclusive of students and to support talented students with specialized instruction. The report argued that gifted and talented students had already mastered from 35 to 50 percent of the normal curriculum prior to the school year, but classroom teachers

made few adjustments to the curriculum for talented students during the school year; that the highest achieving students master new curriculum with limited practice which raised questions about the rigor of curriculum; that only 2 cents out of every $100 spent on K-12 education in the United States supported special opportunities for talented students; and that the majority of school systems identified students based on IQ and achievement tests, despite the call from Marland and Javits to move beyond general intelligence testing (Ross, 1993). The report also highlighted inequities for student involvement and access to gifted and talented educational opportunities (Piirto, 1999), especially for culturally different children, females, students with disabilities, high potential students who underachieve in school, and students with artistic talent (Piirto, 1991; Ross, 1993; VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

National Excellence called for challenging curriculum standards; rigorous opportunities to learn; early access to education, especially for poor and minority students; increased learning opportunities for disadvantaged students; teacher development; and the creation of schools that enable all students to be flexibly grouped according to their needs and interests (Ross, 1993). The report also called for schools to develop an identification system for gifted and talented students that seeks to identify a range of diverse talents, uses multiple means of assessment, is free of bias, is fluid, identifies potential, and assesses motivation (Ross, 1993). The report's definition of gifted is as follows:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high-performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents

> are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. (Ross, 1993, p. 33)

Within the definition, the word “gifted” was eliminated and replaced by the terms “outstanding talent” and “exceptional talent,” shifting the focus of gifted and talented education from innate talent to the development of talent. The definition further emphasizes that “giftedness” depends on opportunity, practice, and study; rather than giftedness as a state of being (Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015). This definition of giftedness is still used by researchers because it is the most current definition placed forward by the federal government.

Over the last thirty years in gifted education, the U.S. Department of Education continues to fund grants, provide leadership, and sponsor a national research center on the education of gifted and talented students. Although the federal government has not updated its accepted definition of giftedness, it continues to maintain a need for gifted services:

> Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (United States Department of Education, 2004d “Sec 9001. Definitions,” para. 22)

The federal call for gifted services focuses on serving a broad range of gifted students. It also lines up with tenants of the *talent development* framework, which is the current philosophical movement in gifted education (Dai, 2010).

The talented development model affirms a broad and inclusive understanding of gifted and talented education, which assumes that the potential for exceptional ability exists in multiple areas of study and among various populations of students. The model defines giftedness as:

> Giftedness is the manifestation of performance or production that is clearly at the upper end of the distribution in a talent domain even relative to that of other high-functioning individuals in that domain. Further, giftedness can be viewed as developmental, in that in the beginning stages, potential is the key variable; in later stages, achievement is the measure of giftedness; and in fully developed talents, eminence is the basis on which this label is granted. Psychosocial variables play an essential role in the manifestation of giftedness at every developmental stage. Both cognitive and psychosocial variables are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated. (Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011, p. 7).

The talent development model's focus on the development of emergent talent and potential offers more opportunity to meet the needs of a broader range of gifted children, especially historically underserved populations (Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015). The philosophical belief of the talent development model aims to be the most comprehensive attempt to include underrepresented high ability students, something that has been lacking for the better part of gifted education. This definition and model will be the accepted definition for this research study. However, although is currently the most accepted definition in gifted education, it is not always the most widely-adopted definition as schools continue to use old constructs of gifted education, which causes inequities for students.

The Current State of Gifted Education

The historical education movements over the last century have shaped the current policies, funding structures, and practices in education. At present, gifted education continues to be a stated focus of federal education policy, but it is often neglected in practice. Gifted education is an example of how inequities in programming and funding affect students' access to challenging education, in particular, students from historically underserved populations. Since the *Marland Report*, the federal government has expressed the need for gifted education, including gifted education for low-income and

minority students, but it provides little incentive for school systems to implement gifted services. As a result, inequities in program implementation and funding have plagued students in need of higher-level services for multiple decades.

Policies and funding.

For over forty years, the federal government has acknowledged a need for gifted education, but currently, but there is no federal regulation requiring that states adopt policies to promote gifted education, so programs of gifted education are dependent upon the state and local governments. Only 32 states hold mandates for gifted education, while other states leave the decision to implement gifted and talented programs up to the local education agencies (National Association for Gifted Children, 2013). As a result, there is no national mandated model for services, identification practices, or funding levels, so gifted services range from excellent to non-existent across the nation's school systems.

In an age of accountability, where the goal is to hold states and schools accountable for student progress, including minimizing gaps in student achievement based on race, income, language, and special needs services, the primary goal of education is meeting a minimum mandated mark for student attainment. Schools prioritize resources based on meeting federal and state accountability goals; as a result, schools place instruction meant to promote higher levels of achievement at a low priority level (Lauen & Gaddis, 2012; Plucker, J., Burroughs, N., & Song, R., 2010; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012; Ross, 1993; VanTassel-Baska, 1998), which in turn limits student access to rigorous instruction. Despite the national mentality that we need to develop the potential of our most gifted students, a mindset that took root with the launch

of Sputnik, there is no federal implementation guidelines and only minimal funding for gifted and talented education programs.

Although the federal government provides no direct funds to gifted programming, it does provide indirect support via the Jacob Javits grant program and the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, which links funding to local school systems to federal research on gifted education. To qualify for grants, school systems must promote both organizations' goals – specifically, (a) to improve the capability of schools to plan, conduct, and improve programs to identify and serve gifted and talented students; and (b) to assist schools in the identification of, and provision of services to, gifted and talented students (including economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities) who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment methods (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). Funds may be used to conduct research on methods and techniques for identifying and teaching gifted and talented students; provide professional development for teachers who work with gifted and talented students; establish and operate model projects and exemplary programs for serving gifted and talented students, especially innovative methods of identifying and serving students whose needs may not be met by more traditional gifted and talented programs; implement innovative strategies; provide technical assistance and information on how to serve gifted and talented students; and make materials and services available through state regional education service centers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b).

Nonetheless, the amount of funding provided to local school systems in support of gifted and talented education is quite small. Less than ten percent of funding from the

federal government goes into education – with the majority of federal funding going to support Title 1 and special education services (Rice, Monk, & Zhang, 2010). For the 2016 fiscal year, the federal government appropriated $15.4 billion for Title 1, $11.7 billion for special education, and $773 million to support education for English acquisition students, but no funding was directly given to support gifted programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In 2015 the Jacob Javits program received $11 million, historically the federal government's highest allocation for gifted and talented education highest (Department of Education, 2015b). One million dollars supported research, $4 million supported new initiatives, and $5 million supported past initiative in local school systems. Regardless, the amount of funding supporting gifted and talented education is far less than federal allocations for Title 1, special education, or English language education. Federal funding for gifted programs clearly is not a current priority for the nation, despite numerous calls for rigorous instruction for the nation's brightest children (Callahan, Moon, & Oh, 2014).

Outside of the Javits Act, the rest of funding for gifted education is primarily left up to the states and local governments in which the school district is located. Out of the states that mandate some level of gifted education services, 14 states provide zero dollars, six states spend less than one million dollars, and nine states spend more than ten million in state funds (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015a). States funding for gifted services can provide students with greater services that aim at meeting the needs of greater numbers of students with high abilities, while school districts that receive little to no funding are left to support gifted programming through private or local based revenues if they can support gifted services at all.

Even when funding comes from the federal or state governments, these funds do not cover the full cost of gifted and talented education. Local school systems must foot the bill for some portion of services, limit the number of students eligible for gifted services, or both. The scope of services is likely to depend on the wealth of a school district. School districts that have the most wealth will be able to implement more comprehensive gifted programs, while schools with little wealth will be less likely to do so. Schools with less wealth are likely to continue a cycle of teaching to minimum requirements and further inequities of access to high-quality education based on economic class. When gifted funding is not a priority for a school district or resources are low, students who are in need of these types of services are neglected (Latz & Adams, 2011; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). This is because schools might not have the financial means to provide challenging educational opportunities that promote achievement beyond minimum proficiency standards.

Gifted programs.

The field of gifted education recognizes that students of high academic ability need higher levels of services that are beyond the prescribed minimum proficiency learning standards that are set for many students. However, the scope and form of gifted and talented programs vary across states, school districts, and schools within districts due to state mandates, funding structures, school priorities, and student enrollment. Some of this variation is associated with major dimensions of gifted and talented programs: (a) how to identify students who are eligible for the programs and (b) what services to provide to students. States vary in how much guidance they provide for each of these dimensions and for states with weak mandates, it is up to each school district to set

criteria for identification and services for students in need of gifted education (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015a). The next two subsections give an overview of standard identification practices and services that are offered to high-ability learners.

Identification.

The field of gifted education generally acknowledges that intelligence is complex, takes on many forms, and requires many criteria to measure it. Identification for services varies amongst states and localities because each state and district have unique needs and the lack of federal and state policies impacts the guidance about which identification works. Nonetheless, identification is a major piece for programs that seek to deliver a robust and effective gifted education program. While the process of identification in some programs seeks to identify students who are innately gifted, the process in other programs seeks to identify services needed to further develop the potential ability of students (Renzulli & Dai, 2003). As a result, local programs and states use a range of identification strategies.

Because proper identification ensures fair access to services, programs, and resources to students (Bracken & Brown, 2006; Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015), many proponents of gifted and talented education encourage a multimodal approach to identification, one which allows for numerous entry points into gifted and talented programs (Bracken & Brown, 2006; Cross & Dockery, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; National Association for Gifted Children, 2012). The use of multiple data points casts a broader net for identification of gifted students, which promotes inclusion rather than exclusion. The National Association for the Gifted recommends that schools use identification data that is both objective and subjective in nature. This

includes intelligence tests; grades and state achievement assessments; teacher observation and rating scales; self, peer, educator, and parent nominations; and work samples (Bracken & Brown, 20099; Callahan & Hertberg-Davis, 2012; National Association for Gifted Children, 2012; Winebrenner, 2001). In addition to using multiple data points, with the focus on talent development, the identification should be a fluid process, according to proponents, rather than one-time opportunity (VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

Early on, one of the first tools used to identify students for gifted services was the use of intelligence tests. This component of identification has been around since the early 1920s when identifying individuals with high-abilities was a research priority for eugenicists, psychometricians, and psychologists. The use of these tests has continued to be popular over the last 100 years, and, today, many states require a national-normed ability or IQ test as part of the identification process (Cross & Dockery, 2014; National Association for Gifted Children, 2012).

Intelligence tests do have merit in the identification process. These tests are good indicators of the potential for exceptional ability and predictive of long-term development and achievement (Gagne, 2009; Gallagher, 2000; Olszewski-Kubillus & Thomson, 2015), but the exclusive use of them for the screening process does bring about some concerns. First, intelligence tests are not free from bias (Dai, 2010; Ford, Grantham, and Whiting, 2008b; Peters & Engerrand, 2016). Many intelligence tests results are heavily influenced by verbal language use, unrepresentative population norming structures, and student's prior educational opportunities (Naglieri & Ford, 2003; Peters & Engerrrand, 2016; Winebrenner, 2001; Worrell, 2015). As a result, students from Hispanic, African-American, Native American, and low-income families are more likely to receive lower

scores on intelligence tests compared to their Caucasian, Asian, and more affluent peers (Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001). Moreover, schools that place a heavy weight on intelligence tests to determine a need for gifted services create access barriers for students who face testing scenarios that are not bias-free (as mentioned above). School systems that depend on test scores for identification tend to promote gifted programs that are disproportionately White and middle class (Ford, 2014; Ford, Grantham, and Whiting, 2008b). Also, some school systems only give intelligence tests after a staff member or parents requests one. If a child does not have an advocate or the teacher's foundational beliefs of observed gifted behaviors are flawed, then a student may not have a chance to take the intelligence exam which is too often a cornerstone of identification practices. Finally, the use of intelligence tests leads to a static or fixed view of intelligence (Lohman, 2006), which goes against the current gifted movement of talent development that sees giftedness as evolving over time and contexts.

Another identification strategy is to use the frequency of gifted behaviors displayed by students. These behaviors are comprised of cognitive and affective characteristics and include the ability to manipulate abstract symbol systems; high levels of concentration; well-developed memory; early language development and interest; a strong curiosity to understand and know why things occur or not occur; the ability to generate new ideas; a strong sense of justice and fairness; a sense of humor; strong emotional intensity; perfectionism; high levels of energy; and strong attachment and commitments (Ruf, 2005; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Not all high-ability students will display these characteristics, and there will be a range in how they present amongst

students (VanTassel-Baska, 1998; Winebrenner, 2001). In addition, these characteristics may be developmental and not appear at early ages or may only reveal themselves when a student is engaged in an area of interest (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Also, considerations need to be made on based on the mindset of the person evaluating observed gifted behaviors.

Gifted behaviors are sometimes incorporated into gifted behavior rating scales (Bracken & Brown, 2006; Pfeiffer& Petscher, 2008; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Because teachers frequently interact with and observe students, they can, in theory, make judgments about the frequency of typical gifted behavior characteristics (Bracken & Brown, 2006; Siegle, 2001). Although behavior scales are useful in the identification process, some problems can arise from them as well. For instance, due to limited training in the characteristics of gifted students, teachers' may rely on predetermined notions of giftedness to complete the rating scales, which impacts the validity of the identification tool (Bracken & Brown, 2006). Also, bias and negative feelings related to behavior and personality about students from specific backgrounds can prevent some children from being identified as eligible for gifted programs (Ford, 2014; Rohrer, 1995; Siegle, 2001), especially if the rating scale is not appropriately developed to include culturally diverse, children with disabilities, and low-income students.

Educator, parent, and self-nominations are another means of identification, regardless of the use of a behavioral checklist. Teachers can be reliable sources of a data if they are appropriately trained to understand the gifted potential. However, teachers with little training are more likely to overlook students who may act out in class, not turn in work, or be culturally different than the stereotypical “gifted” child (Piirto, 1999;

Siegle, 2001). Another issue with teacher nominations is when schools use the nomination process as the first step to narrow the pool of students prior to moving forward with costly intelligence assessments. Schools that follow this approach too often result in a significant proportion of gifted students being missed for gifted services (McBee, Peters, Miller, 2016).

In addition to teachers, parents can nominate their children. Parents are an excellent source of information for the screening process, for they add a dimension that educators may not see – which is the social and cognitive development from the home perspective. Parents know a lot about their children's abilities, motivation, self-concept, and creative capacity, and often can express hidden talents of which teachers are unaware (Robison, 1993; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). One area of caution, however, is when schools heavily rely on parent nominators, which can place some students at a disadvantage, especially for children whose parents are not as involved in their education or feel uncomfortable interacting with teachers, students face a hurdle to being screened if they do not have the advocates to nominate them. In addition, many of the nomination forms are complicated, which inhibits some parents from completing the forms accurately, if at all, because they have difficulty understanding the forms (Ford, 1998).

The third type of nomination is self-nomination. Self-nomination opens the door for students who may have been historically left out of gifted programs based on parent involvement, teacher bias, or lack of understanding of gifted services. Nonetheless, self-nominations, especially when not balanced by other forms of identification, also pose potential challenges for the accurate identification of gifted students for services. Students who feel less comfortable advocating for themselves will be less likely to

nominate themselves, suggesting that this form of screening should be coupled with other identification strategies.

The use of work samples is another data point that can be used in the identification process. Work samples offer a glimpse into a child's present academic achievement levels, but work samples are also highly influenced by the instruction and educational experience to which children are exposed. Inadequate educational experiences impact students' work performance, which when used for screening purposes, places underserved populations at a more significant disadvantage as compared to students who have high exposure to rigorous instruction (Ford, 1998). Also, works samples preclude people based on the work habits of a child. Historically, many gifted programs include only students who are highly productive in school (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). If a child does not turn in homework or classwork, the lack of productivity can be viewed by teachers as a reason why a child does not need gifted services. However, when gifted children have advanced general ability that ability is still present even when productivity lags (Naglieri, Brulles, & Landsdowne, 2008).

The combination of multiple data points is an essential step in the identification process, an action that is not always present in many schools. Instead, many schools use limited data points by which to identify students for gifted services. But multiple data points allow for more equitable screening practices. Even when using this approach, screening members need to be careful not to put too much weight on one data point (Johnsen, 2008), for it can skew the screening process and unfairly limit student access to gifted programs. In addition, using multiple data points moves the field of gifted

education away from the heavy reliance on intelligence tests toward the current trend in gifted education, which is not based on static ability, but the nurturing of potential.

Finally, identification of gifted services requires advocates for children. Donna Ford (2014) argues that,

> Many advocates for the rights of gifted students in general but rarely fight for those who have different needs, concerns, values, opportunities, and experiences. Essentially, the need and sense of urgency to prevent, intervene in, and cope with social inequalities is not as proactive and urgent as needed to reduce or eliminate social injustices associated with culturally different students (p.159).

Schools cannot rely on parents to be the advocates of children; staff members need to step into the role. One method of advocacy comes from analysis of demographic data and how it relates to representation within a program across a school or school system. Ford (2014) argues that "Districts must be diligent about studying, evaluating, and disaggregating their student demographics – taking into account race, income, gender, and language – and proactively and aggressively advocating for underrepresented students from such groups" (p. 145). This includes looking at referral, representation, participation, and retention rates for various cultural, genders, economic status, and linguistic groups (Ford, 2014; Lewis, Rivera, Roby, 2012). School systems also need to be proactive in developing teachers' mindsets on what gifted services are and who the services serve. Bias is a major hurdle in how teachers identify students and having a comprehensive multicultural professional development program moves educators to make certain the services become more equitable (Banks, 2007; Castellano, 2010; Ford, 2011; Lewis, Rivera, Roby, 2012).

Services.

Proponents of gifted education believe that gifted students, because they "are different from other learners in respect to characteristics, developmental trajectories, and idiosyncratic ways of learning" (VanTassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007, p. 184), need accelerated and/or enrichment classes to progress at a rate that is commensurate with their advanced capacity to think, reason, and learn. According to these proponents of gifted and talented education, education should not be based on equal services for all, but fair and just services for each (Dai, 2010). Since 1969, the federal government has recognized these needs but has done little to support it, and the burden of to provide services to gifted students has been left up to states and local education agencies. There are a variety of service options for gifted students that are finding traction in schools, where schools use specific student-grouping approaches, placement settings, instructional strategies, and frequency of services to support advanced learners.

The way students are grouped within a school or classroom can serve as a form of gifted services. However, the way schools have grouped students has caused social and academic challenges over the years. One area that brings forward fierce opposition is the concept of ability grouping. Ability grouping is when students are placed into academic groups based on their perceived ability to learn and are provided instruction with like-ability peers. The purpose is to create a more homogenous learning environment so teachers can provide targeted, tiered instruction efficiently and effectively (Steenbergen-Hu, Makel, & Olszewski-Kubilius, 2016). There are two common types of ability grouping – students are grouped in a heterogeneous class but have a cluster group of like-

ability peers or a class that is homogenous. According to Matthews, Richotte and McBee (2013),

> From an instructional point of view, either grouping practice reduces variability in the group's learning abilities and needs, grouping allows a given level of instruction to be relevant to a greater proportion of learners than it would be in the absence of grouping. (p. 82)

While ability grouping is meant to be flexible, so that students can move in and about the group based on their needs (Feldhusen & Moon, 1992; Neihart, 2007; Tieso, 2003), when it is not, it is tracking (Loveless, 2009).

Ability grouping is often confused with tracking. Tracking also bases student grouping on perceived academic ability, but it is not flexible (Loveless, 2009). Once a student is tiered into a specific group, children remain in that group for most of their academic career. Historically, due to the rigidity of tracking, tracking is a way to reinforce racial and social-economic inequities for students because once a student is placed in a specific track, the student continues to remain in a lower track despite being capable of moving to higher tiers. Tracking limits opportunities and access, especially for disadvantaged students (Oakes, 1985). As a result, it can have grave implications on student's college and career options.

Some critics of ability grouping do not distinguish between ability grouping and tracking and view both as a way to further marginalize at-risk students. Critics of ability grouping contend that it increases achievement gaps, inhibits access to academic opportunities, and lowers self-concept or self-esteem (Belfi, Goos, De Fraine, & Van Damme, 2012; Oakes, 2008). However, if done correctly, ability grouping can have substantial positive effects for students. Studies have found that ability grouping can benefit students at all ability levels (Kulik & Kulik, 1992, & Pierce, 2011) since it

specifically addresses the academic needs of students, and for gifted students, ability grouping significantly improves academic achievement (Steenbergen-Hu, Makel, & Olszewski-Kubilius, 2016).

Grouping can and should vary according to students' service needs. The way students are grouped depends on the specific placement settings in a school or classroom. While placement settings for gifted students are varied – ranging from highly specialized to low-frequency of services – service modalities tend to fall into two distinct categories. The more specialized and intense programs, what I call full-time services, include special day schools, district-wide centers, and special classes. The low-frequency services, what I call part-time services, include pull-out programs, cluster grouping, and individualized instruction in a general education classroom. I describe each next.

Full-time services are placement options that allow students to have consistent gifted instruction, multiple days a week for multiple hours in a day. The grouping of students is homogenous (likeability) in nature. The benefit to this type of student grouping is that students in like-ability classrooms typically achieve statistically significantly higher scores on achievement tests than their gifted counterparts in regular, heterogeneous classrooms (Goldring, 1990). For full-time services, there are special day schools where teachers who are advanced in subject knowledge provide specialized curriculum and extracurricular experiences in a cross-district model (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Examples of these services include governor schools or special district-wide centers and schools, where students come from multiple schools and feed into one school.

The focus of service delivery is the concept of a homogenous classroom. This type of program creates self-contained gifted classes, where the entire make-up of the

class is of like-ability peers. Trained staff deliver a totally integrated and differentiated program, including enrichment, acceleration, and independent studies (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Similar to the makeup of special centers, special classes have 20-35 students within them, and trained teachers work in differentiated curricula and special subject matter or topics (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). These classes are located in local schools, and children who attend the local school can attend this program once eligibility is established. This type of full-time placement is similar to the setting for this research study.

Part-time services are domain specific, occur less frequently, and are often left up to a resource teacher or general education teacher to deliver services. There are pull-out resource services where identified students (around 15-25) are pulled out of the general education classroom to received gifted services with a resource teacher for short amounts of time (Callahan & Herlberg-Davis, 2012; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Pull-out models have significant positive effects on achievement, critical thinking, and creativity (Vaugh, Feldhusen, & Asher, 1991), but are limited by the amount of time a resource teacher works with the students. The amount of time can range from about once a week for a half-hour to one full day of services (Callahan & Herlberg-Davis, 2012).

Another part-time option is through the use of a school-wide model of clustering students known as the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM). Within SCGM, 3-8 gifted students are placed in a general education class, but the gifted and talented resource teacher co-teaches with the general education teacher to deliver services or the general education teacher differentiates to deliver services to the students (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). This model aims to create a balance of ability and achievement levels by

grouping all students in a grade level according to their abilities and achievement levels, which can yield desirable outcomes that benefit all students (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008). In this model, students are exposed to enrichment, acceleration, or independent studies to meet their needs across the entire school year. When implemented well, the SCGM represents one viable solution for providing effective and consistent gifted services when budgets are constrained (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011; Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010).

Finally, students can be randomly placed in a classroom with 1-5 other gifted students, and the general education teacher provides individualized instruction for students who are in need of gifted services (VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Within this model, teachers must have the capability to modify curriculum to meet the ability and achievement levels within the regular classroom (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008). This service model is not ideal, for research has shown that this form of services rarely happens in a general education classroom setting, even when the intention is to implement the model fully (VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

Embedded within the placement options are the instructional strategies used to deliver the services. The most common instructional strategies include acceleration, enrichment, and differentiation. Accelerated curriculum is when the delivery and exposure to content is at a faster pace. It is based on two premises: (a) that academically gifted students can acquire and process information faster than their peers; and (b) that academically gifted students have already mastered grade-level content and can move to above grade level work (Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011; Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008). The use of acceleration is a strong means of gifted instruction for gifted

students (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004; Rogers, 2004; Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007).

An enriched curriculum involves going deeper into grade level curriculum without accelerating the pace of instruction or moving to above-grade-level learning objectives. Often enrichment supplements the regular curriculum or covers topics that are not typically taught in the regular classroom (Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011). This type of service is the most common form of gifted services (Olszewski-Kubillus & Lee, 2004), and can be used with all students.

Another type of instructional practices in gifted education is done through the use of differentiation. Differentiation is based on the foundational belief that teachers need to meet the unique social, emotional, academic, or psychological needs of all students in the classroom (Latz & Adams, 2011) – what might be useful for one student may not be suitable for another student (Dai, 2010). The ultimate goal of differentiation is to take learners from their individual entry points and move them through an educational continuum based on individual needs (Tomlinson, 2003). Within the differentiated mode, teachers may move in and out of acceleration and enrichment to meet the needs of each child (Dai, 2010).

Supports.

Policies, funds, identification, and services are critical components of gifted education programs, but teachers, leadership, and instructional supplies are supports and tools used to strengthen them. First, teachers can have a strong influence on the academic achievement of students, and the achievement of gifted students is significantly impacted by the quality of the teacher providing gifted services. The effectiveness of a teacher is

greatly dependent on the training which the teacher receives, including professional development. Gifted teachers need training that focuses on creating and using differentiated instruction; compacting curriculum; understanding behaviors, characteristics, and social and emotional needs of gifted students; and learning how to monitor academic achievement through assessments (Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010; Ford, 2014). Teachers who are trained in gifted education rely on instructional practices that emphasize higher level thinking skills and discussion, and, according to some research studies, they can develop more positive classroom climates than teachers who have no training in gifted education (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994). When teachers lack proper training, they resort to a teaching that is not appropriate for gifted learners and place more emphasis on lecture and grades (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994). This, in turn, impacts the delivery of services and can be a barrier to the participation of underserved populations in gifted programs. In the third section of this literature review, I will discuss in more detail how the lack of training impacts our most underserved students.

Committed, strong, and effective school and central office leadership teams are vital to the success of gifted programs, primarily because principals have a direct role in promoting school effectiveness (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Even though there is not extensive research on the role of principals in promoting effective gifted services (Lewis, Cruzeiro, & Hall, 2007; Weber, Colarulli-Daniels, and Leinhauser 2003), there is some research that suggests principal leadership can influence gifted and talented education programs – much in the same way that principal leadership affects other student programs. First, in the age of accountability, principal expectations about student learning influences the way teachers implement programs. Forward-thinking principals,

who believe and model to others that all children need to learn something new each day, are principals who advocate for gifted services and commit to providing them in the school (Lewis, Cruzeiro, & Hall, 2007). Second, principals who hire-quality, and well-trained gifted teachers commit to providing students gifted services. Third, principals who strengthen teacher practice by providing professional development (Hallinger & Heck, 1996) often promote more robust gifted services in their school.

The role of leadership is not left up solely to principals at the school level; the amount of central office support also impacts the implementation of gifted services. Central office support helps to make decisions about curriculum and instruction; supports good instructional practice through professional development, for principals and teachers; and evaluates results to strengthen instructional practices and models (Corcoran, Fuhrman, Belcher, 2001). Central office support also helps to allocate the materials and resources needed to support gifted services, for, without materials to support services, implementation is a fruitless effort.

Section Summary

In summary, this section of the literature review gave an overview of gifted education in U.S. schools. Gifted education has been around for over 100 years, and the working definitions, policies, and research practices have evolved to align with the political and societal ideals occurring over the years. Although the federal government acknowledges the importance of gifted education, often by making ties to national security, it does little to support the cause through funding or regulation. Current policy initiatives and funding structures are weak, which directly impacts the way gifted services are, or in most cases are not, implemented across the country. For services that

are implemented, I discussed strengths and weaknesses of widely-used identification techniques and programming services. One of the most prevailing weaknesses of current gifted and talented education programs is the large number of underserved students. In my concluding section of the literature review, I will further discuss the equity issues that relate to access to services and resources for underserved populations, especially students from low-income backgrounds.

Relationship of Poverty and Gifted Education

Over the course of the last two literature review sections, I outlined how poverty and education intersect to influence the education of children. Federal policies have been established to try to minimize the negative impacts of poverty on education, but those policies often have resulted in less rigorous instruction in classrooms, especially for more high-ability learners. Gifted education is meant to be an equitable service for students, but in the age of accountability for minimum standards, gifted services are far and few between across the United States. In this section of the literature review, drawing upon the arguments from section one and two, I examine how poverty further impacts students' access to gifted education and a rigorous academic curriculum in American public schools. I describe underrepresentation in gifted populations with a focus on poverty. I address programming strengths and weakness in supporting gifted students who live in poverty. Finally, I conclude with an explanation of how current research on inequities that high-ability, low-income students face serves as a foundation for conducting the study.

Underrepresentation of Students Living in Poverty in Gifted Populations

The topic of underrepresentation is not new to gifted education. Underrepresented populations include students with physical and learning disabilities, females, English-language learners, African Americans, Latinos/Latinas, and students from low-income families (Ford & Harmon, 2001; Levy, Heissel, Richeson & Adams, 2017; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Reis, 2015; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Research studies have found that "the most commonly identified risk factors for students with high ability not participating in gifted programs are socioeconomic status and cultural diversity" (Cross & Dockery, 2014, p.2). For the purpose of this study, I focus on underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs for students living in poverty, though much of the research that I discuss also applies to students who come from a culturally diverse background.

In the ESEA of 1994, it noted that gifted and talented students from economically disadvantaged families are at great risk of being unrecognized and not served in schools. In 2018, the topic of underrepresented populations is still at the forefront of gifted education policy. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there is significant research that depicts how socioeconomic status and educational opportunity are correlated with each other (Loughery & Woods, 2010; Ford, Grantham, and Whiting, 2008a; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Worrell, 2003). For example, using data collected from over 2,000 schools, it was reported that students from low-income homes were significantly underrepresented in gifted programs as compared to the total population across each school district, and only 18% of schools had adequate representation of low-income students in their gifted programs (Callahan, Moon, Oh, 2014). Furthermore, only

28% of low-income students who have been identified as promising or high ability perform in the top academic quartile in the first grade, while 72% of their more affluent peers with comparable classifications do so (Wyner, Bridgeland, & Diiulio 2008). Moreover, as these promising low-income students become older, they are more likely to lose their status as promising high achievers and fail to keep up with their more affluent peers, with only 50% of the 28% remaining in the high quartile of achievement by the end of elementary school (Wyner, Bridgeland, & Diiulio 2008). Even more disheartening, research suggests that high-ability students who are underserved in schools have higher high school dropout rates and are less likely to finish college (Wyner, Bridgeland, & Diiulio 2008). Thus, the cycle of underrepresentation is compounded as students grow older.

Besides identification issues, underrepresentation occurs due to a lack of actual access to a gifted program. A significant reason why students who live in poverty fail to be identified as gifted is that they have fewer educational opportunities that help them to develop cognitively and socially to their fullest potential. The failure to identify students as well as provide access to services have significant short-term and long-term impacts on high-ability students. Significant differences in educational opportunities start as early as the preschool. Although research has found that children from low-income families benefit from access to the high-quality preschool programs, with significant increases in academic achievement, cognitive development, and social adjustment, high-quality preschool programs are more likely to be available to affluent students than low-income students (Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Wyner, Bridgeland, & Diiulio 2008), thus students from low-income families are starting behind without even having the chance to start.

Also, students who come from low-income households are more likely to attend elementary and secondary schools that focus on lower-level instructional strategies and high-stakes test preparation. In these schools, high-ability students have fewer opportunities to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to develop their talents (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Reis & Renzulli, 2010; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Schmidt, Burroughs, Zoido & Houang, 2015; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). When students do not have opportunities to develop their talent, they then have fewer opportunities to access higher rigorous opportunities in middle and high school, which impacts the colleges they can attend and graduate from and can prolong the cycle of poverty. Researchers have further isolated a lack of access, or in my view, a failure to provide opportunities, as school-specific because each school presents differences in opportunities to learn, which includes differences in curriculum, access to advanced classes, instructional quality, and teacher mindset and expectations (Adelson, Dickison, & Cunningham, 2016; Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Schmidt, Burroughs, Zoido & Houang, 2015).

Although policymakers may disagree how best to improve educational opportunities for children, there is some agreement on neutralizing inequities. Since the passage of the ESEA much legislation has focused on providing a fair and balanced education for all children in the country, primarily by eliminating inequities in educational resources and opportunities among schools that serve economically advantaged and disadvantaged children. But little focus has been placed on how to address educational inequities that exist among high-ability economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. According to Burroughs, “year after year, with billions and billions of dollars spent on interventions and policy initiatives that focus largely on

minimum competency, the vast majority of our bright minority children, ELL students, and students of limited financial means underperform academically" (2012, p. 22). Even though states are focusing on reducing achievement gaps in math and reading, with some success at least on state assessments, there is evidence that the gap between high-ability economically disadvantaged and affluent students is closing at a slower pace (Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012). One reason why may be due to the current status quo in education, where lower-income students, regardless of ability, are "generally treated as educational underachievers who need to be brought up to average attainment level" (Wyner, Bridgeland, Diiulio 2008, p. 30). This belief follows suit with teaching and learning philosophies that are associated with the pedagogy of poverty.

Under the current reauthorization of the ESEA, Every Students Succeeds Act, the legislation continues to call for decreasing the achievement gaps between racial groups, economic groups, and limited English proficient groups. Nonetheless, the same demographic discrepancies exist at the gifted services level. The newest reauthorization of ESEA provides little encouragement or financial resources aimed at closing the achievement gap between higher-income and lower-income students who might benefit from gifted services. As a result, the status quo in education is likely to continue. While "schools work to increase the numbers of students who achieve proficiency, few schools have targeted services at high-achieving students or even assessed the effects of their programs on the number of lower-income students who reach advanced levels of learning" (Wyner, Bridgeland, Diiulio 2008, p. 30).

As I discussed in the prior section, because of federal and state funding priorities, low-income students are less likely to have opportunities to participate in gifted and

talented education programs. In schools with more low-income students, there is less funding for gifted education, and in schools with fewer low-income students, there is more spending and more funding for gifted education (Baker & Friedman-Nimz, 2004; Education Trust, 2006). Thus, there is an access gap to rigorous instruction for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds spills over into the existing achievement gap, particularly at higher levels of achievement. The lack of early exposure to advanced academic/gifted services, especially in the early grades, lays the foundation for further missed opportunities for developing the talents of underserved students (Cross & Dockery, 2014; Loveless, 2014). As a result, there is a disproportionately low number of low-income students who are performing at the highest levels in elementary schools and middle school, which leads to fewer students in high school taking advanced courses, and far too many low-income students who do not graduate college or move on to graduate school (Allensworth, Gwynne, Moore, & de la Toree, 2014; Wyner, Bridgeland, Diiulio 2008; Xiang, Dahlin, Cronin, Theaker, & Durant, 2011).

A Shift in Construct

There are a variety of barriers that high-ability students who live in poverty face when it comes to access to advanced programs – conceptions of giftedness that focus on already developed talent; misconceptions about low-income, high-ability learners; pedagogy and curriculum that does not support talent development; identification policies; policies that obstruct participation; labeling students as gifted; and the lack of access to supplemental programs (Olszewski-Kubillus & Clarenbach, 2012). These barriers, though, need not be permanent. If poverty and gifted education are both social constructs, then there is room to build new educational knowledge, beliefs, and actions to

support students living in poverty who are also in need of gifted services, so as to move beyond these barriers.

Identification practices.

It is clear that socioeconomic status influences the educational opportunities and trajectories of high-ability students as well, but the lack of access is not solely based on income, it also comes from the social constructs on how schools identify and provide services to children. Prevalent identification practices create inequities in the educational opportunities afforded high-ability students, including inequities in access for talented and promising students from low-income families (Coleman & Gallagher 1992; Peters & Engerrand 2016). "Such inequities exist," according to Slocumb and Payne, "because most school districts identify gifted students by using standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, and student grades to establish cutoff scores…. This process often screens out underachieving, learning – disabled, culturally different, and – most consistently-students from poverty backgrounds" (2000, p.28). Olszewski-Kubilius and Corwith (2018) contend that lower-income students lack access to high-level curriculum and teaching strategies which lowers performance on both achievement and ability tests as compared to their more affluent peers. Many of these test scores are based on age norms, and do not factor environmental norms that take into account economic status (Peters & Engerrand 2016). If schools use age norms, instead of a norming system that examines other means of standardizing tests, there will always be inequities in identifying students. Peters and Engerrand (2016) noted that,

> 13-year-old students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals received a score on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)– Reading that was 2/3 of a standard deviation lower ($d = -0.68$) compared to the mean score of 275 obtained by their higher income peers. (p. 160).

If schools rely heavily on standardized test scores as a means to identify students than the fluidity and flexibility to access gifted services is diminished. Another example comes from a recent study from Warne, Anderson, and Johnson (2013), who found disproportions of minority and low-income students in gifted programs due to the lower academic achievement scores that screened them out during the identification process.

The means by which teachers understand giftedness and whom it serves also serves as a barrier for identification. Although there are school systems which have proper training and appropriate definitions and identification systems for gifted students, there are a large number of schools that work from beliefs that are out-of-date or not founded on research. In addition, some school systems do not accept any definition of giftedness since it is not an educational priority. Olszewski-Kubilius and Corwith (2018) note that “Often, these beliefs include that giftedness is a fixed characteristic demonstrated in effortless learning and above grade-level achievement" (p.43). Unfortunately, the beliefs of educators are often solidified through the development of working definitions or practices that guide a gifted education program. These policies provide a framework for gifted education programs and services and guide critical decisions like how students will qualify for services, the areas of giftedness to be addressed, and why services will be offered (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015b). It does not help the field of gifted education that national definitions of gifted services have not been updated since the 1990s, but current research definitions, in particular, the talent development model focuses on nurturing and growing potential and has moved the field forward to being more inclusive versus exclusive. The use of an inclusive definition of giftedness, one that acknowledges multiple areas of potential for

high levels of performance, increases the likelihood of identifying students who have historically been underrepresented in gifted programs. The definition of giftedness established by the school has a significant impact on how students' opportunities are shaped for long-term academic success (Tomlinson, 2014); broad and inclusive definitions of giftedness can also help educators change their own mindset about who is gifted and who should receive services.

The National Association for Gifted Children and Council of State Directors of Programs (2015) analyzed gifted protocols across the country, and it found that the use of IQ and achievement tests and referrals were the most common (2015), but there is enough evidence to support that these strategies are not effective. Over the course of the last decade, more research has been conducted to find more effective ways to identify students. First, to correct underrepresentation of low-income students, school districts need to be more flexible in how they screen students and develop "local alternatives" to state requirements that heavily rely on IQ, achievement tests, and nominations (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018). The recommended protocol from the National Association for Gifted Children (2015a) suggests using a multi-modal means of assessing students based on achievement factors like work samples and anecdotal notes, which helps provide greater access to those who have been excluded from gifted programs in the past.

Second, Cross and Dockery's (2014) review of the recent research notes that early identification for participation in gifted programs is a way to end the cycle of underrepresentation based on socio-economic status or race in gifted programs. Programs like the Young Scholars program and USTARs are two examples of programs that I

discussed earlier that promote early identification. The goal of the program is to identify potential early and provide programs to nurture their talents.

Also, proper training in gifted education is a way to open identification practices. Gifted and talented professional development is meager at best. If teachers are to make recommendations about which students require gifted and talented services, they need training about how to assess the need for gifted services properly and how stereotypes about giftedness can unfairly deny some students access to gifted and talented programs. "A key issue for the identification of gifted children from poverty," according to Olszewski-Kubilius and Corwith (2012), "is whether educators believe that gifted potential can exist in the absence of high accomplishment and if that potential can be observed and discerned in some fashion" (p. 43). Many endorsement and licensure courses now include ways to identify students who come from a low-income household, and school systems are paying closer attention to professional development on how to identify students using alternative methods. In the next paragraphs, I go into further details on professional development and its intersection with poverty.

Professional knowledge.

Knowledge comes from training and practice, and the lack of formal training for educators about gifted education has plagued the field for years. Only five states require all teachers to receive pre-service training in gifted and talented education, and only 14 states require general education teachers to have any training on the nature and needs of gifted and talented students at any point in their careers (National Association for Gifted Children, 2009). The lack of training causes issues when it comes to identifying students and providing them services. Thus, there is a large rift in what teachers think they know

about gifted education and what researchers say are best practices. Dr. Donna Ford (2014) wrote about the need for gifted training as essential. She went on to say,

> Even if educators have received academic degrees in gifted education, professional development must be ongoing and substantive, targeting equitable identification and assessment instruments, policies, and procedures; affective development; psychological development; social development; cultural development; curriculum and instruction; and services and programming for gifted students from all backgrounds. (p. 150)

Initial and ongoing teacher training provides a means of diminishing or confronting myths about gifted learners, myths that perpetuate the cycle of underrepresentation. Teachers need training in basic gifted concepts like how to identify students and ways to use curriculum resources more effectively, but teachers especially need to develop the skills to identify advanced students from underserved populations and create a supportive learning environment for the development of these students.

The National Association for Gifted Children (2016) has argued that all teachers should receive training about the learning characteristics and behaviors of underrepresented gifted populations; cultural differences that may mask ability; ability among children with multiple exceptionalities (e.g., disabilities and giftedness); techniques for developing positive peer culture in the classroom and school; and equitable and nonbiased assessments. Moreover, training in gifted education should help teachers acknowledge students' potential, emphasize students' strengths, focus less on areas of weakness, and make gifted education more inclusive of underrepresented populations, including those living within poverty.

Mindset.

One approach to the goal of alleviating access gaps revolves around changing educators' mindset about identifying, developing and nurturing high academic potential in

students from economically disadvantaged populations (Jarvis, 2009). Teachers' beliefs, stereotypes, biases, and expectations often influence whether students are included or excluded from gifted and talented programs (Ford, 2014; Siegle, 2001). When educators believe that giftedness is merely a function of IQ rather potential that requires development, or that only a few children warrant gifted and talented services, low-income children are less likely to be identified or be given access to gifted and talented services. Moreover, a mindset of low academic expectations for children who come from poor households can discourage gifted students from engaging in the types of behaviors that will help them further develop their potential. When gifted students feel accepted and understood by their teachers, they are more apt to take academic risks (Delisle & Galbraith, 2002; Webb, 2005).

One way educators and schools can adopt a "growth" mindset is to operate from a strengths perspective, rather than a deficit perspective when assessing the ability and talents of their students. When student strengths are the focus, there is a higher likelihood that academic talent will be recognized and developed for students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Hale & Rollins, 2009; Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). With a growth mindset, the goal is nurturing academic talent, rather than simply classifying students as gifted or of exceptional intelligence. Such a mindset acknowledges giftedness more broadly and creates a more inclusive environment in which students will feel more accepted and understood by their teachers (Delisle & Galbraith, 2002; Webb, 2005). A growth mindset fits well the talent development philosophy discussed earlier, and it is increasingly the orientation of gifted educators and directors of gifted education programs.

Services.

While one of the primary goals of ESEA's Title 1 program, which provides supplemental resources for high poverty schools, is to provide children with an enriched and accelerated educational program, too often it fails to do so. Even when resources are used to develop schoolwide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time, there has been little effort to provide more rigorous instruction and curriculum for gifted students. Title 1 programs may promote enriched and accelerated instruction for all students, but, usually, enriched and accelerated instruction is limited or viewed as an "add-on service," particularly given the potential of many high-ability students. Federal funding and mandates promote equitable educational opportunities, but only up to the point where a minimum achievement rate has been met for economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. Policies and practices in low-income school systems need to promote two achievement goals. One is to ensure that high-achieving lower-income students continue to achieve, and the second is to help more lower-income students move into the top quartile of academic achievement (Wyner, Bridgeland, & Diiulio 2008).

Yet another approach to support underrepresented advanced academic learners is through the implementation of a continuum of services and programming models – ranging from part-time to full-time services for students identified as gifted. Adopting a service model that focuses on a continuum of gifted services embraces the notion of giftedness as a dynamic, evolving characteristic of students that can emerge over time. A continuum of services promotes an inclusive gifted program that provides services for all gifted students based on the students' ability and potential to learn, for it maximizes

opportunities for students to demonstrate their potential and talent in multiple areas (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008). It provides access to students and works on the idea that exposure encourages greater access in the future. It also aligns with the talent development model, which promotes a range of services from low-exposure to high-exposure for students. Low exposure can include monthly lessons on higher-level thinking skills to every-day exposure to research-based gifted and talented curriculum units. Under the talent development model, students can move upward on a continuum of performance using scaffolded support along the way. This approach to services allows access to more students who have not historically fit into the mold of gifted education (Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015).

Several programs are targeting students from underrepresented populations to provide students access to help them grow toward higher levels of gifted services, including USTARS and the Young Scholars program. Both programs function under the belief that students need access to higher level tasks and lessons so students can have an opportunity to show gifted behaviors. "These structures help avoid a problem common to most achievement tests and teacher rating scales," Peters and Engerrand (2016) argue, "[because] any given student might not demonstrate the skills the teacher is looking for, simply because he or she has not yet had a chance to develop that particular skill" (p.163).

Section Summary

There are too many low-income high-ability students not being identified for gifted and talented education programs, which contributes to the achievement gap, especially at higher levels of achievement among high-ability students. While high-

ability low-income students benefit from rigorous programs in general education, participation in a more formal gifted program could enable these students to thrive and develop their potential more fully. To provide more access for low-income students who historically have been left out of gifted and talented programs, current policies and practices about gifted education need to use inclusive identification procedures, promote open or growth mindsets among educators and focus on providing students access to academic programs that foster high-level thinking and learning experiences. The current gifted and talented policies and practices have resulted in the stratification of educational opportunities based on family income levels. If school systems make the aforementioned modifications in approaches to identification, mindsets about gifted education, and service strategies, then gifted and talented programs could be more accessible to low-income students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter's purpose was to evaluate the literature that guides this case study. The literature detailed that students in poverty do less well in school than their more advantaged peers partly because of inadequate resources and access to quality educational opportunities. Disparities are especially pronounced for high-ability, low-income students who are seldom identified for gifted and talented education programs and provided access to them. Some barriers to the participation of high-ability low-income students identified in the literature are high-stakes accountability systems that prioritize attaining modest academic standards over boosting student learning to higher levels; low expectations for student performance, particularly for economically disadvantaged students; culturally biased or restrictive identification procedure for gifted

education programs, and culturally biased or restrictive educational services for gifted students.

Although the federal government provides funding for research about gifted education, especially for research that examines programs that promote greater access to gifted services for historically underserved populations, the amount of funding is small, and the literature remains incomplete. For example, there is little research on the role that school leaders might play in promoting and creating more inclusive gifted education programs, particularly in schools where large populations of low-income students attend. Much research is still needed to extend our knowledge about how to effectively and equitably implement gifted education in Title 1 schools for low-income students. In the next chapter, I describe the methodology and procedures that I use to study to efforts to increase the access of low-income students to gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

In this chapter, I discuss the research design and methods used in my study of Title 1 schools and students' access to rigorous curriculum and instruction via community-based, full-gifted education programs. The first section describes the research questions and conceptual framework that guide the study. The second section discusses the research tradition that informs the study and provides a justification for its selection. The third section explains the site and sampling methods and argues why the sampling frame is appropriate for the study's purpose and research questions. The fourth section discusses the data collection procedures and how the data was analyzed. The fifth section addresses the study's validity and potential transferability of findings. The sixth section concludes the chapter with a discussion of the study's major limitations.

Research Questions

This qualitative study is an in-depth, examination of community-based, full-time programs in Title 1 schools. Gifted and talented programs are not in every school across the country, and there are opportunity gaps that exist especially in schools with high rates of poverty (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007). As Haberman (1991, 2010) has argued, low-income children in low-income schools typically experience a pedagogy of poverty in their classrooms and schools. Such a pedagogy relies heavily on repetition, drill, and teacher-directed instruction; and children are seldom given opportunities to explore their own interests or engage in more powerful constructivist practices thought to develop critical analytical skills, a deeper understanding of content, and self-confidence in learning. By examining potential contradictions to a pedagogy of poverty, the provision of gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools, I sought to understand the

reasons why schools opt to implement the program, the challenges and benefits for providing low-income children with more rigorous curriculum and instruction, as well as, the opportunity costs associated with its implementation.

I address the following research questions in this study:

RQ1. What are the reasons expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff for implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools?

RQ2. What are the benefits expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ3. What are the challenges expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ4. What are the opportunity costs expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?

The research questions are intentionally broad, so I can capture a wide range of ideas about why school leaders and instructional staff members implement gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools. The questions also provide an opportunity to understand better the perceived benefits and challenges of providing low-income students with the type of pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices used in many full-time gifted programs, programs typically not found in Title 1 schools.

Research Tradition

The study's design is an applied, collective case-study in which I "test applications of basic theory and disciplinary knowledge to real-world problems and experiences" (Patton, 2002, p. 217) by linking information from individual cases to a combined case (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The basic theory that I examine is the pedagogy of poverty, which hypothesizes that the curriculum and instruction provided to low-income students are pedagogically weak, uninspiring, and ineffective, but the cases within this collective case-study contradict pedagogy of poverty's belief system. Also, according to Yin (2003), a case study approach affords itself to understanding the "why" of a phenomenon under investigation. By understanding why schools elect to use non-standard pedagogical practices in Title 1 schools, practices more often found in schools that serve more economically advantaged students, I sought to understand better both the reasons behind the pedagogy of poverty and why some school leaders and instructional staff members reject it or seek an alternative to it. I also examine the teaching and learning beliefs in the community-based, full-time gifted program in multiple Title 1 schools, so that I can provide a rich description of the form of pedagogy that school leaders and instructional staff have developed as an alternative to a pedagogy of poverty.

I selected an applied, collective case study because this methodology provides an in-depth study of a program in multiple settings (Creswell, 2007). I elected to use an applied research philosophy because it has the power to "contribute knowledge that will help people to understand the nature of a problem in order to intervene" (Patton, 2002, p. 217), and, in the case of this study, the intervention I study opens a window that could inform how to shift instructional practices from the pedagogy of poverty to the pedagogy

of plenty. Furthermore, an applied research study enables me to bring my "personal insights and experiences into any recommendations that may emerge" (Patton, 2002, p. 217), because of the professional work I completed prior to the study. It is also a well-established research design that is used across many disciplines, including education (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery, & Sheikh, 2011).

The use of a collective case study allows the researcher to focus on each unique case before combining them as one collective case (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995). By developing multiple unique cases of the community-based, gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools, I was able to look for similarities across programs but also for variations in programs (Yin, 2003). Collective case studies provide robust data about a particular phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003) and improve the researchers' ability to contextualize findings and theorize about a phenomenon in a broader context (Berg, 2007; Dawson, Hancock, Algozzine, 2017). In addition, a case study approach is a frequently used method for studying specific programs in context, such as gifted and talented education programs; I used foundational studies that use this method to shape my study (Mendaglio, 2003; Moon, 1991).

Site and Sampling Methods

Next I describe the site for the study the sampling strategy that I used to select participants for the study from the site. I also describe, in some detail, each of the Title 1 schools selected as cases for the study.

School District Site

The data was collected from a large school system, which I call Lirah Central School District (LCSD.[3] Based on the state records, the school system has around 200 schools and serves grades PreK-12. It is one of the top twenty largest school systems in the United States and serves a diverse population with close to 200,000 students. The racial demographics for the school system include 40% White; 25% Hispanic; 20% Asian; 10% Black; 5% two or more races; and less than 1% are American Indian or Native Hawaiian.

The school system offers a robust general education curriculum, and it provides programs to fit the specific needs of its students, including services for English language, special education, and gifted and talented; early childhood education for young students; world languages for students interested in becoming multilingual; and Title 1 services for low-income students. The school system supports these services through a $3 billion operating budget that feeds predominately from local funds (70%) and the state (23%). The federal government contributes minimal funding at less than 2% of the total budget.

Sampling

Case studies lend themselves to a variety of sampling methods and, for the purpose of this study, I used a purposeful sampling method on information-rich cases, focusing on three Title 1 schools which present potential alternatives to a pedagogy of poverty. The sampling method selected aligns with two sampling philosophies – atypical

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[3] The names of the school system, schools, and employees have been changed to protect the identity of those in the study.

and extreme case. Atypical sampling bases selection on unique situations within a given phenomenon of the study's interest (Merriam, 2009) and extreme case sampling focuses on unusual manifestations of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Although the cases within the study are not typical of Title 1 schools, Patton (2002) argues that "lessons may be learned about unusual conditions or extreme outcomes that are relevant for improving more typical problems" (p. 232). Given the unique nature of school-initiated, full-time gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools, the three schools selected for the study provide an opportunity to examine the reasons for providing gifted and talented services in these schools, and any distinctive program attributes supportive of the services. By looking at these alternative or atypical cases that go against the pedagogy of poverty, the data leads to conclusions that improve low-quality instructional practices in typical Title 1 schools.

I used six criteria for selecting the three schools to be included as cases in this study. The first criterion is that the school is a Title 1 school. Title 1 schools are schools that have high percentages of children from low-income families and receive funds to support programs to neutralize the impacts of poverty. Despite the school system being located in one of the wealthiest areas in the county, there are areas of extreme financial need in the communities served by the school system. The school system has a 30% population of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FRPM). Local poverty rates and FRPM eligibility are factors used to allocate Title 1 funds for school systems. Within this school system, there are over 40 elementary schools that receive Title 1 funds and implement school-wide Title 1 programs.

The second criterion is that the school implements a community-based, full-time gifted program. The school system has over fifty schools that have implemented this type

of gifted services. The community-based, full-time gifted program involves an approach to curriculum and learning that contrasts with the pedagogy of poverty. It bases its curriculum and instructional strategies on a student-centered approach that fosters a love of life-long learning. In the community-based, full-time gifted program, adaptations are made to the general education standards and curriculum to provide an appropriate level of challenge for gifted learners with a strong emphasis on critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Also, the program allows students to explore and express their ideas with other highly able peers. Teachers develop and implement units of study that lead to an understanding of the concepts, themes, and issues that are fundamental to the mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. During their studies, students pursue independent investigations and ongoing research appropriate to the disciplines and have ongoing opportunities for reflection and self-assessment that develop an understanding of the characteristics, demands, and responsibilities of advanced intellectual development. The community-based, full-time program offers an alternative to the magnet program, where children are bussed to other schools to receive the gifted services for which they qualify. I provide further explanation of these two programs in Chapter 4 of this paper, including the professional development, curriculum adoption, identification procedures, the difference between the two full-time gifted programs.

From the list of Title 1 schools that implement gifted and talented programs, I applied four sub-criteria for the sample selection: (a) program fidelity of implementation, (b) access to the program for low-income students, (c) years of program operation, and (d) the principal's years of service at the school. The first of the sub-criterion was the

level of the fidelity of implementation of the program. The fidelity of the program was determined by teacher attendance at professional development, the reputation of the program within the school system, and teacher endorsement status. Schools were rated as low, medium, or high fidelity. As a way to check my ratings of fidelity, I separately met with two members of central office to share the possible list of schools, and it was confirmed that the schools I noted with medium to high fidelity were accurate.

The second sub-criterion I used was based on student representation in the program as compared to the population of the school. I obtained this data from the school system since it uses codes within the student data information system to denote special programs students receive. All students who are magnet-eligible for the program receive one code, while students who are not magnet-eligible, but are receiving full-time gifted services receive another code. The school system had information that broke down services by service code and by the school, and it also included numbers based on free and reduced-priced meals (FRPM).[4] To determine the proper representation of students receiving FRPM, I calculated the percentage of students enrolled in the gifted program who participated in the free and reduced-meal program in each school, and I then compared the percentage of participating students in the gifted program to the percentage of FRPM students in the entire school population. I determined which schools had higher proportions of low-income student representation in the program as it compared to the entire school enrollment. This ensured that the schools selected represented the

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[4] Since the study is not focused on representation based on race or ethnicity, I did not consider these criteria as a sampling decision.

phenomenon under investigation – schools that provide gifted services to low-income students. In chapter 4-7, I go into further detail about the identification process for the program.

The third sub-criterion I used was based on the years the program has been implemented. I wanted to select schools that had well-established programs, believing that these schools would provide a better understanding of gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools. It also ensured that the school was implementing the full-time program in the intended grades. Often, schools start the community-based, full-time gifted program with only one grade level, which is typically third grade, and add a grade each subsequent year. Thus, after three years of program implementation, the school is operating at the all the grade levels that the program is supposed to target. During the selection process, I listed how many years each program had been in operation. The years of implementation was determined using the program's original proposal, as well as, historical knowledge from the gifted and talented office.

The final sub-criterion was based on how long the current principal had been at the school. I used this criterion because I was interested in the principals' reasons for implementing a community-based, full-time gifted and talented program, so I selected schools with principals that have been at the site for multiple years and have the history behind why the program started and why the program continues to be implemented. Also, principals serve as the key advocate for a program, and it is often their responsibility to persuade the school staff, students, and community members to endorse a program. Principals also have first-hand insights into the benefits, challenges, and opportunity

costs of the gifted program because their job requires them to have a whole-school perspective versus a teacher's perspective, which is typically isolated to one classroom.

Using the six criteria, the selection of the sample then followed a three-step reduction process. First, from the 44 Title 1 schools within the district, I determined which schools offer school-initiated, full-time gifted services. This created a pool of 14 schools. Second, I leveled the 14 schools using four categories – fidelity of implementation, student enrollment, years of program operation, and principal's years of service. During the final step of the site-selection process, I used the six criteria points to select three schools for the study. I selected schools that have medium to high levels of fidelity, have an appropriate FRPM participation rate as compared to the total school enrollment of students on FRPM, and programs that have been in operation for at least three years with principals who have been at the school for at least three years. Figure 3.1 gives an encapsulated overview of the sample selection process.

Figure 3.1 Sample Selection Process

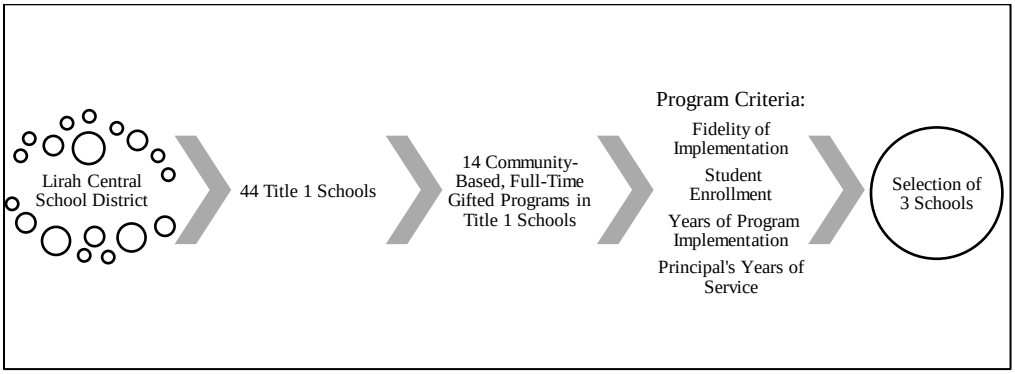

Table 3.1 presents the characteristics of 14 full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools in the district. Each column represents the fundamental selection criterion for the study: start-up year, the tenure of the current principal, the fidelity of implementation rating, the percent of school enrollment of students eligible to receive free or reduced-

price meals, and percent gifted program enrollment for students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals. I selected the schools illustrated in bold font – Schools 2, 3, and 8 – for the study.

Table 3.1

List of Full-Time Gifted Programs in Title 1 Schools

School	Start year of full-time gifted program	Number of years current principal has been at the school	Fidelity of implementation rating	Total school student enrollment on FRMP	Total full-time gifted program student enrollment on FRMP
School 1	2004-2005	3+	Low	81%	74%
School 2	**2003-2004**	**3+**	**Medium**	**62%**	**48%**
School 3	**2004-2005**	**3+**	**Medium**	**75%**	**48%**
School 4	2015-2016	3+	Medium	56%	32%
School 5	2004-2005	3+	Medium	64%	45%
School 6	2014-2015	3+	Medium	48%	28%
School 7	2013-2014	3+	Medium	73%	56%
School 8	**2006-2007**	**3+**	**High**	**80%**	**66%**
School 9	2015-2016	3+	Medium	48%	28%
School 10	2012-2013	3+	Low	52%	14%
School 11	2010-2011	2	Medium	71%	49%
School 12	2008-2009	3	Medium	59%	32%
School 13[5]	2008-2009	3	Medium	69%	49%
School 14	2014-2015	3+	High	73%	43%

Note: Boldface indicates the case samples selected.

[5] This school was initially selected as a participant site, but the school opted not to participate in the study.

Besides the similarity of having full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools, the three schools selected have many overlapping features and programs. One overlapping feature is that schools are located in the most populated areas of the school system. Within the surrounding areas, there are large numbers of apartment complexes or relatively low-priced single-family homes with multiple families residing in the home; the schools are close to congested main thoroughfares; the community radius in which the school feeds from is smaller in square miles as compared to other areas in the district. The second overlapping feature is that all three schools offer similar programs to fit the needs of its students – including English as a Second Language (ESOL) services and Head Start for preschool-age students. The most prominent apparent difference is the enrollment size of the schools. Compared to all the elementary schools in the district, the sample includes one of the smallest elementary schools and two of the largest elementary schools. The range of student population is 300-1100 across elementary school. The selection of different size schools was not a factor in sample selection, but it now offers an extra layer to the case study. Table 3.2 provides a basic overall comparison between the three sites.

Table 3.2
Comparison of Sample Schools Selected

Characteristic	School System	School 2	School 3	School 8
School naming code	Lirah	Winnifred	James	E.S. Hughes
School abbreviation	LCSD	WES	JES	ESH
Grades	PreK-12	PreK-5	PreK-5	PreK-5
Total number of students	200,000	400	900	1100
Accreditation		Fully accredited	Fully accredited	Fully accredited
Percentage of school student enrollment on FRMP	29%	62%	80%	76%
Ethnicity				
Asian	20%	23%	13%	12%
Black (not of Hispanic origin)	10%	6%	6%	17%
Hispanic	26%	46%	70%	40%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	40%	23%	7%	29%
Other	6%	2%	4%	2%
Limited English Proficiency	29%	51%	68%	61%
Mobility	12%	19%	23%	27%
Special Education	14%	17%	12%	11%
Featured Programs		Title 1, Head Start, Foreign Language, Full-Time Gifted, ESOL, Young Scholars, Responsive Classroom	Title 1, Head Start, Foreign Language, Full-Time Gifted, ESOL, Young Scholars, Responsive Classroom,	Title 1, Head Start, Foreign Language, Full-Time Gifted, ESOL, PBIS, Young Scholars

I selected ten educators as participants in the study who are associated with the implementation of the program from the three schools selected and the central office support team. The size of the sample is ample because it covers a range of perspectives and similarities based on each person's job role. The participants include the principal from each of the three schools, the previous and current gifted and talented coordinator for the school system, an assistant superintendent in central office, the central office gifted and talented resource teacher support person, and the gifted and talented resource teacher for each school. Each of these individuals brings rich and varied perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for providing low-income children with more rigorous curriculum and instruction. The principals bring forward the vision and buy-in for the program which carries across the school. The central office staff provides the overall ideas behind program standards, philosophy, identification procedures, professional development, curriculum adoption, knowledge of best practices in gifted education, and instructional supports for schools on their journey of implementation. The gifted resource teachers were selected to be a part of the study because they serve as chair persons for identification, which is a significant component of gifted access; they understand the various levels of gifted services within in the school; and they provide support for students and staff members throughout their schools.

To recruit the participants, I called upon the associations I made throughout my years in the field of gifted education. As a result, I have a professional relationship with some of the participants who are a part of the selected sample. I contacted the participants via email; introduced my study; added a personal connection to the study; and provided each participant with a written copy of the study's introduction, benefits for participation,

and a means to contact me if they wish to participate. I also set up a timeline for the interview process which was within the permission parameters set by the Lirah Central School District. When meeting with the participants, I provided each participant with the IRB consent forms, offered to provide a letter from the school district stating approval of the study, and discussed the token of appreciation gift.

Participation in the study required a time commitment from each principal, central office administrator, and gifted resource teacher. Although participation in the study was voluntary, I offered principals a token of gratitude for participation in the form of professional development for their staff or the purchase of a gifted instructional resource for his or her school. I also offered to bring a coffee or tea to each interview as a means of "breaking the ice" and nurturing a safe and welcoming interview process.

Data Collection

The qualitative nature of this study provided a mode of inquiry that occurs in a natural school setting and draws upon multiple methods of data collection. The process of using a case study approach includes gathering "comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest" (Patton, 2002, p. 447). Yin (2003) and Creswell (2007) recommend using multiple data sources for collective case studies, including documents, archival records, direct observations, interviews, observations, and physical artifacts. In keeping with Crowe et al. (2011) recommendations, I specifically focused the data collection on being in line with research questions but remained flexible to allow different paths to be explored. For this study, the data was collected from multiple sources. The sources include document data and interviews with program participants, both of which are common forms of case-study data collection methods (Hancock &

Algozzine, 2006). The combination of data collection provides strength for the study through triangulation (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2000; Patton, 2002). Using the data, I assembled the raw case study data, then constructed a single case, and concluded with a final case study narrative. The means in which I progressed through the case study followed the timeline presented below in Table 3.3. In the subsequent paragraphs, I go into further detail about each data source and the protocols I followed for analysis and case narratives.

Table 3.3

Timeline of Data Collection and Analysis

Date Source	Data Analysis	Time Frame
Document analysis Statistical profiles Full-time gifted proposal School improvement plan	Field notes Content analysis Code generation Content generation Content refinement	Summer/Fall 2017
Principal interviews	Transcription Theme analysis Code generation	Summer/Fall 2017
Central office interview	Transcription Theme analysis Code generation	Summer 2017
Gifted and talented resource teacher interviews	Transcription Theme analysis Code generation	Fall 2017
Follow-up interviews	Transcription Theme analysis Code generation	Fall 2017
Individual Case	Individual case report write-up	Winter 2018
Full data set	Theme refinement Drafting of final report	Winter 2018
Collective Case	Final report write-up	Winter 2018

Document Data

During data collection, I used documents as sources of information. The use of various documents provided richness to a study because it can portray the values and beliefs of participants, as well as provide background data for the site, population, and program justification (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Document data was collected from the statistical profiles, program proposals, school improvement plans, state documents for gifted services, the district's gifted standards tool, and Title 1 plans of the schools selected for the study.

First, statistical profile information included the following: (a) the number of students the program serves; (b) the proportion of students in the full-time gifted program who receive free and reduced lunch as compared to the entire school population; (c) the number of teachers with teaching credentials/endorsements in gifted education; (d) special programs within each school; (e) school demographic information; (f) years the program has been implemented; (g) years the principals has been a part of the program. The information was obtained from the school system's website, the data collected within central office, and during my interviews with staff members. I used this information to determine the sample selection, which then informed my interviews and subsequent data collection.

The full-time gifted program proposal is another source of data. One year before program implementation, each school submits a program proposal. Within the proposal, the school outlines identification procedures, the plan for implementation of services, goals for the program, and the commitment for fidelity of implementation. Once the program plan is submitted, the assistant superintendents for the school and instructional

services, and program coordinator review the plan to determine if the program will be established at the school. The use of this data provides the background to why schools opted to adopt the full-time program and its plan for action.

A third source of data comes from central office documents including (a) a self-study tool; (b) district plan for gifted services required by the state; and (c) information from the gifted website. The first is the school district's self-developed self-study tool for the full-time gifted program. The self-study tool is designed to ensure that the standards and associated practices within the gifted and talented program are being maintained and implemented with fidelity. The self-study process helps to ensure that schools meet the expectations of the gifted curriculum, teacher qualifications, vertical and horizontal planning, and communication of programming to the school community. The tool allows the school to reflect on current practices and to develop areas of growth. The information on this document outlines the standards and practices that are recommended by the school system and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2010). In addition, I used the district's plan for gifted services that is submitted to the state. The plan includes information about the school system's philosophy of gifted education, its goals, types of program, and identification procedures. The information from the document provides a philosophical base to the community-based, full-time program. I also use information from the gifted office website which also details foundational information about the gifted program within the district.

A fourth source of data comes from each school's yearly Title 1 plan. The plan outlines reform strategies to ensure all students have access to high-quality learning experiences and nurtures the connection between home and school relationships. In

addition to supporting professional development for staff members, purchasing high-quality instructional materials, and bridging relationships between home and school, Title 1 funds can be used in the area of intervention and enrichment. The district's website reports that,

> Title 1 schools offer a variety of opportunities for students to access scaffolds and supports that enable each to reach his or her full potential, including both interventions geared toward students' needs in literacy and mathematics and enrichments that ensure all students reach high expectations. Title 1 funds are used at the division level to provide technical assistance and support to schools in grant administration and school reform efforts.

The use of this data helps to understand if Title 1 schools use Title 1 funds to support the full-time gifted program, which can be viewed as an instructional reform effort.

The final type of document collected was each school's required school improvement plans. School improvement plans provide an overview of annual planning and monitoring of school programs and effectiveness. For this study, the school improvement plan was used to determine if the gifted programs are used to improve instruction across the school or are conceived to be more insular or separate from the school's traditional Title 1 programs. I used two years' worth of plans when examining this data source, which added additional robustness to its use.

Interview Data

The study's most extensive data collection method is through interviews because "[an interview] allows us to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2002 p. 341) and provide insight into the perspectives of why schools implement full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools, and the benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of implementation. In-depth interviews were conducted with school principals, and at the central office level with the past and present coordinator of the gifted program, the

administrator who supports the gifted and talented resource teachers, and an assistant superintendent within central office. They are the “key participants whose knowledge and opinions may provide important insights regarding the research questions” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 39). In-depth interviewing adds much strength to a research design. It fosters face-to-face interactions with the participants; uncovers participants’ perspectives; facilitates immediate follow-up for clarification; is useful for describing complex interactions; provides information on context; and facilitates analysis, validity, checks, and triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

I developed an interview protocol, which I provide more detail in Appendix A, to guide me through the interview process and to align the interview questions with the overall questions of the research study. The protocol called for a semi-structured approach to questioning, which helped to standardize questions yet allow flexibility if I needed to go further or redirect the questions. I also used a semi-structured interview approach because “semi-structured interviews invite interviewees to express themselves openly and freely and to define the world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).

The interview questions stem from current literature studies, as well as, Haberman’s underpinnings of the pedagogy of poverty, and specific questions relating to the implementation of the gifted program. The interview was broken down into two parts. The first part examined each of the interviewee's philosophy of teaching and learning, which can provide insight into the theoretical framework used for the study. The second part looked explicitly at the full-time gifted program. The interviews were purposely sectioned off so I could obtain an understanding of how the theoretical framework of the

pedagogy a poverty versus pedagogy of plenty connects to the ideals behind the implementation of a full-time gifted program in the school. I sequenced the questions based on its relationship with the study's conceptual framework and research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Kavle, 1996). Table 3.4 illustrates how the interview questions were organized for the research questions I aimed to answer.

Table 3.4

General Research Questions[6]

Research Question	Interview Question
Theoretical Framework Questions: Pedagogy of Poverty vs. Plenty	• What is the teacher's role in the classroom? • What is the student role in the classroom? • What impacts student learning? • What is a prerequisite for learning and living? • What instructional strategies are important for learning? • What is an ideal learning environment?
What are the reasons expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff for implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools?	• Why does your school implement a locally funded full-time gifted program? • Can you give a brief history of why the program at your school started and how the program has been implemented over the years?

[6] In Appendix A, I provide a more specific outline of the interview questions that I asked each participant in the study. The questions varied based on the job role of the participant.

Research Question	Interview Question
What are the challenges expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?	• What are the challenges you identify with providing locally funded full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools? • What strategies do you use to address the challenges?
What are the benefits expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?	• What benefits do you identify with providing locally funded full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools, including possible spillover effects to the rest of the school and the community, and what strategies do they use to maximize those benefits? • What evidence is there to support the benefits and spillover effects of providing locally funded full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?
What are the opportunity costs expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?	• What tradeoffs do you need to make to implement the program at the school?

The interview questions developed were piloted with practitioners in the field and my advisor to ensure clarity and assess its intended descriptive nature. During the interviews, I followed a scripted, sequenced approach, which allowed me to code data in a more efficient manner as well as standardized the fundamental questions of the study (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Each interview occurred in a one-on-one person format, which has a reputation for producing meaningful amounts of information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). I also conducted the interviews in a private environment to increase the comfort level of the

participant, which lent itself to obtaining a high-level of information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The majority of the data was collected in a single setting. During the interviews, I used follow-up questions to clarify and extend details that emerged during the data collection process.

Before each interview, I obtained informed consent for each participant and explained that information attained will be kept anonymous and confidential. During each interview, I recorded the session using an audio-recorder and an iPhone with audio software, which provided higher insurance for reliable recording. The recording of the interviews allowed for greater efficiency and accuracy in getting all the information participants spoke about, and I was able to concentrate on the topic and subtleties of the interview (Kvale, 1996). I also took brief field notes during the interview, in case of audio recording failure. For participants who opted not to be audio recorded, I took detailed field notes and checked for understanding as the interview was conducted.

Per the permission of each participant, the recorded interviews were sent away to a reputable translation service company. To secure the privacy of the participants, I signed a confidentiality contract with the company, sent audio recordings over a secure server, and requested to have completed files deleted from the company's server after the transcriptions were complete. Transcription of the audio recordings was done “near verbatim”, where words and phrases similar to *um*, *like*, *you know*, *uh*, etc… were taken out of the written account of the interviews. In addition, I reviewed each transcription to the audio recording to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions. Finally, the write-ups of the interviews were sent to the participants as a means of checking that the information provided is what was intended. Participants were given seven to ten days to review the

document and were able to send back any changes that need to be made. No changes were requested.

Finally, case studies need to be sensitive to emergent issues even after data collection begins (Patton, 2002), so the study design allowed for time to revisit the interview process. If I had follow-up questions, I contacted the participants for clarification. Participants willingly responded to my follow-up questions, and the responses were incorporated into my previously collected data.

Data Analysis

Qualitative studies allow for a rich and voluminous collection of information, and this case study follows suit. By using multiple data collection sources and case sites, the information obtained was rich and diverse in nature. This increased the substantive significance when it came to analyzing and forming the final case. The analysis of data was flexible as the steps within the process are "interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project" (Creswell, 2007, p.150). In collective case studies, researchers first analyze data for each unique case (Crowe et al., 2011; Patton, 2002), and then formulate the final case once each of the single cases is composed.

The information collected went through a malleable but structured analytical process. The first type of data collection for this study came from documents. The data collected included information from statistical profiles, program proposals, school improvement plans, and Title 1 program goals of the schools selected in the study, which are all text-based data sources. The data were analyzed through content analysis, which is a conventional analysis technique for text data and case studies (Patton, 2002). I followed a systematic examination and interpretation of information to characterize patterns,

themes, biases, and meanings (Berg, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Neuendorf, 2002; Patton, 2002). During content analysis, I transcribed, coded, categorized, classified and labeled (Patton, 2002) information obtained through the various document data sources and isolated it by the school. I then found core meanings and translated it into descriptive findings called patterns and themes (Patton, 2002).

For data collected through interviews, I used theme analysis to consider the data. With theme analysis,

> each new piece of information is examined in light of a particular research question in order to construct a tentative answer to the question. Tentative answers are categorized into themes. This process continues until themes emerge that are well supported by all available information. Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 61)

To start the analysis, I compiled the completed interviews into a computer analysis program where I stored transcripts of the conversations, wrote memos and reflections, categorized information, and developed codes that were searchable for when higher-level analysis takes places. During the analysis portion of this data source, I used meaning condensation to abridge the meaning of more extended statements into shorter and succinct formulation (Kvale, 1996). The bridging aided in categorizing and coding. The encapsulation of the interviews supported the development of themes across each school and in the broader context of the study.

During the study, I followed the recommended process of analyzing each case at a time. The analytical steps proceeded in a spiral-like manner where I managed the data in a secure data management computer program called DeDoose; read and memoed important information; described, classified, and interpreted data; and represented the data in a table, figure, or written narrative (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). For each site

under investigation, I started data analysis by organizing the document and interview data by three different descriptors: (a) document data type (e.g., program proposal, Title 1 plans, school improvement plans); (b) site being studied (c) role of participant. I then sorted the data by the site being studied to start my coding and pattern generation. When coding, I started with a list of pre-set codes that related specifically to my study's questions: teaching and learning, benefits, reasons, challenges, and opportunity costs. I then sorted the data based on the pre-set code and then assigned data to a sub-code. Many of the sub-codes aligned with the themes presented in the literature review, but I was open to using other sub-codes based on the emergent patterns that came forward. Once coding was completed, I left the data alone for an extended period of time and returned to the coding process to review the work. This allowed me to do a dependability check to make sure the code I assigned weeks prior still pertained to the excerpt. Throughout the coding and writing process, I would refer back to the research questions to make sure what I was analyzing was related back to the intended purpose of the study. As suggested by Hancock and Algozzine (2006), I also would ask questions that assisted the process of synthesizing information, such as, *What information from different sources go together?; What arguments contribute to grouping information together?; What questions are being answered?; Within a source, what information can be grouped?* Asking these questions also helped to alleviate potential pitfalls that are associated with case studies extensive volume of data (Crowe et al., 2011).

After coding and finding patterns in the document artifacts and interviews, I combined the information for each case and composed a narrative that addressed the conceptual framework and the four research questions associated with the study. Each of

the cases was represented as its own chapter, for a total of four chapters that reported out the data for each unique site (central office and each of the three school sites). Throughout the single case analysis process, I did not compare or contrast the site until it was time to write the collective case. The final step within the single-case study process included writing a narrative that described the data that sought to answer each question. I wrote the narrative by taking the reader into the perspectives of the central office and each Title 1's school's experience of community-based, full-time gifted program. Patton (2002) notes that "each case study in a report stands alone, allowing the reader to understand the case as a unique, holistic entity" (p. 450). During this step in the process, I made minimal conclusions because the purpose of a collective case study is to draw conclusions during the collective, final report.

After each unique case narrative was written, I moved on to developing the full-case study report. Since a collective-case study approach enables a researcher to explore similarities and differences between cases (Yin, 2003), I began the process with a cross-case analysis. First, I placed the encapsulated themes into a chart and organized it by each unique case and then by research question. This made the comparison between the central office and schools more manageable. During this step, I looked for common patterns within the central office and each of the schools, and then across all of them. I then developed themes that align with the patterns.

During the write-up of the cross-case analyses, I sectioned off each question and then tied-in each unique case to depict the collective cases as a whole study. I used information from the literature review to form conclusions for the conceptual framework and each of the research questions. I then examined the conclusions from the perspective

of the conceptual framework and each of the research questions. Within the conclusions, I tied the cases back to the theoretical framework, as well as, the literature base that surrounded this study. Finally, I presented these connections as overall conclusions for the study.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research studies need to be well-designed and follow best-practices in research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This section of the manuscript will address the parameters of internal validity, reliability, and external validity for this study.

Internal Validity

Internal validity accounts for the credibility or trustworthiness of research findings. I planned for and used a variety of validity to strengthen the credibility of the findings. The internal validity of this study was supported through the techniques of using rich data, source and theory triangulation, peer-colleague examination, the disclosure of my experience with the studied topic, and the long term-involvement with the study.

First, the study is rich in data. Maxwell (2005) describe the use of rich data as one of the best ways to control for validity issues. I used extensive document resources and intensive interviews which provided a source of rich data. During interviews, I did not take notes as my only source of information recording. I recorded the interviews so I could have near-verbatim and verbatim transcriptions which provided detailed and varied information that was not pre-coded based on my own expectations. I also provided rich descriptions, detailed encapsulations, and direct quotes within the data narratives. Creswell (2007) notes that the rich details allow readers to “transfer information to other settings” (p. 209).

Second, I provided multiple means of triangulation. First, I used source triangulation, which is when the researcher uses different data sources within the same method (Patton, 2002). Source triangulation occurred through various document data and interviews. I also wrote an extensive literature review and related my findings to the works of others (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Another internal validity tool I used was the peer-colleague examination. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) believe that having a person familiar with case study goals and procedures helps to confirm one's findings. As a Ph.D. candidate, I worked closely with my dissertation chair during the course of the study. My dissertation chair served as a person who critiqued the plausibility of the emerging findings.

At the onset of my study, I articulated personal biases brought to the study. I did this when I disclosed my experiences with various Title 1 and gifted programs in my professional career. The disclosure contextualizes the study and helps the reader of the study to better comprehend the interpretation of the data by the researcher and the researcher's positionality (Merriam, 1995), and explains how I attempted to mitigate any bias (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Reliability

The understanding of reliability is relative to the methods selected. In a quantitative study, reliability deals with the extent the findings remain the same if a study is replicated. In a qualitative study, reliability is "whether the results of a study are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 1995, p. 56). To facilitate reliability, this study used the same triangulation and peer examination techniques that were used as controls for internal validity. In addition, I used an audit trail of data collection decisions

and analytic interpretations. The audit trail described the data collection process, how categories originated, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry process (Merriam, 1995). As part of my audit trail, I used a data management system to organize and code the data. Baxter and Jack (2008) noted that "using a database improves the reliability of the case study as it enables the researcher to track and organize data sources including notes, key documents, tabular materials, narratives, photographs, and audio files" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554).

External Validity

External validity refers to the generalizability of a study. The external validity of this study takes on the lens of a working hypothesis, where generalizations can be used to guide practice (Patton, 2002) given situation-specific conditions (Merriam, 1995). The study utilized the techniques of thick descriptions, multi-site designs, and modal comparison to strengthen the generalizability of the study. First, I used thick description during the write-up of each case in this collective-case study. By doing so, readers can determine how their experiences compare to the situation researched (Merriam, 1995). Second, I purposely designed the study to be a collective-case study. The multi-site design, associated with a collective-case study, allows for outcomes to be directed to a greater range of similar situations (Merriam, 1995). By using this technique studies, future studies can extend or restrict the situations relevant to the generalizations of the study. The third technique is modal comparison where the program or event is described against the majority of other programs (Merriam, 1995); the modal comparison, in this case, is typical Title 1 programming.

Finally, for this study, I used the purposeful sampling method of atypical cases, which selects cases contrary to typical or normal cases given specific criterion. For the purpose of this study, I selected Title 1 schools, with the requirement that the schools implement gifted and talented programs that contradict typical Title 1 programming. I also conducted and wrote an extensive literature review that defines typical Title 1 programming, which added to the modal comparison and generalizability for this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research design and methods for my study about Title 1 schools and students' access to rigorous curriculum and instruction via school-initiated, full-gifted education programs. I presented the research questions and conceptual framework; described and justified the research tradition selected; explained the site and sampling methods; discussed the data collection procedures and analytical methods; discussed the study's validity and transferability; and provided a discussion of the study's limitations.

In the next chapters, I provide data analysis and a written narrative for the four unique cases stemming from central office and the three Title 1 schools that implement the community-based, full-time gifted program. I then conclude the paper with a full case study that compares and contrasts each unique case and provides generalizations for each of the study's four research questions.

Chapter 4: The Case of Central Office and the Full-Time Gifted Programs

Every child has the basic right to an education that promotes the development of his or her potential. – Lirah Central School District

The purpose of this chapter is to present the case of the full-time gifted program implemented within a Title 1 school from a district-level perspective. Using Lirah Central School District's (LCSD) central office documents, I explain in greater detail the overall structure, standards, instructional strategies, and identification procedures for the program. I then use central office interviews and additional artifacts to describe the historical and current reasons for implementation, and the perceived benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of the full-time program.

Program Overview

Using district documents, I describe the gifted and talented program and services from the district's perspective. I discuss the program's intended structure, standards, identification practices and learning environment.

Program Structure

Although gifted services are not federally mandated, LCSD follows a state mandate to identify and implement gifted services. The state provides funding to local school systems, and the state requires the school system to use matching local funds to support the program. One of the requirements to receive state funding is that districts must submit a plan to the local school board and the state outlining the philosophy and definition of giftedness, program goals and objectives, screening and notification procedures, program service options, and procedures for program evaluation.

As discussed in the earlier review of the literature, there are multiple philosophies and definitions of giftedness, but there are some beliefs that are more accepted than others (Dai, 2010). LSCD mirrors some of the most current beliefs about gifted services, including its definitions of giftedness. In its local plan for the gifted,[7] the school system describes its foundational beliefs as "every child has the basic right to an education that promotes the development of his or her potential" and that the school system is "committed to providing challenging learning experiences for all students that build on individual strengths and optimize abilities." Consistent with these beliefs, LCSD adopted the following definition of giftedness and description of the services that gifted children should require:

> Children who have been identified as gifted and talented have the potential to achieve high levels of accomplishment that need to be recognized and addressed. These students exhibit unusual performance capability in intellectual endeavors in one or more academic areas: mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts as assessed through multiple sources of information…. To meet their needs and develop their abilities, these advanced learners require a differentiated curriculum that is engaging, complex, and differentiated in the depth, breadth, and pace of instruction through a broad range of opportunities that enrich and extend the district learning standards in all subject areas.

This philosophy and definition of giftedness inform the gifted programs throughout the district.

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[7] Throughout the dissertation, I refer to documents retrieved from the school district as part of the study. To protect the identity of the school district and school district personnel, I do not provide the full source for the document in the text nor include the source in the reference list.

LCSD uses a continuum of gifted services to engage students in complex subject matter and prepares them for more challenging and rigorous classes. This continuum of services also acts as a talent development model that current research suggests is best practices in gifted education (Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011). The lowest form of services occurs with all students in the district having access to higher-level/critical and creative thinking strategies. There are also part-time services for students that focus on specific areas of academic strength and full-time services that provide a broader and more comprehensive curriculum for students.

Embedded within part-time services is a type of talented development model called Young Scholars, which a district-wide model that is adopted by schools if they choose to implement it. The Young Scholars model specifically reaches out to children who are historically underrepresented in gifted programs, including students from poverty and students whose primary language is not English. There are two goals for the Young Scholars model:

> To identify students who may not be considered for gifted programs using traditional methods of identification, and who, without that opportunity, are less likely to pursue advanced levels of learning on their own; and (b) to nurture gifted potential at an early age so that Young Scholars will be prepared to engage in challenging subject matter and rigorous courses in elementary school, middle school, high school, and beyond (Horn, 2015, p. 19).

This model, which was started by Dr. Carol Horn, has been used across the United States and the school system adopted it as a means to close access gaps and improve underrepresentation in the school system. Since the model was implemented, LSCD reports that more students from underrepresented backgrounds have been enrolled in

higher levels of gifted services, including full-time gifted programs which are the focus of this study.

The highest form of gifted services on the continuum is the full-time gifted program, where students in grades 3-8 receive enriched and accelerated instruction in content areas of social studies, science, math, and language arts through a full-day, every-day, year-long program. There are two types of full-time programs in the school system. The first type mimics magnet school programs where students in third grade or higher are selected at the division-level to receive full-time gifted services, and the services are implemented in centralized schools that serve students from multiple surrounding schools. For the remainder of the study, I refer to this program as the magnet, full-time program or magnet program. In LSCD, there are around 20 schools that house the magnet program and around 10,000 children from surrounding schools are bussed to the various magnet gifted schools. The magnet program is supported by funds given by the state and local government that are specially designed for gifted programs and has been around for close to forty years. The second type of full-time program, which is the focus of this study, is similar to the first one described, but students receive services at their local school. These community-based programs, which have been in schools for around fifteen years, enable students to have access to full-time gifted services without having to leave their community school. There are around 13,000 students who qualify for the magnet program and 3,000 of them opt to stay in the community-based, full-time program at their school.

Besides location, there are two other significant differences between the magnet and the community school gifted programs. The first difference is the student make-up of

the full-time program. Programs at the community school consist of students who are eligible for the full-time magnet program, but who choose to remain in their local school, as well as, students who are not found to be district-eligible but are determined by the school to be in need of a more rigorous learning environment. The second difference is that the local school does not receive state and local funds used explicitly for gifted services; instead, the school reallocates other school-operating funds to support the full-time program. For example, the magnet program schools are allocated specific positions from the human resources department to staff their gifted program, while the community-based program uses a general education classroom position to staff the full-time gifted classrooms.

Program Standards

To align the program with the requirements of the state and the best-practices defined by National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2017), LCSD has developed and adopted standards to guide its program. The standards focus on a broad range or program characteristics, including programming structure, identification practices, assessment of learning, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environment, inclusion of special populations, professional development for teachers and administrators, data quality and compliance, monitoring, and community outreach. The school system uses the standards to ensure quality and fidelity in implementation. According to LCSD policy, “each full-time gifted program school makes a commitment towards meeting all the standards, practices and curricular requirements.” A recent external review of the gifted programs found that Lirah met or exceeded all of the NAGC standards and relevant state regulations.

Identification Practices

Identification plays a significant role in student access to gifted programs and a school system's process can either open or close this access. Over the last fifteen years, Lirah Central School District has moved away from using ability test scores as a sole means of identification, and instead uses a multifaceted approach, which has opened access to more students who have been historically left out of gifted programs. Moreover, LCSD "has shifted from a focus on labeling students as gifted to a focus on identifying student strengths and providing advanced academic services designed to develop and nurture students' academic strengths over time." Rather than understanding intelligence as a fixed or inherited attribute, intelligence is seen as (a) developing over time, (b) an attribute that can be nurtured, (c) manifesting itself in different ways, (d) complex, and (e) affected by genetic and environmental influences.

Current identification practices screen student for the magnet full-time gifted program via a division-wide selection process coordinated by central office. The process involves a group of educators who form a screening committee and is comprised of gifted resource teachers, school administrators, classroom teachers, school psychologists, counselors, special education and English language teachers across the school system. The committee determines eligibility for full-time services based on a holistic case study approach. The screening committee uses the following mandatory data to make an eligibility decision: ability test scores, which is a requirement of the state; achievement test scores; behavior observation scales; report cards; and work samples. The screening case file also may include awards and letters of recommendation, parent questionnaires, and additional test data. The school system uses an oversight committee to review

decisions and parents/guardians may appeal ineligibly decisions. Students who are not found eligible through division-wide screening may still be eligible for the community-based, full-time services if they are found eligible by their local school; however, if eligibility is determined at the local school, eligibility is valid only at that location. When the school identifies students at the community school, screening members use the same data samples as the magnet process but may place higher weight on teacher observations and work samples.

Introduction to the Participants

Given the large size of LCSD, there are multiple layers of employee hierarchy within the central office. To capture both a district-level perspective about the gifted program, I conducted interviews with four central office administrators – an assistant superintendent, the present coordinator for gifted services, a former coordinator of gifted services who started the program, and a gifted office specialist. In this section, I refer to them as CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4.[8] For the interviews, I met with all participants individually. Some participants I met in the workplace and others I met in their home. For each interview, I spent an hour to two hours working through each of the questions on my protocol. In each interview I quickly established rapport and our conversations felt natural and honest.

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[8] To protect participant privacy, I will not delineate which code belongs to which central office administrator.

The central office participants have a range of expertise. All the central office administrators in this study have over fifteen years of teaching or central office leadership experience and have experience with the full-time program ranging from six to twenty years. One administrator has experience as a school principal. Three of the administrators have experience as a full-time gifted teacher, one had the experience of opening a full-time program in a Title 1 school, and two have experience as a gifted resource teacher. Also, two of the administrators have their doctorate in education, two are nationally board-certified teachers, one has an educational specialist degree, and three administrators have their endorsement in gifted education.

Learning Environment

Students who are in the full-time gifted program are members of a learning environment that "promotes an understanding of broad-based interdisciplinary concepts; fosters the development of higher level thinking skills; guides the student toward expertise in each discipline; and nurtures student self-understanding, self-direction, and interpersonal skills." This type of learning environment contradicts the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010), particularly for gifted programs located in Title 1 schools.

As a means of supporting a learning environment that promotes the ideals of the gifted program, the school system created a curriculum framework and pacing guide that denotes the gifted curriculum materials to be used with students based on subject area and grade level. The framework "provides a structure for how their [students] academic needs should be met through acceleration, enrichment, extensions to the school district's standard program of studies." The curriculum resources use specific instructional strategies. The strategies include "mathematics acceleration, scientific inquiry and

investigation, historical analysis and interpretation, independent research, project-based learning, persuasive writing, and using evidence to support an opinion." The curriculum resources come from writers and researchers from the top gifted-education universities across the country and have been vetted before the school-district adoption of the materials.

For all adopted curriculum resources, the central office provides professional development that not only explains what the curriculum aims to teach but how to teach it. It includes instructional practices that mirror those found in the pedagogy of plenty (Haberman, 2010), such as, developing a learning environment that is student-centered, opportunities for hands-on learning, access to technology, collaboration between peers and adults, and avenues for critical and creative thinking. While the school system views these practices as suitable for all students, the practices are fundamental to the district's gifted programs.

Reasons for Implementation

Historically, the expansion of gifted programs to community schools began as an effort by local principals to keep gifted and talented students in those schools. Administrators also described moral responsibility to educate all students fully, pressure to meet state accountability requirements, and political pressure as other reasons to expand the full-time gifted and talented programs beyond the central magnet program.

Historical: Keep Students within the Community

Community-based, full-time gifted services have been implemented by LCSD for around fifteen years. The pilot program started at a Title 1 school that built a robust gifted intervention program, called Young Scholars, which provided students with opportunities

to build high-level thinking skills and access more rigorous curriculum on a part-time basis. The principal of the school had a large number of students who qualified for the full-time magnet program and asked central office if there could be a program started at the local school so the students could stay within their community instead of being bussed away to attend the magnet program. Central office administrator (CO2) recalled the process of starting the program and she discussed how the principal, gifted office, and assistant superintendent of instruction met and agreed that the principal could pilot a full-time gifted program at the school if the school had a gifted certified teacher and used the adopted full-time program curriculum and instructional strategies. When the program was first proposed to the school community, one of the document artifacts noted that there was an immediate buy-in by families because they wanted to keep their children within the community school. The following year, another principal came forward and asked to start a full-time gifted program, but for a different reason – the school was a high performing school and was losing almost one whole class each year to the magnet program and the loss of students impacted the climate of the school. The principal felt that the school could provide the services without students having to leave for the magnet school.

These early adopters provided precedence for other schools to develop their own gifted and talented programs. Today 60 schools operate a community-based, full-time gifted and talented program in LCSD. As these local programs spread, other reasons arose for keeping gifted and talented students in their community schools.

Moral Responsibility

One of the main reasons for implementation given by interviewees was a moral responsibility to educate all students and develop their potential. One administrator (CO4) said, “They [schools] don't want these students to feel like [that] to receive the kind of education that they are entitled to, they have to go to another school and split up their community.” Another subtheme of moral responsibility comes from the feeling of connectedness of local educators towards their students. Over the years of implementation, CO2 heard from many schools that the school felt invested in their students and felt like it is their responsibility to continue to invest in them. She said,

> They've known these students since kindergarten, first grade. Even if the students don't have strong basic skills in some areas, they believe in the students. And they know if they give them this level instruction, they'll rise to the occasion. And they can still get the additional support that they need.

She went on to say, “They [school staff members] really care about their students. And they often worry that if they go to the assigned magnet school, they [students] may not be successful. So, they want to give their students that opportunity for that level of instruction.”

The moral responsibility also relates to opening access to students who historically have been underrepresented in gifted services. The theme of moral responsibility was mentioned by all central office administrators and seemed to be the most passionate reason for implementing the program in Title 1 schools. As one administrator (CO4) said,

> They will not have access to higher level coursework in high school or college or to have a job that they might not otherwise have if we didn't identify and give them access to these materials. So, it's a moral responsibility – and an ethical one, too – to say, ‘People have gifts, and people have strengths, and it doesn't have to be someone whose parents can give them access to a tutor or access to a nice home in a rich neighborhood.'

The moral reasonably to educate fully all children arose elsewhere during the interviews, which I discuss it further in the benefits section later in this chapter.

Accountability

Another reason why principals opt to open a full-time gifted program at their community school revolves around accountability measures which have been a source of stress since the No Child Left Behind Act. By opening a full-time gifted program, parents of gifted and talented students have the choice of keeping their children in the community school. Three out of four central office administrators discussed this as a reason for implementing a full-time gifted program. As a former principal, one of the administrators (CO1) understood the pressure behind the accountability system and retaining high-achieving students. She said,

> If I'm a principal and I'm losing students that are centrally eligible for the gifted magnet program that typically does very well on standardized assessments, and I'm losing those students to enrollment in a center program, then my overall average scores of my school are going to decline. And if I can retain students, then my overall average scores are going to increase, and I can perform better with respect to accountability and accreditation issues.

Another administrator (CO2) described this reason for keeping students as a "less noble reason, but it is realistic." She went on to say, “many of them [principals] want to keep their test scores. Because these are their high-performing students that would go to a magnet school. The test scores go with the students.” Nonetheless, while acknowledging the desire to keep high test scoring students, the administrator also cautioned that it is “fine as long as the teachers are trained and the students are receiving that level of instruction.” In other words, retained students still needed to receive appropriate gifted services.

Political Pressures

A final theme that emerged as a reason for program implementation in community schools is political pressure from colleagues, supervisors, or parents. Because the gifted and talented program have a good reputation within the school system, administrators feel pressure to allow principals to implement local programs, especially when implementation does not require district funding. Administrators noted that principals who are interested in implementing the program often use the reputational benefits from other schools that have done so as a reason to implement a program in their own school. According to one administrator (CO2),

> Principals are subject to peer pressure just like anybody. And often it's not a negative. It's a positive. Principals see other principals doing it, and they're successful. And that's how the community full-time gifted programs have grown, often because one principal would do it. And they're so excited and happy about it that other principals will want to do it. And then it continues to grow.

Pressure also comes from community members because parents want to keep their children in the local school. Finally, there is pressure from supervisors of principals because the program helps to build the reputation of their schools and helps to meet accountability requirements. One administrator (CO1) noted that principals see the "benefits that it can bring just in terms of the curriculum support and the instructional pedagogy…" These benefits positively impact the reputation of the school and the reputation of the administrators responsible for the schools.

Benefits

In the previous section, I discussed why schools opened community-based, full-time gifted programs to keep students within the community school, how the program satisfies a perceived moral responsibility to meet the needs of the school's students, how

retaining high-achieving students reduces the pressure to meet accountability standards, and how political pressures within a school's community encourage implementation. Many of these reasons presume benefits to implementing a full-time gifted program in a community school. In this section I discuss the benefits identified by administrators.

Access

As discussed previously, an identified benefit of the community gifted programs is a greater opportunity to access gifted services not only for the students formally identified for the magnet program but for the whole school. Using the information from central office interviews and documents, I determined the theme of access to be multi-layered. I subdivided the access theme into three categories: (a) choice for students who are formally identified to be in need of full-time services, (b) greater opportunity of accessing gifted services through student identification and flexible grouping, and (c) the possible spillover of services across the whole school.

Choice.

The actual implementation of the program at the community school that is not specifically funded by the school system increases access because students who are identified as eligible for the magnet program can receive those services in their current school. As one administrator (CO3) argued, it provides students and families with a choice.

> I think that one reason that it has worked really well in our system is because of the choice aspect that parents do still have…I think letting the parents have that choice not only keeps the parents happy in terms of feeling like they can make the best match for their child but it also helps the schools to make sure that they are offering the best that they can offer because they want to be able to attract the parents to stay at their school. So, I think it keeps everybody growing and learning, pushing a little bit more.

In addition to having a choice, providing access to a program within the local school Identified students may socially and academically because the staff in the local school is likely to be invested in the child. CO2 empathized this point by saying, “They know their students. They really care about their students. And they often worry that if they go to the assigned magnet school, they may not be successful.” She went on to say that, “a critical advantage of having locally supported programs is that the school knows their students, and they can advocate for them and give them access and then make sure that they go on and they're successful.” She went on to relay an example that touched upon a school’s need to understand a child’s background, which may not happen at the magnet program because they are not as familiar with the child. She said,

> A teacher had a student, and they were questioning that the student wasn't successful in the locally supported program. And – but she was able to talk to the first and second-grade teacher at that school and say, "Well, why was this child put in this classroom? Why –" and what they found out – the teacher found out was that the child was doing very well in first and second grade but then had traveled back to Africa in the summer. And the grandmother had died, and it had a very severe impact on the family. And the – part of the reason the child wasn't successful was that they – there was a lot of turmoil going on in the family and a lot of sadness. So, they were able to get the counselor involved and help turn that around. The child eventually became successful again. So, knowing the students and having the opportunity to have those vertical discussions really does help the student.

While magnet schools’ teachers can read the cumulative file of incoming third-grade students, they may not have a full picture of the student’s academic history. They may be missing important anecdotal experiences of a student from kindergarten through second grade, knowledge that community teachers have about their students.

Broader access.

Another benefit of the full-time community program is that it opens access to students who have not qualified for the magnet program. These students may not qualify

for the full-time magnet program but qualify for the community program because they show high potential. As reported in one of the school system's documents about gifted services, the full-time gifted program in community schools provides "another avenue to access gifted services to students who may need to practice and strengthen their basic skills but have the capacity to think, reason, and problem solves on very high levels." Because the local eligibility requirements are more flexible than the districtwide program, community gifted programs provide access to a broader range of students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018).

At the elementary level, students need to go through an identification process to access gifted services. Based on Lirah's state's requirements for gifted identification, a mandatory data point is the use of a nationally-normed standardized ability test, which as discussed in the literature review, can be an insurmountable obstacle to some students due to the cultural, linguistic, and social economic biases that are embedded in standardized ability tests (Dai, 2010; Ford, Grantham, and Whiting, 2008b; Peters & Engerrand, 2016). Although the school system uses a case study or portfolio approach to screening, there are still students who are not found eligible for the magnet program because of low test scores. Community-based programs, however, can provide an opportunity to nurture the academic potential of students not eligible for the magnet program. An administrator (CO4) argued that "There are also students with potential who if we aren't the ones to identify that potential and nurture that potential, these students will forever be on the same path." Community-based programs widen the net by which to select students for gifted services.

Moreover, students who eligible for the full-time community program, but not the magnet program, have opportunities to further develop their academic skills and portfolios. The time spent in the community full-time classroom can serve as a data point for future identification for the magnet program because the teachers can collect additional data, such as work samples and teacher observations, that may counter balance lower ability tests scores. One administrator (CO4) argued,

> We certainly have not increased identification based on ability test scores alone but based on our referrals where we are including work samples that could come from these community gifted classrooms. Work samples and teacher observation and parent observation – those referrals have increased – I believe it's in the hundreds of percentages – over the past several years so that we're finding more kids eligible for services than we ever have before.

These work samples, teacher observations, and referrals demonstrate that a child has been successful in a full-time gifted program. They can add compelling information to a screening portfolio about a student's ability and eligibility for the magnet gifted program

The broader access provided by the community programs also aligns with the school system's belief in "providing access to advanced learning opportunities to all students who have the potential to succeed." One of the administrators (CO1) spoke about how principals choose this program because "they want to influence equitable outcomes for all students … and a courageous leader might want to create more equitable access and outcomes for kids." Another administrator (CO2) said,

> I think it gives access to learning opportunities for all students who historically have not had access to those opportunities...The community school program allows more students from poverty and more students that historically have not been part of advanced academic programs are getting that opportunity. Because the Title 1 schools are more inclusive, so often they'll allow students to join that classroom because they have the flexibility. And then when they see how successful they are, they can put them through screening [for the magnet program]…

The community gifted programs further a key district goal, “to increase the number of Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students in advanced academic programs.”

As noted by these administrators, through its more flexible identification criteria, community gifted programs and have narrowed the access gap for gifted services for students who would not qualify by test scores alone. According to these administrators, since the implementation of these programs, the district has seen an increase in the number of students from racial minorities, language minorities, and low-income families receiving gifted services in the district. Moreover, by opening of access to more elementary students, LCSD has developed a pipeline of students who can take on more rigorous classwork as they advance to higher grade levels. As CO2 emphasized, “the earlier you start, the more advantageous it is for kids.”

Across the school.

The community full-time gifted program also benefits the whole school because it can have important “spillover” effects for all students in a school. As one administrator (CO3) said, “whole school cultures [can] be transformed when the approach that it’s taken is one that this is not just for the students within the locally-funded class.” Another administrator (CO4) noted that he sees a difference in schools that do not offer the full-time program. He said,

> When I support resource teachers who are in schools that do not have the community program, access to higher level materials – it's much harder. It's much more difficult. So, if a student needs advanced math, they might not have it at the school. If a student has a need to be enriched in social studies or in science or in language arts, it's not already going on in the school.

The “access to all” benefit, according to these administrators, changes the school’s vision, mindset, and climate. Even if a student does not participate in the community

gifted program, she may have more access to gifted services because of the school's investment in providing all classrooms with some form of rigorous instructional teaching practices and learning activities. I further discuss how the "access to all" benefits instructional practices in the next section.

Instructional Practices

Another significant benefit identified amongst the central office administrators is the improvement in teacher instructional practices and student learning activities across the school, what I referred to as "access to all" in the previous section. Because teachers have a major impact on a child's schooling, the learning experiences they provide students are significant for educational growth. In particular, in Title 1 schools, "The most significant element separating high-achieving, high-poverty schools and their low-performing counterparts is a willingness to change the manner in which instruction is delivered" (Barr & Parrett, 2007, p. 183). According to central administrators, the full-time gifted community programs change the way teachers approach instruction, not only in the gifted program but also throughout the school.

When a school decides to implement the full-time program, the school commits to provide instructional practices to children that include concept-based instruction, student debates, reading beyond comprehension level so as to promotes higher order analysis and meaning-making, independent inquiry, higher level questioning, and critical and creative thinking skills. All of these instructional strategies erase opportunity gaps in high poverty schools (Gorski, 2013) and go against the pedagogy of poverty, which assumes that students need lower level learning and remediation to acquire knowledge (Haberman,

2010). One of the administrators (CO2) that I interviewed emphasized the need for shifting from a remediation approach to one of rigor by saying,

> There's so much research that suggests that remediation just doesn't work, that what children need is something that's going to challenge and stimulate their intellectual curiosity. And then they'll want to learn because they'll be invested in their learning. So, I think that the community, full-time gifted program gives schools opportunities to provide all kids with the type of curriculum and instruction that leads to higher achievement and builds self-confidence. When I talk to teachers over and over again, all the students in the school become more self-confident. They love the fact that they're learning at a higher level. And they love talking about Socratic Seminar, research, the things that they're doing. They're really proud of the fact that they're taking on these challenges. And so, the spillover is it does spill over into the whole school community and impacts all of the learners in that community, teachers, and students.

According to the administrators, community gifted programs tend to improve instruction for students in the program and throughout the school.

When I spoke with another administrator (CO4) about this topic, he reflected on his work prior to his role in central office. For three years, he was a classroom teacher in a community-based, full-time gifted program located in a Title 1 school. When I asked him if he noticed any changes in his instructional practices, he said,

> When I started teaching in a classroom like this, I realized that I had been seriously under-serving my high students, where I said, "Oh, these are the students who have made the benchmark already, so they can work independently now."… And I realized that that was a huge disservice to these poor students. And when I changed the way that I presented instruction and I changed my philosophy about teaching and learning, and I was able to access materials that were much more open-ended and were much more inquiry-based and really just high-quality materials… then I found that my students were much more engaged….The engagement level was so high that it was more, "How can I support the kids in their learning? How can I facilitate learning" instead of "How can I make sure these kids are staying on task?"

When I asked the administrator about his teaching as a general education teacher, he simply said, “I didn’t know what I didn’t know.” But his exposure to the gifted community program resulted in a “critical change” in his instruction.

The instructional practices required in the full-time program are nurtured through collaborative planning experiences, co-teaching, and professional development, which helps to expand the influence of these practices throughout the school. As reported by the gifted office's programming documents, "collaboration that occurs during grade level planning meetings, school planning meetings, and staff development offerings results in general education teachers learning about and then using powerful instructional methods common to the full-time gifted program." As one administrator (CO3) explained, "I've seen a lot of growth in the teachers, in their teaching practices when they have that opportunity at their school and they can talk with their colleagues about using that curriculum more broadly." According to these administrators, these instructional improvements occur when staff collaboration results in planning for instruction that goes beyond the pedagogy of poverty and reflects more of the pedagogy of plenty (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994).

At the community-based, full-time programs, grade level teams come together once or twice a week to plan for instruction. The full-time gifted classroom teacher and general education classroom teachers work together to analyze data and plan instruction. While the full-time gifted teacher's expectations for rigor may be different from the rest of the teachers in the grade, the focus is on adopting curricular and instructional strategies that enhance both. One administrator (CO4) described how this type of collaboration raises instruction in all classrooms. He relayed an example to me when he said,

> If you have teachers working with students that come from the same background and they're implementing those higher-level curricula, you see other classrooms noticing like, "Oh, what are you doing? How are your children able to make these connections? How are your children able to talk about these things with such confidence?" And they say, "Can I try this material?" Or, the teacher in their collaborative learning team might say, "Oh, you know, for this unit on

> Jamestown, I have this really great Document Based Questions that I think everybody should use. We're analyzing primary sources, and I think your kids would really get excited about proving why so many people died in Jamestown using primary source documents and then being able to articulate their thinking in a debate or an in an essay or however they want to have that product." And it just helps to raise the level of instruction across an entire school."

These grade level collaborations can provide teachers with new ideas about how to enhance instruction not only in gifted classrooms but in general classrooms as well.

The district also uses gifted programs to promote more rigorous instructional practices across schools. To improve the instructional strategies in all classrooms, the gifted office allows any teacher to attend gifted curriculum and practices training, and those who attend the training receive the resources and materials that can be used to implement the instructional strategies in their classrooms. As a result, one administrator (CO2) noted,

> Many of these Title 1 schools now send grade level teams to the training…if you look at the numbers of teachers getting professional development on the gifted curriculum and best practices, you'll see from the community full-time gifted program – you'll see so many more teachers pursuing the gifted endorsement, using the strategies, and just becoming lifelong learners themselves.

This administrator, who worked directly in the gifted office, tracked attendance for the trainings, and found that more general education teachers attend the professional development than in the past, which then influences instructional practices across schools.

I asked the central office administrators what evidence they have to support these instructional benefits and they all reported that there has been an increase in state pass rates for mandated proficiency exams. Schools that have implemented the full-time program have seen state tests scores go up across the school. Administrators (CO2 and CO3) both noted that test scores in Title 1 schools have gone up where principals have

adopted the vision of using the gifted curriculum and instructional practices schoolwide. One administrator (CO3) argued,

> So, we have looked at the data of the state scores of students who are placed in a community-based class who may not have been found eligible through our magnet selection process officially, but they have been maybe school-designated to be in that class, and those students are scoring as highly as the students who've been found officially eligible. So, we know many more students can handle this curriculum and we will see the benefits of thinking at a higher level.

According to these central administrators, a primary benefit of the community-based gifted programs is that it improves instruction, as evidenced by improved achievement results on state-mandated tests.

Challenges

Although there are numerous benefits to the community-based gifted program, there are some challenges to the program. The challenges include the school's mindset and buy-in, fidelity of implementation, meeting federal accountability requirements, staffing, student grouping, and political pressure. In the next section, I present these challenges, but I also address how the school system navigates them.

Mindset and Buy-in

One of the top challenges that emerged from the interviews with central administrators was changing the mindset of the school. They did not mean that implementing the program created negative mindsets among staff; in fact, the end result, in their opinion was just the opposite. Schools that take on the mindset of providing access to challenging learning opportunities had positive results on performance assessments, state tests, and student engagement. However, administrators acknowledged the initial challenge of changing minds and beliefs about instructional practices and curriculum. One administrator (CO1) said,

> So, when you're starting a new program in a Title 1 school, unfortunately, sometimes there's the mindset and the cultural change kind of belief systems that you have to work on changing before you can actually be successful with implementing a program.

Before Title 1 teachers agree to adopt gifted and talented practices, there often has to be a shift in their thinking about how best to educate students.

The shift in mindset, according to the central administrators, starts with the leadership of the school. Change in instructional strategies require the principal to communicate a new vision for the program and school. One administrator (CO3) explained it this way,

> The community full-time gifted program in a Title 1 school really requires a strong leader in the building to be at its maximum impact. That leader would set the tone regarding what the expectations are within the classroom of full-time and then also what the expectations are in the other classrooms. I think the most successful, community-based, full-time programs are ones in which the principal sees that that approach, that instructional approach, using the inquiry-based curriculum that we would use with the advanced students is one that is beneficial for the whole school and that students in different classes may need different scaffolds for that but that all students should have that opportunity, so that really helps create a schoolwide culture that is important not just for the students in the locally-funded classroom but also for the school as a whole.

Another administrator (CO1) said "a principal with a strong vision of this program, sees this program as a driver to help accelerate the kinds of innovative teaching and learning practices…and that it doesn't have to be just for some teachers and some classes." A third administrator (CO2) argued,

> To me, leadership is so important. Not that the principal would just be the leader. The principal should be a leader of leaders. But you need principal and teacher leaders that embrace these practices, have a vision of what kids can do, have a growth mindset community. And then the spillover effect so that all kids are getting a higher, more engaging – higher level, more challenging and engaging curriculum, and all kids are achieving at a higher level.

As evidenced by these quotes, central office administrators felt very strongly that school leadership was essential in creating the mindset for successfully implementing gifted and talented programs in a Title 1 school.

Teachers may not see the value of a gifted program, especially in Title 1 schools where the pressure to meet accountability standards is high. If remediation and low-level instruction are getting students to pass state exams, the risk of trying something new can be a daunting, even if teachers believe that gifted practices will make learning more engaging for students and promote higher critical and creative thinking. One administrator (CO2) talked about the work that school leaders need to do to “help teachers see that students can work at this level and be successful, even if they're not in the locally supported full-time program.” She later went on to say “I don't think you could tell them. I think they have to experience it firsthand. So, I think one of the greatest challenges is helping all teachers see that they can use these strategies with their students.” A second administrator (CO3) emphasized the importance of teachers taking leadership: “It also takes teachers who are committed to a mindset of access and realize the impact that using this type of curriculum will have on their students” and to pass this thinking on to colleagues.

The shift in mindset also means buy-in to actually implementing the program. While related, I differentiate buy-in from mindset by understanding that buy-in is the actual commitment to implementing the full-time program within the school. First, there is the challenge of getting staff to buy-in to having a class that is a full-time gifted program. Second, there is the challenge of getting staff to buy-in to changing instructional practices so all students benefit from rigorous learning opportunities. One

administrator (CO2) recalled her work to change instruction at a school, and she relayed a story to me about how she worked with the school principal to gain buy-in for the changes from school staff. She said a teacher would not use a higher-level thinking activity because he did not have gifted kids. The principal encouraged him to try it and the teacher later came back and relayed that he tried it and was blown away by what the children could do. CO2 further emphasized, “You can't tell them; they have to experience it firsthand. That's why principals as an instructional leader are so critical because they have to encourage the teachers to try the strategies, see what the kids can do. And then they're convinced.” What emerged from this administrator’s reflection are three connected challenges of implementing a gifted program in a community Title 1 school: changing teacher mindset, developing a supportive principal vision, and getting buy-in from staff. The principal communicated the vision, then worked on shifting the school’s mindset about instructional practices, and then garnered buy-in amongst the staff to reap the benefits of not just the full-time gifted classroom experience but the benefits of a broader shift across the whole school in educational expectations.

Fidelity of Implementation

Another challenge identified by the administrators is maintaining fidelity of implementation at schools that elect to implement a gifted program. Following the success of the first two pilot schools, more principals began to ask to start a full-time program in their community schools. Now, the school system allows more than 40% of its schools to implement this program outside of the magnet program. Although expansion of gifted programs through the district can bring benefits, there is also a risk that expansion will come at the cost of fidelity – that is, lower standards and expectations.

To encourage fidelity, LCSD requires any school that wants to implement a gifted program to submit a start-up proposal. The proposal includes (a) a professional development plan for teachers to be conducted one year prior to implementation, (b) an outline of community notification and surveyed support of the program, (c) an explanation of how students will be selected for the program, (d) a description of the qualifications of the teacher who will teach the class, (e) an impact statement for the local school, (f) evidence of readiness of the school-wide faculty to adopt the program, and (g) plans for program evaluation. In addition to the written proposal, the school principal meets with the school's assistant superintendent to review the plan and discuss the proposed program's impact on school facilities, school programs, and the district's magnet school. Once this review is completed, the plan is submitted to LCSD's highest leadership. One administrator (CO2) described the process as follows:

> Once we required a plan, then it raised the level of commitment of the principal. The plan had to be approved by our office and by the leadership team, and it had to include how the teachers were going to be trained, how the students would be selected, how the community was supportive.

Program standards, a self-study tool, and requirements for periodic evaluation also help ensure that schools maintain fidelity and meet their goals.

While the district seeks to ensure the quality of the gifted programs implemented in community schools, it does provide room for local exceptions or innovations. One administrator (CO2) spoke about flexibility being a nice aspect of the community programs because schools can really tailor their programs to fit the needs of the students. The expectation is "that the teachers have the same curriculum, the same training, the same expectations. But how they implement it depends on the school." While local programs can be more highly tailored to the needs of the community, choice helps to

guarantee that the program will be high quality. If a school is not providing a quality program, parents can send their children to the magnet school. As the administrator explained,

> I think having the choice is important because it keeps the locally supported programs accountable. Because if they are not good, then the students can still leave. And what my experience, many of the locally supported programs are even stronger than the magnet programs because they are that invested in keeping their students. And they know in order to keep their students they have to maintain the curriculum and the level of instruction that they would have if they went to the magnet program.

Through these policies and practices LCSD seeks to balance the need for flexibility with the challenge of ensuring the fidelity of the gifted programs in community schools.

Accountability

As mentioned earlier, accountability, especially in a Title 1 school is a challenge the full-time community programs face. The fear of not passing state accountability standards is high, and this fear often results in low-level, repetitive instructional practices similar to those that characterize the pedagogy of poverty (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990; Knapp and Associations, 1995); such practices are the opposite of what the district promotes through its gifted and talented programs in community schools. As one administrator (CO1) said,

> If you're in a Title 1 school, and you have Title 1 funding and how that funding can vary based on your performance and the accountability and accreditation issues that come – because with the funding comes additional accountability and additional oversight if you're not hitting accountability targets – I think there is a real pressure for Title 1 principals to perform.

The challenge arises when the pressure to pass the test becomes so intense that teachers weaken fidelity of implementation for the gifted program and reduce expectations for student thinking. The same administrator commented further about diverting away from

typical gifted pedagogy due accountability pressures, “very direct, teacher-centered instruction is not engaging to students. And while it may yield results on state standardized assessments... it's not doing anything to develop their problem-solving skills, their critical thinking skills, their creative thinking skills.” Even if teachers buy-in to gifted services, they are likely to be anxious about meeting accountability standards, especially in Title 1 schools.

Another administrator (CO4) spoke about how principals have to incorporate risk taking into their vision of education for a school, so as to encourage teachers to move beyond a fixation with state accountability standards. He said, "Let's move away from teaching to the indicator level of our state tests. Let's move away from covering material so that students can pass a test and let's instead move to a more concept-based curriculum.” A colleague (CO1) concurred, "It takes some belief that it's okay to take risks and it's okay to maybe miss those performance targets right away because we're trying something different.” A major challenge to the implementation of gifted program in Title 1 schools is helping administrators and teachers deal with the threat of failing to meet state standards.

Although the fear of not meeting accountability measures is high among administrators and teachers, central administrators believe the gifted provide benefits beyond those of achieving proficiency on state-mandated tests. One central administrator (CO3) observed,

> Often in community gifted classes in Title 1 schools, you’re going to have students in poverty and so the one thing that we do know is that having this type of instruction is one of the few things that can mitigate the impact of that poverty, the stress that goes with it, the prospects for the future and breaking a cycle of poverty so the teacher really needs to believe that that will make a difference and

> they have to be pretty persistent in their seeking of approaches that are going to work.

Moreover, the assessments used in the full-time gifted programs gauge higher-level thinking, real-world problem solving that provide more in-depth information about students' skills. The same administrator spoke about how this way of assessment better determines students' growth in knowledge. She said,

> …as the state moves away from using purely multiple-choice tests and goes to using more performance assessments and potentially capstone projects at particular grade levels, having those locally-funded classes at the school… is going to benefit the other teachers... They already have models in place… And now there's even more reason to try more approaches like that when we're being asked for everybody to do that. So hopefully in the next couple of years, we will have more data connected to higher-level thinking and what students choose to do for their capstone projects and their portfolios for performance assessments.

According to these administrators, the value of the gifted programs in Title 1 schools will be validated over time, especially as the state embraces more performance-based assessments.

Staffing

Staffing is also a challenge that the community based full-time gifted program faces. First, finding teachers qualified to teach the program can be a challenge. The state does not require a gifted endorsement for teachers to be hired as a gifted teacher, but the school system highly recommends that teachers obtain an endorsement. The endorsement in gifted education is essential to help teachers to meet the specific social and academic needs of gifted learners (Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010; Ford, 2014). Although there is no mandated requirement for the endorsement, in the community full-time program, principals can decide who teaches the program, and the principal can make the endorsement a stipulation for the position.

The second issue with staffing is that the district always faces position "movements" or "churning", such as retirements, maternity leaves, and resignations. These movements can have an impact on gifted programs because the loss of a principal or teacher can influence vision, knowledge of the program, and fidelity of implementation. One administrator (CO3) noted,

> We are pretty transient, so when leadership changes if the new leader coming on may not have the same mindset, they may change certain things without realizing the unintended consequences of that….and you can have great teachers with great training, but then they move on. So, you have to be cognizant of fidelity of implementation constantly.

This challenge is further compounded in community schools because these schools have no "official" gifted teacher position; rather, the principal must staff the program as though the program was a general education class.

While magnet program schools are allocated specific positions to staff their gifted program, this staffing can be affected by the number of eligible students who decide to attend their local schools rather than the magnet schools. Children who opt not to go to the magnet program impact the numbers of teachers in the magnet programs. An administrator (CO1) explained,

> You're pulling kids out of a magnet program, for example, and they're enrolling in their base school, that if you don't have enough kids still in that magnet school, then it could dilute the quality of that program because you might lose staff and resources that are associated not just with the magnet program itself, but additional staff resources that are generated based on the overall enrollment in that school.

Central administrators, therefore, face challenges in how to balance staffing between the magnet schools and the community-based programs. However, this same administrator argued, "I don't think that that is that significant of a challenge, frankly, [because] in most of our magnet schools… the number of kids that are in the magnet program is larger than

the number of non-magnet students in that [gifted] school." Central office documents disclosed that for every 13 kids eligible for the magnet program, three opt to stay in the community-school to receive services. Nonetheless, as I describe in a subsequent section, declining numbers in the gifted programs at the magnet schools has created concerns for proponents of these programs, particularly the parents of students who chose these schools.

Student Grouping

The way a school groups children can also present a challenge to the gifted program in community schools. Many times, the school does not have enough students to make a full class because there are fewer students who are identified for the program then at the magnet schools. One of the gifted office's document states: "Since there will be fewer students identified, classes might be multi-age or a single grade level class, providing fewer opportunities for students to change their group of classroom peers." On the other hand, having fewer identified students can be a benefit because it allows other students to come into the classroom based on academic need, which facilitates differentiated experiences and access. Nonetheless, managing these groupings in Title 1 schools can be a challenge.

Another challenge with student grouping comes from the perceptions of teachers. If the higher-ability students are grouped in the gifted class, the non-gifted classroom teachers may become frustrated because they feel like they are left only with struggling students. One administrator (CO4) explained,

> If you have identified the brightest kids in your locally funded program, then it almost seems like you're skimming the cream from the rest of the classrooms. You're removing all of the classroom models and putting them into this one class

> where they are accessing the higher level curriculum. So, there might be some push-back from the general education classroom teachers ...

Most of the central administrators felt that addressing these perceptions can be a challenge in schools, especially in Title 1 schools where student grouping may create a division between the teacher of the children in the gifted program and the teachers of children in the general education programs.

Political Pressure from Parents[9]

One of the reasons why a school may adopt the full-time gifted program is due to political pressures from parents. These pressures can be beneficial, as when they create support and momentum to get a gifted program started, but these pressures can also create challenges for school leaders, especially if school leaders and parents disagree about key aspects of a gifted program.

One area of pressure comes from parents' beliefs on what the program is, who the program is for, and how it should be implemented. The best way to deal with this challenge is to get parents involved with understanding the goals and philosophy of the program from the start. A central administrator (CO2) said, "one critical piece about the community full-time gifted program is that parents are invited into schools. They're very much partners in their child's education." Similarly, another administrator (CO3) argued that "Every opportunity that we have to be able to reach the parents and talk to them about the approaches we take in school is huge because it maximizes that partnership."

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[9] I use the term *parents* to mean an inclusive group of people, including birth parents, guardians, and community members.

The school system attempts to facilitate outreach through at least two gifted information nights at each school and the school system's website, which provides information about the selection process and gifted program. LCSD also requires, prior to starting a gifted program, that principals get community feedback and input about how the program will work – this includes parents who may or may not have children directly involved in the gifted program.

Parents' beliefs and views about "giftedness" can also pose challenges to school leaders and central administration. As one administrator (CO4) explained, parents sometimes associate attending a gifted program as status acquisition rather than an educational opportunity for their children.

> There's a certain sense of status that goes along with sending your child to a magnet gifted school. So, in order to have parents say, "Oh, yes, I choose this local school. Their local program. I choose that instead of the center" – it requires parents to move away from the idea of status – especially for elementary students. What we're looking to do is give students access to materials, not say, "My child is gifted. My child is in a gifted program." You're trying to say, "My child needs these services" and have the service match the child's needs, not the child be labeled with some sort of "gifted" label.

Even among parents who choose to send their children to the community gifted program rather than the magnet program, there is sometimes resistance to including students who are not magnet-eligible in the class. Parents of children in these community programs fear that allowing non-eligible students to participate in the program will lower the quality and rigor of the program. According to one administrator (CO1), "You need courageous leadership and the principal's leadership to do things that might be really important for kids, but not be politically popular is really important." To address these challenges, school leaders have to educate parents about giftedness, so as to shift parents from the

historical belief that gifted education is only for exceptionally talented students to the belief that gifted education is for nurturing the potential in all students.

Another challenge is the perceived competition for students between the magnet programs and the community programs. Critics of the community based gifted services fear that the school system is trying to close the magnet gifted schools by opening alternative opportunities for gifted education at local schools. LSCD argues that opening community programs is not an attempt to close the magnet gifted programs; instead it is an "effort to expand the opportunity to participate in full-time gifted services to more students." Nonetheless, parents of children who attend the magnet program continue to worry about the consequences of having eligible students attend programs operated by their local school. These parents worry that as participation in the in the magnet gifted programs become smaller, these programs may lose quality and rigor.

Opportunity Costs

Many of the challenges the school system faces in implementing the community gifted programs also have costs, which, by definition, prevent the investment of resources in other areas. As I discussed in the previous paragraphs, school leaders must invest time and resources to address many of the challenges associated with the implementation of gifted programs in community schools. Changing the mindsets of parents and teachers requires time and resources, as do ensuring program fidelity; addressing accountability pressures, recruiting quality staff, managing student grouping, and responding to parental

pressures. From the central office's perspective, there are also costs associated with allocations from the district's budget and administrative support.[10]

Budget

Given that the local gifted program does not qualify for federal or state gifted funds, community schools and the district must reallocate other funds to support the community full-time gifted program. While the central office does not provide funding for the schools to hire a gifted teacher or purchase materials for the program, it does provide funding for a half-time gifted resource teacher and materials to teachers who attend professional development trainings. The returns to this investment are two-fold: (a) it encourages teachers to attend the trainings because they can acquire materials without the school having to purchase them and (b) through the profession of professional development, often conducted by gifted resource teachers, it supports the fidelity of implementation of these local programs. Like all school systems, LCSD has a limited operational budget, so it must determine how much money to put into resources like professional development and materials to support full-time gifted programs at the magnet and community schools.

Time

Another central office cost is time, especially when you consider the planning and ongoing support provided by central administrators responsible for gifted programs in the district. One administrator observed (CO1),

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[10] The school's opportunity costs will be discussed in the chapters that look specifically at each school.

> If you're a school that's going to open a new program…there is a lot of training and professional development and support that you need to provide to the teachers in your building…. So, if you're going to change the entire program and you're going to ask people to change their practices, you're going to need to provide them with a lot of support to be able to do to that and do that well.

When programs are first getting started, the central office team works closely with the school principal to talk through the logistics of the program and how to write the program plan. In addition, they work with staff members on possible program models, endorsement questions, and community forums. Once the program is approved, central office works with teams of teachers to collaboratively plan out what the full-time model will entail, as well as, the carry-over of these strategies with the whole school. The time commitment is a significant investment for a small team that needs to service over 200 schools in the district.

Summary of Key Findings

This chapter focused on the full-time gifted program from a district-level perspective. I used multiple documents, including state regulations, local guidelines for gifted programs, program standards, and an extensive review of information provided from the school system's website to provide an overview of the district's approach to gifted programs. I also provided an overview of central office perceptions of full-time gifted programs, both at magnetic schools and community schools, through my conversations with four central office administrators.

In the chapter, I first considered the philosophy of gifted programs in the district and found that LCSD administrators see gifted services as an opportunity for all children. The gifted office adopts the philosophy that children need to have access to high-level learning experiences that focus on problem-solving, choice, hands-on experiences,

collaboration, and rigor. This philosophy contradicts that of the pedagogy of poverty, which characterizes instruction for children in many Title 1 schools (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990; Knapp and Associations, 1995). I then asked central office administrators the reasons behind the community-based gifted program and themes emerged around keeping students within the community, having a moral responsibility of the school, accountability requirements, and political pressures. The theme of opening access and changing instructional practices were the most significant benefits of the program. Both of these benefits relate to a shift in beliefs in what children from poverty can do. Mindset, the fidelity of implementation, accountability pressures, staffing, student grouping, and political pressures were challenges that the program faced, though central administrators felt that these challenges had been addressed successfully by school leaders. Finally, the opportunity costs include resources that involve reallocation of budgets and central staff time.

My next three chapters present how policy is placed into practice with a focus on three Title 1 schools that opt to implement the full-time gifted program. The three schools are located within Lirah Central School District and are Winnifred Elementary School, James Elementary School, and E.S. Hughes Elementary School. Each school is presented as an individual case. For each case, I describe the background of the school, the school's pedagogy of learning and teaching, and the reasons, benefits, challenges, and costs to electing to run a full-time gifted program in a Title 1 school. Information from each was collected from documents and individual interviews. Document include information from the school website, the annual Title 1 plan, school improvement plans (SIP), and the full-

time gifted program proposals. Interviews with the principals and gifted resource teachers add a layer detail about implementation that document may not always provide.

Chapter 5: Winnifred Elementary School

"I think the children are owed what they need."- WP, Principal

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the full-time gifted program as designed and supported by Lirah Central School District's central office. It focused on a more global picture of how the program works across the school system. This chapter provides a picture of implementation that specifically looks at Winnifred Elementary School's community-based, full-time gifted program. In this chapter, I present general information about the school and program, such as overall structure and school demographics. Next, I introduce the individuals interviewed for the study and discuss the reasons they gave for implementing a gifted program, and what they believe to be the benefits, challenges, and opportunity cost associated with the program.

School and Program Information: Winnifred Elementary School

Winnifred Elementary School (WES) is located in the more urban section of Lirah Central School District. Despite its urban environment and being surrounded by busy thoroughfares less than one half of a mile from the school, WES is situated in a small neighborhood filled with single-family homes and surrounded by apartment buildings. The school is one of the smallest in the entire school system,[11] with fewer than 400 students; it serves students in pre-school through fifth grade.

Students represent a wide range of racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. The majority of the school's population is Hispanic (46%), followed by Asian

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[11] Elementary school sizes range from 300-1100 with an average student size of 650.

(23%) and White (23%) students; the remaining eight percent is mostly African American students. The limited English proficiency rate is 51%. The school has a high mobility rate, with close to 20% of the school population moving each year compared to the school system mobility rate of 12%. WES's free and reduced lunch rate is 62%, which places it in the top 25% of low-income student enrollment across the district, and it is a Title 1 school.

WES employees 50 instructional staff members. It has one assistant principal, and the school principal has been an administrator at WES for over ten years. WES is a fully-accredited school, and its pass rates on the language arts and math state tests continue to increase each year, including higher rates of students achieving advanced proficiency scores. The school offers a Head Start program, which is an early intervention program for preschool children from low-income families. It also offers an Arabic foreign language program that is integrated into the science and math programs. In addition, the school has programs to support English language learners, students with autism, and the full-time gifted program. According to school leaders, WES uses Title 1 funds to purchase school supplies and pay for additional instructional positions like instructional coaches, math and literacy resource teachers, and the STEM teacher. These funds also support portions of the full-time gifted program through the staffing of support teachers.

The gifted program at WES is the longest running community based gifted program in the school system. One out of three classrooms in grades 3-5 is dedicated to the full-time gifted classroom. The make-up of the class consists of all students found eligible for the school system's magnet gifted program, which is about 30 students across the three grades. The remaining seats are filled with students who exhibit a need for more

rigorous instruction but were not found to be eligible for the magnet program. District records indicate that “non-eligible” students comprise about half of the gifted enrollment at each grade.

According to school leaders, grade-level teachers work together to plan for language instruction for all students and to hold data conversations about student strengths and areas of need. Because the full-time gifted program’ math program is not aligned with the grade level team, planning occurs primarily with the math coach or a gifted resource teacher, who works at the school half time. The gifted resources teacher also provides teachers with professional development, modeling instruction strategies, and she provides math instruction for younger students who may participate in the gifted program in the future, and supports the Young Scholars model. These collaborative activities facilitate flexible grouping practices and gifted screening that occurs throughout the year.

Introduction to the School and Participants

When I entered the school for my interview with the principal, the school looked welcoming and clean. The front office staff greeted me in a friendly way, and since I arrived early, the office staff asked me to sit in the front office while the principal finished up with a prior meeting. As I sat in the main office, I watched children and staff members come into the office to ask questions or drop-off items. The environment was cheerful and helpful, adults and children were respectful of each other, and they seemed genuinely happy to see and speak with each other. After about ten minutes, I entered the principal's office. I was greeted with hugs from the principal and assistant principal, and they invited me to sit around their conference table. They both spoke to me about their

children, and they asked about mine. This initial interaction set a tone of comfort, safety, and teamwork, and as I started to ask questions about the principal's philosophy on teaching and learning; her answers were evidence of how the initial warm interaction with me is an embedded part of the school culture. The same was true when it came to the interview with the gifted resource teacher. She invited me over to her home on the weekend for the interview. Even though this was the first time we met, she welcomed me into her personal world to talk about her professional thoughts. Both women were excited about their work with the school and seemed eager to share their thoughts with me.

Pedagogy of Learning and Teaching

I started out both interviews with initial questions about the school's philosophy of teaching and learning. These initial questions were important to get an overall feel for the school's vision and to understand if the foundational beliefs aligned with or contradict the assumptions embedded in the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010). Based on my conversations with the principal (WP) and gifted resource teacher (WGT), two themes emerged as it relates to teaching and student learning. First, they feel that students need to have access to basic needs, such as safety, food, and feelings of belonging and community. Second, teachers need to plan purposeful instruction that actively engages students.

Basic Needs

Throughout my conversations with the principal and gifted resource teacher, the need for basic learning skills did not come up as a prerequisite for learning – which the pedagogy of poverty would suggest (Haberman, 2010); rather, these school leaders emphasized the need to meet basic survival, psychological, safety, and sense of

belongingness requirements for children as a prerequisite for learning. Both school leaders (WP and WGT) specifically spoke about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1987), which suggests that basic human needs, must be met before higher needs, such as learning, can occur. The philosophy is echoed in WES's school improvement plan, which states that staff will be "mindful of the emotional, social, and intellectual needs of our students and we set high expectations of ourselves and others as we reflect collaboratively on the planning and assessing of instruction." The principal said, "If those [basic] needs are not met then they [students] are not going to be present, and they are not going to be engaged in their learning;" the gifted resource teacher concurred, "As long as those basic needs are being met, they can do it."

WES provides free breakfast to all students. It also promotes a Responsive Classroom approach to discipline, which fosters discussions about behavior, mutual respect and community (Responsive Classroom, 2018). WES also has a mental support team to help students address personal problems and support teachers. During my interviews, both the principal and the gifted resource teacher focused in on the importance of developing a positive classroom environment, which each in turn connected it to emotional well-being of the students and teachers at WES. The gifted resource teacher was passionate about the importance of making an emotional connection with children.

> The emotional connection is critical because once the kids come to school once they get in there and they understand, 'Hey, this is a safe place; Ms. WGT loves me, I can feel very comfortable in my skin and I can be who I am.' Then, nothing really can hinder them from absorbing the material you give them to learn. That emotional connection is huge.

The principal expanded the idea of providing children with an emotionally safe place beyond the classroom to the entire school. The school principal said, “We also know that the feeling of safety is not upon all of the shoulders of teachers it takes a crowd of effort to make sure the kids are safe.” He continued, “That's why we really rely on her mental health team to support us and making sure our community is feeling ready to learn.” For both of these school leaders (WP and WGT), learning starts with the creation of these emotionally safe spaces.

Besides meeting students’ basic needs, the principal also felt that teachers had emotional needs that also needed to be met to create a positive learning environment. They, too, needed to feel safe, so that they can learn new practices and try new instructional strategies, especially in the face of accountability pressures. She spoke about how the administrative staff purposefully develops a sense of value and respect amongst the staff. She felt the investment in honoring and protecting teachers’ needs and time opened their minds to new ideas, and the investment helped to retain teachers, as well as, particularly with the “whole world breathing down their necks” (WP). She went on to say,

> part of the challenge for a Title 1 school that's succeeding is holding onto those teachers because it's very easy for them to get worn out. So, part of what we're trying to do is to really build them up and recognize them, and their strengths and their gifts.

According to the principal, creating an emotionally safe space for teachers was a prerequisite for them being able to engage in and sustain good instruction.

Purposeful Instruction

A second theme that emerged is that teaching and learning needs to be purposeful, and students need to be actively engaged in their learning. The principal felt that

purposefulness is especially important in WES because of the students that the school serves. “The urgency,” she argued, “is there before they [students] walk through those doors in kindergarten, because we know they're already going to come in, quite a few, three years behind.” She went on to explain that if learning is to be engaging and rigorous, teachers need to know their craft and understand their content; they need to “purposefully” collaborate with others and use the supports afforded by Title 1 to actively engage students in their learning. When I asked her to go deeper into what it means to be purposeful, she spoke about what she looks for when she goes into the classroom.

> I look for the purpose of that lesson and the activity…. There's a purpose for how you're assessing that learning. There's a purpose for how you're going respond to who got it, who didn't get it. There's a purpose for the next day, and how you link what you did today with what you're doing tomorrow.

According to the principal, without purposeful instruction, WES would not be able to meet the instructional needs of its students.

Both the principal (WP) and gifted resource teacher (WGT) said that students are also responsible for being engaged in their learning. “I think their [students] role needs to be to learn to be responsible for their own learning, own their own learning,” The principal argued. She went on to explain that “means we need to teach them how to do that, how to advocate for themselves. What it looks like to be attentive, what it looks like to work with a pair, with a small group.” The gifted resource teacher compared her students to what it would be like to be on a “little league baseball field,” where the players are responsible for playing and engaged in learning new skills, and the adults are there to coach and guide them. However, ultimately, each agreed (WP and WGT), it is the adult who needs to guide students in learning those new skills.

Both themes of basic needs and purposeful and engaged learning that emerged under the school's philosophy of teaching and learning continued to weave in and out of my conversations with the principal and teacher throughout the interview. These themes reoccurred when I asked about other aspects of the program. In the next sections, I discuss the reasons for implementation that they identified, their beliefs about the benefits and challenges of the program, and what they believed to be the major opportunity costs associated with operating a gifted program at WES. I also note where the principal's and gifted resource teacher's beliefs about emotional needs and purposeful, engaged learning may help in understanding their answers to this part of the interview.

Reasons for Implementation

Winnifred Elementary School started the community-based, full-time program and it has been in operation for fifteen years. Documents and interviews revealed two major themes behind the reasons for implementation. WES opted to implement the program to keep students within the community school and they viewed it as moral responsibility to educate all students fully.

Historical Reasons: Keep Students in the Community and Moral Responsibility

On WES's website, it is noted that the school "is proud of our ability to meet the needs of our students, while partnering with parents to ensure that our students move on to middle and high school ready to achieve their academic and personal goals." The full-time gifted program is an example of how the principal and gifted resource teacher feel WES is meeting the needs of students. Throughout their interviews, you can hear the pride in their voices when they described the program to me. WES was the first school to implement the full-time gifted program located within a community school. As noted in

Chapter 4, the school had built up a strong gifted intervention model called Young Scholars. The Young Scholars intervention had a strong impact on nurturing academic potential, and it shaped a population of young students at WES who later became ready for more rigorous instruction. Because WES was the first school in the district to create its own full-time gifted program, the gifted program has become an important part of the school's identity.

At the inception of the program, WES's former principal had a large number of students who qualified for the magnet full-time program and asked central office if there could be a program started at WES for two reasons. One reason, according to the current principal and the central administrators that I interviewed, was because it would retain the students with the top academic performance from leaving the school. In the age of accountability, this was important for accreditation because when students leave the school, so do their test scores. A second reason was that it became a way to keep the community together. According to the principal, when the program was first proposed to the school community, there was an immediate buy-in because families wanted to keep their children at the community school, wanted them to continue to be able to walk to school, or be with their neighborhood friends. School staff members felt the same way, they had invested in the children in the early grades and wanted to see them remain within the community.

Current Reasons: Keep Students in the Community and Moral Responsibility

Fifteen years later, these reasons still inform the rationale for why to operate a gifted program at WES. The principal noted the benefits, especially for a Title 1 school, of preventing WES's high achieving students from being diverted to magnet schools. The

gifted resource teacher also emphasized the value of sustaining a community for students over and over again. She said, “The heart of a community is always its neighborhood school.” The principal also acknowledged a moral obligation for students to have access to services that fit their needs in their home school. She stated, “I think the children are owed what they need,” and she expressed confidence that her staff is capable of delivering these services with fidelity.

Benefits

The reasons why WES started and still implements the program overlaps with the benefits of the program. In addition to keeping high-achieving children in the community school and providing programs that address the needs of their students, three other major benefits emerged from the data – broader access to services, improvements in instructional practices across the school, and higher expectations for learning for staff and students.

Broader Access

In analyzing the responses of the principal and gifted resource teacher, one of the most mentioned themes was access, which I broke it down into three subthemes. These subthemes include: (a) access to rigorous instruction (b) more inclusive identification practices and (c) the flexible nature of the program.

Rigorous instruction.

One subtheme to access is access to rigorous instruction. As a result of the principal’s moral belief that children deserve to have what they need, the full-time gifted program has become an avenue to access needed rigorous, enriched, and accelerated

learning opportunities which are not prevalent across many Title 1 schools in the country. When the program first started, the classroom teacher who piloted the program was purposeful in how she designed the learning opportunities. In her reflection plan she wrote, “I made sure that these children adjusted to the rigorous environment of a GT magnet class, not by lowering expectations, but by making the material accessible to a wide variety of learning styles and cultural backgrounds.”

Over the years the goal of providing broader access to rigorous instruction has continued. According to the principal and gifted teachers, WES has implement the gifted program with fidelity, meeting all of the central office program standards and replicating the official gifted program in the magnet schools. Having the program WES also opens access for students who are not found magnet eligible. The principal said, “We really are a pipeline of success for them [students]. And even if they don't do it full time, they still are able to access it even part-time, and that really opens a lot for them." The principal and gifted resource teacher (WP and WGT) reported that many students who were enrolled in the program as a “guest”[12] later went on to the formal full-time program in middle school, as well as, the International Baccalaureate program in high school. Both the principal and the gifted resource teacher felt that being a part of the elementary program opened more opportunities for these students in the future. This aligns with the

[12] Guest is a word that some school staff members use to describe students who are not found to be eligible for the magnet program but are found eligible at the school level and placed into the class.

talented development model because it the program is preparing children more rigorous opportunities (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thompson, 2015).

More inclusive identification.

Another subtheme off of the access theme is the benefit of reaching students who are not typically found eligible for the magnet program by using comprehensive identification practices that place a large focus on work samples and teacher observation. At the initial start of WES's program, there was an effort to reach the many students in minority populations who were not being identified as gifted through traditional methods. After one year of implementation, the classroom teacher who started the program reflected back and wrote, "It has been a frightening paradox that the percentage of minority populations in our gifted programs has continued to decrease. The success of our GT pilot program is one step towards reversing that trend." During the pilot year, the classroom teacher "assembled comprehensive portfolios on each student during the course of the year to demonstrate to the GT screening committee that these students did not just survive but thrived in a GT full-time environment that had the potential to offer an enriching experience that would benefit all of our gifted students in magnet programs." The teacher noted that student standardized ability tests scores went up, and more students went on to qualify for the magnet program.

The program at WES has opened access to gifted instruction for more students, especially students who come from low-income households and second language learners. The school opens access by using an inclusive model for identification. It uses the standard data points of screening for the magnet full-time program, but relies heavily on teacher observation, the collection of student work samples, and screens every student

in the school, every year. The screening process is collaborative in nature, and it involves grade-level teachers, support teachers, and administrators, who bring multiple perspectives to eligibility decisions.

Flexibility.

A final sub-theme of access revolves around the flexible nature of the program at WES, specifically focusing on student grouping and instructional strategies that emphasize differentiation. Unlike the magnet program, the community school program allows students who are not eligible for the program, but who are showing a need for more advanced services, to be members of the full-time class. This involvement can be for all subject areas or focused only one content area where students, with the student receiving instruction in the other content area in a different class. The gifted teacher said, "That flexibility of having that ability for fluid movement is powerful. It's not ideal to lock kids in. That is a very dangerous thing. Once you put the glass box on, that's ridiculous. Fluid movement is best." These flexible practices open the program to more students (Feldhusen & Moon, 1992; Matthews, Ritchotte, & McBee, 2013; Neihart, 2007; Tieso, 2003); they also provide teachers with more alternatives for addressing students' interests and meeting students' learning needs.

Speaking specifically about English-language learners, the principal said, "So maybe they start off in third grade flexing in for math and science, and remaining in the gen ed [general education] class for more of that language support for language arts and social studies." She also has seen how the program works well for students with disabilities. The flexible nature of the program allows students to receive both gifted and special education services. As the principal explained, "A teacher that can differentiate

should be able to differentiate whether all their children are gifted and just at different planes of giftedness, or whether or not they're working with second-language learners, students with IEPs." She went to describe how she has noticed a school and community shift in thinking about differentiation, seeing differentiation as more natural and doable. She said, "I think community members are starting to see, and teachers are starting to see, that by having it be school-based, we're able to provide this flexibility of going in and out."

Instructional Improvements Across the School

Another benefit, according to the principal and gifted resource teacher, is that the school has seen instructional improvement across the entire school. Since the implementation of the program, the school has developed a vision to carry-over gifted services to all students and the principal, which the principal further argues has led to an increase in the number of students passing state tests.

As evidence of their commitment to promoting critical thinking and problem solving across the school, the principal and gifted resource teacher both noted that goal was part of the school's improvement plan and Title 1 plan. Moreover, the school uses its Title 1 funds to support the goal. One example is the creation of a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) program for all students in kindergarten through fifth grade. For an hour each week, students receive STEM enrichment instruction from a molecular biologist and the same molecular biologist works with teachers to support science planning and curriculum development for the fourth and fifth grade.

In addition, differentiated instruction focused on higher-level thinking has increased across the school, according to the principal and gifted resource teacher. The

administrative team relies heavily on the school's instructional coach, reading and math resource teachers, and gifted resource teacher to support teachers in their use of higher-level instruction for all students. These members of the administrative team promote team planning and modeling of these forms of instruction. The principal noted, "So I think it's really great for [all] our teachers to see what good instruction can look like so that they can embrace it, too." The gifted resource teacher confirmed the principal's commitment to more active, engaging instruction.

> The principal made it very clear that the bulk of my position was targeting and supporting the first and second grade advanced math students. She told me "I really want you to start doing advanced math starting in first grade, using the gifted curriculum and modeling for teachers the lessons …I can see how that focus on the early primary grades truly helps build their full-time gifted program.

Through these and similar activities members of the administrative team have sought to improve instruction across the school.

Changes in instructional practices did not come quickly. The principal recalled when she first started at the school and how she needed to change teachers' beliefs about what their students could accomplish. When I asked the principal about how she viewed her school's progress, she said,

> I think we're in a really good place because we've had it going for so long, it's just a part of who we are. I think there's a lot to consider if you're going implement a full-time advanced program. I think it's definitely worthwhile, but I think it starts from the top. I think the principal has to believe in it. I think the principal needs to kind of know that she or he has enough community members and enough staff members that understand and believe in it so that she can have them be the influencers.

The gifted resource teacher agreed and said,

> I think now, really, there's momentum now towards that ideal. There's definitely more of a movement towards that. I'm proud of the principal for making that decision. I'm proud that she could understand and she saw that vision. I was really excited to be part of that. It's a good thing.

This vision required a mindset shift across the staff, which is further explained in the next paragraphs.

Mindset

The final benefit identified through the interviews was the change in the mindset of the students and teachers. According to the principal, students throughout the school believe that they can do it – that they can engage deeply in content and complete challenging academic tasks. Switching over to high expectations is not always easy for students. The principal said,

> There are going to be some challenges in the beginning, as the child is suddenly being pushed and enriched to this level, and held accountable for their capacity and not just the status quo… So, I try to push the teachers to hold out and differentiate, and fill in any gaps that might be needed, and keep the child there for the full year.

But the principal and gifted resource teacher both believe that their students can strive academically in a more demanding learning environment, especially if the school continues to provide the basic and emotional support that they believe is important for learning. The gifted resource teacher noted the students see the school and program as "a safe place to take risks and really kind of stretch yourself and try some things that you've never done before and that's pretty exciting." She went on to say, "They're happier and they're in a better place" because of the program.

Besides students' shift in expectations, the principal and gifted resource teacher also noted a shift in expectations amongst staff members. The principal noted, "I think not only are we creating that flexibility in the brain of the children, but we're creating that flexibility in the mind of the teacher," and when that happens, she argued, "It kind of pushes them [teachers] into growth mindset, whether they want to or not." The learning

environment promoted by WES is a pedagogy of plenty versus a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010). Instruction is grounded in the belief that children, including children from low-income backgrounds, are capable of doing and benefiting from challenging work.

The principal was eager to explain that the learning environment promoted by WES took time to develop. She started at the school about ten years ago, and she recalled staff attitudes about the gifted program at that time.

> Well, because I came on board just a few years after it was implemented, we had community members and staff members who thought that it was tracking – who thought that it was elitist. When I became principal, there were actually some staff members who thought I would do away with our full-time school-based program. Don't know why they would think that, but they tried to encourage me to consider that. And their reasoning was that we would have more models in the class for struggling students. And my question was, "So what do the advanced kids get out of it?"

According to the principal, teachers needed to see the benefits of the program, not just for students eligible for gifted services but also for non-eligible students. She believes that these benefits resulted in a shift of mindsets about the value of the program and what students can do. She also sees more teachers embracing the use of rigorous instruction in the classroom, more teachers attending gifted trainings outside of the school, and more teachers going for the gifted endorsement.

Challenges

With any program, there will be challenges. The full-time gifted program is no different. According to the principal and the gifted resource teacher, the most prevalent challenges WES faces are staffing issues, community understanding, and the small size of the school.

Staffing

One of the greatest challenges the school faces is staffing for the program. The principal emphasized over and over again, “I just hope our staffing stays.” For many years, the school system has been hit hard by budgetary constraints. The budgetary challenges directly impact the way a school can staff programs, including the community full-time gifted program, which is not protected by mandated state requirements. Because the district does not fund gifted classroom positions in the community schools, these positions need to be funded through the schools existing budget and the trading or repurposing of traditional staff positions.

Ironically, the success of the program creates its own staffing pressures, for the more students that qualify for gifted services the more staffing is needed for the program. But, as the principal noted, “No matter how high our gifted and magnet-eligible numbers ever go, we're not going to be provided extra staffing to be able to maintain our program.” If the budget for staffing continues to dwindle and becomes inadequate for the student population, the principals feels she will need to make hard decisions on how to restructure the program without harming the program for children who qualify for it. The restructuring, according to the principal, may have to include multiage classrooms, larger class sizes, or removing the students who are not eligible for the magnet program.

The staffing pressure has been ongoing, but the principal said that her “data shows that we’re doing the right thing” and “the closer we can get towards 100 percent [pass rate], the more people will back off and just say yes to my trade request.” Using the data to show schoolwide growth is one way the principal believes she can keep the program

going. She went on to emphasize that it is important to get the support of her supervisor because tough decisions about staffing occur in tough budgetary times. “I've been supported by my direct supervisor for the last couple years…. We had to really get to the point where we were showing that what we're doing, and how I'm using staffing, is actually productive for *all* students.” She said the WES achievement trends have helped her supervisor convince human resources to approve staffing decisions that require funds to be reallocated from other funded positions.

Community Understanding

Although the community has been largely supportive from that start of the program, sustaining community support of the program can be a challenge. WES uses a proactive approach to keep the community informed and updated about the program. The gifted resource teacher noted, “It's the issue of making the program so that every parent understands it." The school uses Title 1 funds to hold workshops that connect caregivers to materials about various programs in the school, including the gifted program. In addition to clarifying what the gifted and other programs are about, the principal is transparent on how the program is staffed and funded. She explains to parents how she trades positions to support the program and how she plans to address the needs of students that were supported by the shifting of positions. She also makes clear to parents that the program is not guaranteed.

While the principal is proactive in nurturing support for the gifted program in the community, she wished that the support would have greater intensity.

> I'm afraid that if something does come – They [parents/community members] have not sent enough positive letters about how wonderful it is. But if it was taken away, they would be a little crazy about it…. they have not found a need to have

> to advocate for it because of the fact that I have the same belief system they do, and I fight for it.

Encouraging active and vocal community support for the program is an important strategy for sustaining the gifted program, especially when threatened by budgetary constraints and limited resources.

Another challenge associated with community support is getting permission from parents for their children to participate in the gifted program. The gifted resource teacher noted that it is hard to obtain permission from the parents, particularly in a low-income community. She reflected on one example when she said,

> We went through all this rigmarole, all this paperwork. We tracked down dad at his job to have him sign this paper to submit the referral. Then, the child is in, but the parent did not sign the permission form or – just the logistics of that component, I wish – we need to figure that out– we need to work on that. It's not as easy as it should be.

The resource teacher discussed calling parents, using translation services, and going home to obtain permission, but she feels it still seems to be challenge to get parents to understand what the gifted program can do for their child.

Size of School

Two unique challenges that were mentioned by the principal and gifted resource teacher are student grouping and teacher-instructional planning, which, they believe, stem from the size of the school. Since the school is small, for each grade level, there is only one full-time gifted class and two classes that are not part of the full-time program. In such a small school, there can be a tendency for the gifted class to be seen as the “smart class.” The gifted resource teacher said, “We want to stay away from the idea of the haves and the have-nots.” The workaround the school uses to off-set this challenge is implementing rigorous instruction across the entire school, so as to provide access to

rigorous instructional opportunities to all kids. The emphasis on rigor across grades, the principal and gifted resource teacher believe, helps to alleviate the “haves and have-nots” scenario.

Another issue that stems from school size is based on student grouping and the classroom make-up of students. The principal noted, "the downside is that we – because we're small, there are fewer classes to kind of put the mix in, and give the children the opportunity to kind of take a break from each other.” Often, the same students are in class with each other for three years, and when there are on-going conflicts between students that are not easily to resolve, this can create conflicts in the classroom and school. Unlike in larger schools, where there may be multiple gifted classes, WES staff cannot regroup students to diffuse tensions.

The school’s size also creates challenges associate with instructional planning. Because there is only one classroom per grade level with a full-time gifted program, planning by grade-level teams is more complicated. Nonetheless, the principal highly values collaboration by teachers and seeks to promote grade-level and school-level collaboration at WES. She identified several strategies for addressing the challenge:

> For the collaborative planning, it wasn't respectful of that full-time gifted teacher to have to plan for math with the rest of the team members. [Since it is advanced by one year]. But yet you don't want to make them feel alienated like they're just singletons. So what we've done now for the last three years, and we really think it's the best thing for us, is that they plan collaboratively for language arts, and that way they get to share their resources and so forth. For math, they actually get undivided one-on-one coaching and planning. So the instructional coach plans for math with them for an hour each week. On Wednesdays, they have their math CLT [collaborative learning team], and it's a CLT of two.

The challenge for the school, according to the principal, is to develop a master plan that is conducive to collaborative planning. The principal said, “I do not think that people can independently plan and be strong teachers for all children anymore. Especially in a Title

1 school that retains their gifted learners." It takes work and strategy, which the principal equated to playing a game of chess, but the time spent collaboratively planning is worth it.

Opportunity Costs

With any program, there will be opportunity costs. Overall, though, the principal and gifted resource teacher found it difficult to identify any "lost" opportunities associated with the school's investment in the gifted program; rather, each saw the costs associated with implementation of the gifted program as a "gained" opportunity. The major costs that they identified include organizing for the start-up of the program, investments in human resource, and creating buy-in for the program. Because the gifted program is funded largely locally, these costs are born by WES and typically involve re-purposing resources.

Start-up

One of the costs mentioned by the principal and gifted resource teacher was the initial start-up of the program. Setting the foundation for the gifted program's success took a substantial investment of time by school leaders. Prior to the implementation of the program, staff from WES visited to the magnet schools to observe and ask questions; they also worked very closely with the gifted office to doing program planning about instructional practices, curriculum materials, and identification strategies. According to the principal it took about a year to set-up the gifted program, train staff and develop a plan for implementation.

Another cost involved acquiring staff and materials. Before starting the program, the former principal, members of the gifted central office, and assistant superintendent of

instruction met to discuss starting the program. It was agreed that the principal could pilot a full-time gifted program at the school, so long as it was implemented with fidelity using the district's gifted curriculum and instructional strategies. The initial cost for the materials was $1000-$2000 per grade level, which also needed to be occasionally updated and replenished. The school also needed to repurpose the general education positions to acquire three full-time gifted classroom teachers. These costs, according to the principal, have been covered through the school's curriculum and staffing budget.

The school has also accrued costs helping other schools in the district start their own gifted programs. Other schools come to WES to observe teachers, ask questions about the program, and look for guidance on how to start the program at their school. While this investment does divert energy from other activities, it has an indirect benefit or return to the school. By promoting the good work teachers are doing at WES, it enhances the school's and program's reputation. Also, the visits provide opportunities for school leaders at WES to monitor the program's fidelity.

Human Resources

Another cost is human resources. When the principal met with central office administrator to request permission to start the program, one of the requirements was that the school hire a gifted certified teacher. Because the magnet program hired most of the gifted endorsed teachers in the area, this proved to be a challenge for the principal. Nonetheless, school leaders, with the help of central office administrators, did find a teacher gifted endorsement who was excited for the challenge of starting a new program in a Title 1 school.

Human resources continue to be a major cost of the program to WES. To operate the program, WES has to employ three teachers certified in gifted education. Because young teachers are often mobile, this can be a challenge. To address the challenge, this principal encourages all teachers to attend district-sponsored gifted education training, in the hopes that some teachers will pursue endorsement. The principal said,

> We don't push that they [teachers] all have to have the gifted endorsement, but we highly encourage them to attend the gifted trainings. And after they attend enough trainings, they want to get that endorsement under their belts. So, for instance, we already have one in second grade that's ready to move up to third-grade full-time gifted classroom teacher should that need arise.

The school creates this pipeline of endorsed teachers not only to fill positions for the actual full-time gifted program but to provide services for students in first and second grade as a form of early gifted intervention. These costs are supported through the school's Title 1 budget.

Buy-in

An ongoing challenge and cost that the school faces revolves around investing time and political capital to promote buy-in from key stakeholders. The stakeholders include students, parents, staff members, and supervisors. Initially, the buy-in was about why the program should be started, but with the budgetary challenges and accountability pressures, the buy-in is about why the program needs to keep going. As described earlier, the principal believes it is important that she explains the program to parents and the decisions that she makes about programs in the school. The principal said,

> I've let them know that I have made the choice to go down to one ESOL teacher, while the county wants us to have three. And I have let them know how I've made decisions, and how I've had to ask for permission to maintain the three full-time gifted classroom teachers. They know that I've had to really combine three budgets to create the STEM position. They know that I fund the instructional

> coach, but that's how we have the school-based embedded professional development and the consistency of instruction.

Through these explanations, she tries to maximize parent buy-in for the program; she also helps parents leverage their buy-in through advocacy. As she explained, " …sometimes I have to have little talks with them and let them know, 'But you're making me put up the fight alone…' And what I'm trying to teach them is to write letters." Encouraging parental buy-in and helping parents become more effective advocates for the program are major investments of time for the principal.

Creating strong buy-in amongst students, staff and supervisors also represent major investments of time for the principal. She needed to create a vision of engaged learning, convince students that they should have higher educational expectations for themselves, and convince staff that their students could engage content more deeply and achieve higher academic goals. As noted earlier, the principal said it was not easy at first, but instructional improvements have provided more children with access to rigorous instruction and have led to a rise in student performance on the mandated assessments. The principal also expends considerable time nurturing the buy-in with supervisors and other administrators who make decisions about budgets and local programs. By making these proactive investments in time, the principal hopes to create greater support and opportunities to advocate for the program's continuation.

Summary of Key Findings

This chapter brought forward the unique case of Winnifred Elementary School. The school was the first school in the district to implement the gifted program, so it provided the historical context to why the program was started in the district – an effort to provide children with services that they qualify for without having to leave their

community school. Over the course of fifteen years, school leaders at WES have experienced numerous benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs. The theme of access proved to a major benefit and was broken down into three categories: (a) the actual implementation of the program which provided access to students who qualify for it, where prior to the program, students would need to leave their community school to receive the services; (b) expanded access that allowed students who were not eligible for the magnet program to join the full-time gifted class; and (c) flexible grouping for the program where children across the school have access to more rigorous instruction and curriculum. Another major benefit is an improvement in instructional strategies, as teachers across the school have adopted practices reflective more of a pedagogy of plenty than a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010). While WES has faced challenges with staffing, developing community support, school size, school leaders have been able to find workarounds for these challenges. Finally, as with any program, there are opportunity costs, many of which require additional investment in time to address the challenges and repurposing of a limited budget to pay for the costs of the program.

In the next chapter, I present another school, E.S. Hughes Elementary School, that implements a similar program. I follow a similar pattern of considerations as I gave to Winnifred Elementary School.

Chapter 6: E.S. Hughes Elementary School

"When teachers say they can't do this because students need basic skills. Our belief is 'We can't wait for every basic skill; it will come through high instructional strategies.'"
- E.S. Hughes- Principal

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the full-time gifted program at Winnifred Elementary School. This chapter brings forward another school, E.S. Hughes Elementary School, which also implemented a community full-time gifted program. I follow the same organization of findings as the preceding chapter.

School and Program Information: E.S. Hughes Elementary School

E.S. Hughes Elementary School (ESH) is located in an urban section of Lirah Central School District. The school is one of the largest in the entire school system with close to 1000 pre-school through fifth grade students. There is a wide range of racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in the school: students represent over 50 countries and speak nearly 40 different languages. The majority of the school's population is Hispanic (40%), followed by White (29%), Black (17%), Asian (12%) and other racial/ethnic groups (2%). The limited English proficiency rate is 60%. The school is considered to be above average for its mobility rating, with close to 30% of the school population moving each year compared to the school system mobility rate of 12%, and it is in the top 5% for high mobility rates across the school system. WES's free and reduced lunch rate is close to 80%, which makes it in the bottom 5% of schools concerning economic wealth. These characteristics qualify ESH for Title 1 funds.

ESH employees 140 instructional staff members,[13] and four administrators (the principal and three assistant principals). ESH is a fully-accredited school, and, as demonstrated by district records, its pass rates on the language arts and math state tests continue to increase each year. The school offers a variety of programs to fit the unique needs of the school and its students. The school offers a Head Start program, programs to support English language learners, Young Scholars, the full-time gifted program, a STEM lab, before and after school enrichment and remediation programs, parent liaisons, and uses a co-teaching model in language arts and mathematics. The school receives Title 1 funds and uses these funds to purchase school supplies and pay for additional instructional positions, like instructional coaches, math and literacy resource teachers, and gifted resource teachers. The school also has a reduced-ratio of students to teacher classroom program in grade K-3.

The full-time gifted program is well-established program at ESH, having been offered at the school for close to ten years. It is implemented in grades three through five, and central administrators consider the program to be one of the highest in fidelity in the school system. There is at least one classroom dedicated to full-time gifted instruction on grades three through five, and, according to the principal and gifted resource teacher, there is an expectation that the non-full-time classes "infuse" the gifted curriculum into lessons on a regular basis. The make-up of the gifted class consists of all students found eligible for the school system's magnet gifted program, which is about 61 students; the

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[13] Teachers, instructional assistants, and counselors

rest of the class is filled with students who are exhibiting a need for more rigorous instruction, but who are not found eligible for the magnet program through central screening. The gifted programs make-up breaks down to about an 85% magnet eligible to 15% school eligible. The school uses Title 1 funds to support portions of the full-time gifted program through the staffing of support teachers, including coaches and one out of the two gifted resource teachers.

All grade-level teachers work together to plan language instruction that incorporates higher-level thinking activities; teachers also hold routine data conversations about student strengths and areas of need. In addition to collaborative planning, the school implements a co-teaching model where all classroom teachers pair with a support teacher to teach mathematics and language arts. The gifted resource teachers support the full-time gifted class, along with the classroom teacher, but they also support other teachers in the school by providing professional development; lesson plans; individualized instruction in reading, math, and science; and guidance about critical and creative thinking lessons distributed by the central gifted office to local schools. The gifted resource teachers also serve as the chair for the school's screening and identification of students who required gifted services. Due to ESH's size and high poverty rate, central administration supports one full-time gifted resource teacher while the school supports the second full-time gifted resource teacher through the reallocation of its budget.

Introduction to the School and Participants

When I entered the school for my interview with the principal, the school was a buzz. There were many parents in the school, kids were moving in and out of the

cafeteria after a program, and the main office seemed busy. The front office staff greeted me and connected me with the principal. The principal met with me during her lunch time. During the meeting, I could hear how passionate she was about children and how her decisions were always made based on what her beliefs and research say about best practices. I also had the same feeling of passionate commitment when I met with the gifted resource teacher, whom I will refer to as HGT. Although there are two gifted resource teachers, I selected to interview HGT because she had been at the school for four years, as opposed to the other resource teacher who was relatively new to the position. HGT and I met in her office which was located at the back of the school library. When I walked through the library, I saw children working on computers, checking out books, and speaking with teachers.

Pedagogy of Learning and Teaching

When I spoke with both the principal and resource teacher, as well as, looked at documents, a few common themes emerged about their views on learning and teaching. On the school improvement plan, the school set forward its belief and value system, with its core mission being: “Our mission is to foster life-long learners. Within a safe and caring community, we collaborate, differentiate, motivate and communicate so all achieve their greatest potential. Our futures begin here.” The school values rigor, positive culture, and engagement.

Rigorous Instructional Practices

Within the rigor category, the school focuses on fostering high expectations, a growth mindset, and student accountable; the school also encourages the use of performance tasks, authentic learning experiences, higher level thinking skills, and the

recognition of effort. When I spoke with the principal (HP) and the gifted resource teacher (HGT), these themes also came forward during our conversations. HP spoke about how the teacher is a facilitator for learning, connecting learning to real-life, moving past right and wrong answers by opening opportunities to have multiple solutions, and engaging students in cooperative learning. HGT spoke about giving children opportunities to express their opinions, opportunities to share metacognitive thinking, provide students with choice, and differentiate for learning styles. She said, “Students are getting the opportunity to express their opinion, tell how they worked a problem, and make sure students know they have choice and allowing them to be able to present a way that feels comfortable for them and their learning style.” All of these beliefs contradict the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010), as well as, mirror the belief system set forth by the gifted office.

Positive Culture

In addition to promoting rigorous instructional practices, the principal (HP) and gifted resource teacher (HGT) discussed developing a feeling of community and safety within the classroom and across the school to nurture a growth mindset. According to them, administrators and teachers can cultivate a sense of community when they seek out the good in each child, promoting a “you can do it” mindset that can help each student grow. HGT said cultivating community is about,

> making sure that students feel a comfort when they come in by developing a community within the classroom and knowing that ‘I might not have the right answer but I’m going to get it and you know I’ve got my teacher here and my peers here who are going to assist me with it, and no one's going to laugh at me, and no one's going to think any different of me.'

The gifted resource teacher also spoke about how the school principal and teachers model for students a belief that "it's not that you don't have it, it is you don't have it yet."

Engagement

Another theme stems from the idea of engagement. According to the principal (HP) and gifted resource teacher (HGT), responsibility for engagement comes from the staff, as well as, the students. First, teachers have a responsibility to engage their students. Engagement comes from learning experiences that are hands-on, inquiry-based, and the use of open-ended questions. Engagement also occurs when teachers differentiate the curriculum for students, all of which contradict the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010). The principal (HP) emphasized that students have specific needs and abilities and teachers need to assess and tailor instruction to meet those needs. The gifted resource teacher (HGT) said, "When they see that their needs are being met I think that's when students really start to shine." HGT further explained that part of student engagement includes students' ownership in learning – that is, seeing learning not as a task imposed on them but a task that benefits them.

> I also think that it's something that the student needs to know is going to help them grow, so they have to be able to look at instruction not so much as this is something that has to be done more than this is what I need.

According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, teacher and student engagement is central to the forms of pedagogy and learning valued at ESH.

Reasons for Implementation

E.S. Hughes Elementary has implemented the community-based, full-time program for ten years. The historical and current reasons have been consistent over time. Four reasons emerged from behind the reasons for implementation- a belief that the

school is capable of providing services, a long-term plan to provide a range of gifted services for students, keep students within the community school, and the known benefits to the program.

School is Capable

Similar to the reasons for implementation given by the principal and gifted resource teacher at Winnifred Elementary School, ESH's staff believed that they should develop a full-service program for students and that students would do better in their local school. ESH's full-time program proposal states that,

> faculty members and parents at E.S. Hughes ES are committed to providing a structured, positive learning environment in which all students are encouraged and challenged to maximize their academic potential and social growth. Our students thrive in this environment. They are great kids who work and play so well together that they continually impress both their teachers and parents.

The program proposal also states that ESH staff and parents want,

> to dispel the perception that students need to leave our school to get a 'gifted quality' education. Every year we bring back more students from private education. This full-time program will allow us to continue to build our school's reputation for excellence and let our community know that we are indeed a full-service school, able to meet the needs of all our students.

According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, parents strongly supported the notion of a "full-service" school in their community. In the first year of implementation, all of the children who were found eligible for the magnet program remained at ESH instead of going to the magnet school. The school continues to retain its students with very few going to the magnet program.

Expand to Range of Gifted Services

The implementation of a gifted program at ESH also fitted well with the school's long-range goals. Before implementing the gifted program, the school had worked hard to

nurture gifted potential through the Young Scholars model. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, through Young Scholars, the number of students qualifying for the full-time gifted program increased from 16 to 69 by 2005. Offering the full-time gifted services at the school was the next step for expansion. By offering a full-time gifted program, ESH could also expand services to students even if they did not qualify for the magnet program. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the implementation of the gifted program was the next step in providing services to these children. Also, the school saw it as a way to expand services for students for long-term success. The proposal justified the program as a way to address,
"Although teachers challenge each student and are attuned to the needs of high achieving students, this is clearly an area where we need to continue to improve."

Keep Students in the Community

Similar to the beliefs of the staff at WES, the staff at HES believed that there were educational advantages to keeping their students in the local school, especially given the Title 1 population that they served. Students and their parents have a feeling of comfort and sense of community within the school, according to the principal and gifted resource teacher. Their siblings go to the school, so it helps siblings stay together, which is also convenient for families. Rather than having to navigate two different school start times, events, and policies, parents can focus on the schedule at their local schools.

Such advantages may be especially important for students from low-income families or students from ethnic minorities. According to HES' program proposal, "immigrant families are reluctant to send their children away from the base school; they are familiar with our school, our parent liaisons, and our teachers. They are happy here."

Twelve years later, this reason remains the same. The gifted resource teacher (HGT) said, “People feel comfortable with the fact that you know with their ethnicity that there're more people here that fit in with their ethnicity and their cultural background.” She continued to explain, “We have a lot of different countries that are represented at our school, so a lot of the students feel very comfortable that this is their home base.” According to the gifted resource teacher (HGT), parents feel it is a hardship to move their children to a different school and parents want to keep their children within the local community.

Known Benefits of the Program

ESH staff also sought to model the success of Winnifred Elementary School, which was the first school to start a community gifted program. The former principal who started the program at ESH was once the assistant principal of WES. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the former principal had a great experience with the program and wanted to bring it to ESH. When I asked the principal (HP) why she continues to implement the program, she responded that it is "a great avenue for exposure to a rigorous and exciting curriculum for all students.” Both the principal and the gifted resource teacher felt that the gifted program had many benefits to justify its continuation. I describe those benefits in the next section of this chapter.

Benefits

The principal and gifted resource teacher identified a range of benefits that they attributed to the implementation of the gifted program. These benefits include (a) broader access to rigorous instruction for students, (b) improved instructional strategies

across the school, (c) enhanced identification procedures and (d) positive changes in students' perceptions of learning.

Broader Access

The most prominent benefit to implementing the program comes under the theme of access. One impetus for implementing the gifted program was to provide gifted services in the school similar to those offered by magnet program, so students did not need to leave their community. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the implementation of the gifted program at HES has done just that: it has broadened access to rigorous instruction for children found eligible for the magnet program. As a result, the majority of children who are found eligible for the magnet program remain in the school.

The gifted program also provides flexible grouping of students who are not identified for the full-time magnet program but show high ability. The principal (HP) described this as an "added bonus" to the program because "children who are not found eligible via the county selection process can still be eligible at the local school, which means more kids can be exposed to the curriculum." Both the principal and the gifted resource teacher said that it makes flexible grouping easier because children can move in and out of the program for instruction in a specific subject area or to address a specific need. What this means is that in the full-time class, children are exposed to an enriched and accelerated curriculum in the areas of social studies, science, mathematics, and language arts. Children who are not magnet eligible and are in the general education classes, can "flex" into the full-time class for specific subject areas that they are in need of additional rigor. This form of flexibility grouping aligns with current ability grouping options in elementary schools (Feldhusen & Moon, 1992; Neihart, 2007; Tieso, 2003).

The gifted program has also broadened access to rigorous instruction beyond the gifted classes. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, many general education teachers have adopted portions of the full-time curriculum in the general education classrooms. The principal (HP) said, "The program has exposed the rest of the school to the curriculum. We have exposed more children to higher levels of learning." The gifted resource teacher concurred,

> I think that the exposure to the different curriculum, exposure to the different opportunities is something that should be made available to all students. I see that we're meeting all the students' needs so – and that's when they're above, on grade level or below, all students should have access to the program.

This orientation to instruction has also led to the development of new programs to promote rigorous instruction at ESH, including a STEM lab for all students, before and after-school programs, summer school, and weekly critical and creative thinking lessons. The school improvement plan describes access to these types of programs as a way to increase the amount of quality learning time for students.

Instructional Strategies

According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the implementation of the full-time gifted program has improved instructional practices across the school. "We have been accredited every year," the principal (HP) noted, and we have "seen an increase in improved [state assessment] scores for the last three years – 15-16 points in each category/subgroup." The influence of the gifted program can also be found school improvement plan. The plan specifically references the use of aspects of the gifted curriculum in reading and math throughout the school. In reading the plan calls for the use of Caesar's English, Socratic Seminars, Grammar Island and Touch Pebbles, which are all curriculum resources adopted by the gifted office; in mathematics, the plan calls

for incorporating aspects of the gifted math curriculum at each grade level. Both of these examples underline how the school is looking to improve rigor throughout its classes rather than rely on repetition of low-level tasks.

The use of these strategies requires professional development and the principal (HP) believes that if the teachers learn "the skills to differentiate then all kids will be exposed to great instruction." Over the years, school administrators and teachers have committed to attending professional development in gifted instruction, and, according to the principal, more teachers are attaining gifted endorsements. The teachers who are trained then bring back that knowledge to the school. The principal (HP) said, "Staff who are trained, model and coach for their team and we have developed a group of excellent instructional leaders because of it. Teachers really have improved their craft." The gifted resource teacher (HGT) noted that she had witnessed a shift in teacher's ability to differentiate instruction because of the professional development. She said, "Often teachers did not know what to do with those who are above. It was always, 'Can you take them out of my class' or 'can you do this?', and now they're like, 'I can do this,' 'I've done this.'"

The principal (HP) explained that broad improvement in instructional strategies has been a grassroots effort by the full-time gifted classroom and resource teachers and that when "the other teachers see good instruction and they want to try it." Teachers who are new to the strategies and curriculum look to their trained colleagues to help them to use it. At the school level, the grass-roots training occurs in three ways. First is through collaborative learning teams (CLTS) when teams hold data conversations and discuss instructional techniques to support student learning. The gifted resource teacher (HGT)

reflected on her experiences working with collaborative teams during data talk conversations and planning conversations. She spoke about a time when general education teachers and full-time gifted teachers were planning together. She relayed that the full-time gifted teachers would give an example of something that really works and then would give ideas on how to scaffold the curriculum for use in the general education setting.

The second means of training is through co-teaching experiences. Since ESH has two full-time gifted teachers, co-teaching becomes more a feasible task. The gifted resource teachers go into the full-time gifted classrooms to co-teach, model, and give feedback to improve instruction, but the gifted resource teachers also work with general education teacher in grades K-5 to implement more rigorous curriculum and help teachers develop critical and creative thinking strategies for their students. The school also offers in-house professional development sessions for teachers. The gifted resource teacher (HGT) noted that she is currently doing professional development with interested teachers on differentiation and student engagement. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the training that has been provided to the gifted and talented teachers has spread and ultimately has had a positive impact across the school.

Identification

The spillover effects from having rigorous opportunities across the school have helped improve identification practices. The principal (HP) said that the program has helped with screening because “it has helped our staff to see potential and see things differently because the curriculum and instruction are engaging.” The gifted resource teacher (HGT) noted a shift at the screening meetings because teachers are more prepared

with student work samples that show high-level learning and they can speak with confidence about how students are doing when they access that type of learning.

Identification at the school level has helped access within the community full-time program. The gifted resource teacher (HGT) said,

> There are other students that are found eligible by the school…We look at students that may not have qualified at the district level, and we see that potential in them to really be part of the gifted program, the full-time gifted program.

Both the principal and gifted resource teacher said the Young Scholars model has also helped to develop higher-level skills and identify a broader group of students for the full-time classroom. When I spoke with the gifted resource teacher about whether or not the program represented the demographics at the school, she responded that it does reflect the overall school population. She said, “We’re not being exclusive in the screening so if your population looks a certain way, then your classroom should look that way, too.” She said that the make-up of the full-time class naturally represents the school and she credits it to the really knowing the students, providing nurturing at an early age, having advocates in the school, and engaging parents in the process.

Student Perception of Learning

The principal and gifted resource teacher also said that they have noticed a change in students’ perceptions of school. Although the school did not have a formal assessment tool to determine how students felt about school, the principal (HP) and gifted resource teacher (HGT) drew from their own experiences when working with students across the school. The school principal said she had seen greater excitement about coming to school and an actual love of learning. For students in the gifted program, they also learned how to take on new challenges. The gifted resource teacher said, “They're used to being the stars in their class, and then they come in [to the full-time class], and it’s like everybody’s

on the same playing field and really have to work now." The principal (HP) also noted that while the school cannot control some of the factors that influence learning outside of school, it can raise expectations about what students can do. She said,

> Teachers need to maximize positive impacts. We (the school) don't have control over parent SES or education, but I have an impact on what happens in our building. We need to need to help parent and kids to see the whole picture. To explain the options and help them to see the future. We see potential.

The gifted resource teacher also noted an increase in the number of children who are asking to be a part of the full-time program. She said students say, "That's what I want to do" and "I want to be in there."

Challenges

Determining themes for ESH's challenges was interesting because there was not much data to pull from. When I asked the school principal what the challenges are she first told me there are none. I probed a little bit more, and she said, "It is normal business in school. With any program, you will have to deal with training, equipment, etc… This is typical. It is business as usual, just part of doing the job." She looked at the community-based, full-time gifted program as a success across the whole school.

A few minutes later, the principal (HP) came back to me and said that when she arrived at the school, "It took time and patience to get the staff to understand that this is beneficial." The principal and gifted resource teacher both spoke about a growth mindset as being a catalyst to believing in the program. Initially, teachers said that they could not do the program because students needed basic skills and the principal would respond, "We can't wait for every basic skill, it will come through high instructional strategies." The school tapped into resources at the school, such as the gifted resource teacher, instructional coach, and the full-time gifted teachers, to train other teachers to overcome

lower expectations that represented by the pedagogy of poverty. The principal (HP) said, “Telling people you need to do this, doesn’t always work. Tapping into the interest of teachers and shared leadership does. It moved the program forward.”

A challenge that the gifted resource teacher (HGT) brought up included communicating about the program to parents. Understanding eligibility for the gifted program can be especially challenging for some families, particularly ethnic minority families where language might be an obstacle. While parents want to choose the best programs for their child, making that decision can be hard when parents are presented with multiple options. To overcome the challenge, the school organizes parent meetings in the school, taps into their parent liaisons and translators, and works with the “spokes parents” of the school to get the information out.

Opportunity Costs

Like challenges, the principal and gifted resource teacher did not go into opportunity costs as profoundly as the reasons and benefits to the program. They simply saw investments in the gifted program as gaining rather than losing any valuable opportunities for the school and its students. Only two supposed costs to the program emerged during the interview, though neither the principal not the gifted resource teacher discussed the costs in great detail. The costs were staffing and investment in training teachers.

Staffing

While ESH has greater support from the central office for its gifted program than most schools (the district provides one full-time resource teacher as opposed to a half-time gifted resource teacher), the principal still repurposes funding to support staff for the

gifted program. Along with the three full-time gifted classroom teachers, which are created from the general education budget, school principal reallocates funds to pay for a second full-time gifted resource teacher though Title 1 funds. The principal said,

> We have two full-time gifted resource teachers. They co-teach in the three full-time gifted classrooms. So, there are two adults in the classroom for literacy, just like the general education classrooms. It is the same philosophy of co-teaching as in the general education classrooms.

Also, the gifted resource teacher noted that the funding for two gifted resource teachers has helped with identification. She said, "When the principal first decided to have two full-time gifted resource teachers, instead of the allotted one full-time position, we went from 12 [students] being found eligible to almost 60." The gifted resource teacher attributes the increase to time and effort placed training teachers.

Investment in Training

Another cost has been the investment in training teachers. HP said, "We have spent a lot of time going to PDs [professional development] and obtaining the curriculum resources.[14] The school uses this across the board?" However, she also believes that the training has paid off, because student test scores have risen and so have the use of more rigorous instructional practices by the general education teachers. This investment has led to other schools coming to ESH to learn about the program so as to replicate it elsewhere.

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[14] The curriculum resources mentioned are Document Based Questions, Mentoring Mathematical Minds, Socratic Seminar, Michael Clay Thompson Grammar and Writing. All these resources are materials selected by the gifted office for use in the gifted program.

While hosting other educators can compromise other educational activities, hosting can also enhance the school's reputation and political capital.

Summary of Key Findings

This chapter brought forward the picture of E.S. Hughes Elementary School, which is a Title 1 school implementing a full-time gifted program. In this chapter, I presented HES's overall philosophy of teaching and learning, which contradicts the pedagogy of poverty orientation so typical in Title 1 schools (Haberman, 2010). HES provides children with access to rigorous instruction across the school, a safe and caring learning environment, and opportunities for teachers to actively engage students in learning. The reasons given for why school leaders implemented the program were school leaders felt that it was important to develop a "full-service" program for students in their school and they believed that they had the ability to provide these services to their students. School leaders also felt, along with parents, that keeping children in their community schools was a benefit to the children.

With a history and a reputation for strong fidelity of implementation, ESH has experienced numerous benefits from the program. They include greater access for students who qualify for the program and rigorous educational opportunities for students who fail to qualify for the magnet program but require a more challenging curriculum. An additional benefit is that gifted education has improved instructional practices throughout the school, as many teachers have adopted instructional practices associated with the gifted program. The principal and gifted resource teacher also described improvement in identification practices and improvements in students' educational

expectation. According to the principal and gifted resource teacher, the benefits far outweighed any challenges or opportunity costs.

The next chapter discusses the gifted program at a third Title 1 school, James Elementary School. The chapter covers the overall background of James Elementary School, the school's reasons for implementing the program, as well as the benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of operating the program. I follow the same organizational framework that I used for Winnifred and E.S. Hughes, and I use similar data sources for reported the results of my case study.

Chapter 7: James Elementary School

"If you're never exposed to it, then you can't say that they can't do it. You have to give them the opportunity." – James Elementary School Principal

The previous two chapters provided a detailed description of the full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools at Winnifred Elementary School and E.S. Hughes Elementary. This chapter examines another Title 1 school, James Elementary School, which also implements the community full-time gifted program. I follow the same section outline as the preceding chapters and use the same types of data sources to analyze the program.

School and Program Information: James Elementary School

James Elementary School (JES) is located in the more populated portion of the school system. It is located near major interstates but is situated in a small neighborhood where homes are $600,000 or more in value. On the outskirts of the community are large business and apartment complexes. The school is considered a medium-to-large size school with around 900 students and serves students in pre-school through fifth grade. There is a wide range of racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in the school. The majority of the school's population is Hispanic (70%), followed by Asian (13%), White (7%), Black/Africa American (6%) with the remainder (4%) being from other racial/ethnic backgrounds; the limited English proficiency enrollment at the school is 68%. The school is considered to be above average for its mobility rating, with close to 23% of the school population moving each year compared to the system mobility rate of 12%. About 80% of the students qualify for the free and reduced meals rate.

JES is led by the school principal who has been an educator for over 20 years and an administrator for over eight years, with five of those years as the principal of JES. There are two assistant principals and 100 instructional staff members. JES is a fully-

accredited school and its pass rates on the language arts and math state tests fluctuate each year. Science scores have been an area of concern because low scores in this area have affected accreditation in the past. Nonetheless, there is an upward trend in the number of students who pass the state tests with advanced scores.

The school offers a variety of programs to fit the unique needs of its students. The school offers a Head Start program and a Spanish foreign language program that is integrated into science and math. In addition, the school has programs to support English language learners, Young Scholars, special education and the full-time gifted program. The school uses a Responsive Classroom model, which fosters discussions about behavior, mutual respect and community, to create an environment where students feel safe, are nurtured, and have a sense of belonging (Responsive Classroom, 2018). JES receives Title 1 funds and uses these funds to purchase school supplies and pay for additional instructional positions, such as an instructional coach and math and literacy resource teachers.

The school uses Title 1 funds to support portions of the full-time gifted program through the staffing of support teachers. The gifted program at JES is implemented third through fifth grades and has been running for over ten years. According to the principal (JP) and gifted resource teacher (JGT), the last four years has seen the biggest growth in students opting to remain in the school to receive full-time gifted services. Two classrooms at each grade level have been dedicated to the full-time gifted classroom. Of the two full-time gifted classrooms, one is a typical full-time gifted class and the other is a language immersion class using the full-time curriculum. The make-up of gifted classes consists of all students found eligible for the school system’s magnet gifted program

while the rest of the class includes students exhibiting a need for more rigorous instruction but were not found eligible for the magnet program through central screening.

All grade-level teachers work together to plan for language instruction and review performance data to identify student strengths and areas of need. These conversations facilitate flexible grouping of students and gifted screening that occurs throughout the year. Since the full-time gifted curriculum includes math that is one year above a student's grade level, the classroom gifted teacher works more closely with the gifted resource teacher to plan math lessons and review student performance in math. JES relies heavily on the gifted resource teacher, who works full-time at the school, to facilitate instruction throughout the school. The gifted resource teacher provides professional development, models instructional strategies, helps to plan instruction for the gifted classrooms, runs the Young Scholars program, and works with the instructional coaches to support instruction across the school. The gifted resource teacher also serves as the screening chair for all gifted services.

Introduction to the School and Participants

I interviewed the principal (JP) and gifted resource teacher (JGT) on a beautiful fall day about five weeks into the school year. The grounds of the school were impeccably kept, gardens were blooming, and the school looked welcoming with the hallway walls lined with student work, clean floors, and classrooms that looked worked in, but tidy.

I first met with JGT in her classroom located out in the trailer section of the school. The room was decorated with a Harry Potter theme, had comfortable chairs, and anchor charts were hanging around the room. JGT is extremely passionate about her job;

she works 12-14 hours a day on the weekdays, 4-6 hours on Saturday and Sunday, mentors numerous teachers, creates family field trip for parents on the weekends and has been nominated for the state's gifted teacher of the year. My interview with her lasted almost one and half hours. When our interview was over, we walked down to the main office to meet with the principal.

The principal at JES is a former gifted and talented resource teacher. JP's answers during our interview were concise, and she showed a lot of passion for her work at JES, as well as, her goal of helping students to do their best. The sections below will bring forward how the work of JP and JGT have influenced the program at the school.

Pedagogy of Learning and Teaching

During my interviews with the school principal (JP) and the gifted resource teacher (JGT), two themes emerged about the pedagogy promoted in the school. These themes were quite similar to the themes identified in my interviews at the other two Title 1 schools in the study: meeting students' basic needs and challenging instruction.

Basic Needs

School leaders at JES believes that students need to have their basic needs met so learning can take place (Maslow, 1987). JP and JGT focused on the areas of food, clothing, shelter, safety, and relationships as examples of basic needs. Although the school does not have total control over all these basic needs, it provides support throughout the school to offset some of these challenges. For instance, across the school, all children have access to a free breakfast program. JGT said,

> Students who are hungry are not going to be able to focus and so forth. So, we now have a breakfast program. Not only do we eat the breakfast, but anybody who doesn't want one, we save it for later. I have a little snack table. I don't know if you noticed it. Then they'll eat it all by the end of the day.

The provision of food, regardless of whether a student qualifies for free and reduced-price lunch, helps to lower the hurdle of hunger as a learning challenge.

In addition to the nutritional program, the school believes that students need to feel safe to learn. This safety goes beyond the idea of physical safety – it includes building and developing a sense of personal value in the classroom and school, so children feel safe to take academic risks. JGT said, "Students won't care what you have to teach them until they know you care about them. So, it's true. You have to believe in them, and they have to feel that. Then they'll be good." Staff members nurture the sense of safety through the Responsive Classroom model. The school website reports that,

> The Responsive Classroom approach creates a safe, challenging, and joyful elementary school. The research-backed approach increases academic achievement, decreases problem behaviors, improves social skills, and leads to more high-quality instruction. The goal of the Responsive Classroom approach is to enable optimal student learning.

The Responsive Classroom environment helps to nurture a growth mindset for both students and teachers (Responsive Classroom, 2018).

JP also mentioned a need for students to have privacy. Because I had not heard of that expression as a basic need before, I asked her to elaborate. She said,

> Whether a child has privacy, which is an interesting concept I'm sure nobody talks about. But at our school, many of our families rent rooms. And they rent mattresses. So, parents are sleeping in the same room with their kids. They're seeing and hearing all types of things, whether appropriate or inappropriate. And so, they're exposed to a lot more. So, if you don't have privacy to decompress, or you don't have your own, that's some stresses that add to that…. We all need time to self-reflect. And we all need time to decompress. And you need to do that in a privacy, with no one is judging you or looking at you. And sometimes we take that for granted, that we can go into our room and close the door, and it's all yours. Or all the things that you love are around you, and you can just process.

She later said that the need for privacy is why she urges teachers to be flexible about the arrangement of desks and chairs. JP felt that when teachers give students a choice where

to sit – whether on the floor or in a quiet space with cushions – students have a chance to seek private space for reflection in a safe environment.

Best Instructional Practices

Both JP and JGT discussed what teachers need to do in the classroom to maximize instruction. JGT said, "Every child deserves a great teacher, but I think in our school, we are the difference between success and not." They both went on to explain what embodies a great learning environment, identifying characteristics more aligned with a pedagogy of plenty than the pedagogy of poverty. They felt that learning experiences should be differentiated and use high-quality curriculum that is not watered-down. The principal said,

> Differentiation is really about understanding that students are going to come to you at various levels of understanding and learning. And what you need to do is have your task at hand – and I always tell my teachers, "Do not water it down. The task is this. You need to scaffold it in a way that they can understand…. You start with the curriculum, and then you put in the provisions that they need." Whether it's visuals, repetition, explicit talk, time to process, whatever it is. That's how you would differentiate the lesson for them.

Both JP and JGT spoke about having high expectations and believing that children can do challenging, including complex problem-solving that involves critical and creative thinking. JGT said, "I would like them [the students] to think about how they're going to change the world. Start now and be problem solvers."

One area that JP and JGT were passionate about was that they felt that all students need to have a choice in their learning. By choice, they mean allowing students options about how they want to learn content, whether it be hands-on activities, independent work, collaboration with other students, or through discourse. JGT said,

> I think is really important is to help them discover their interests and passions on top of whatever else they need to learn. So, I've implemented an ongoing discovery project where they can research or create something of their own choice

> of a project in addition to anything that we may be doing. So, I hope that they'll feel empowered to take part in their own learning.

JGT further explained,

> I don't want them to be dependent on me. Obviously, I have some specific knowledge and some skills that are helpful, but I really want them to take ownership of their learning. I do believe that giving them a lot of choices is important so that they're excited about learning and, also, they're doing the work. It's not me. I'm just there to help sort of monitor and facilitate, but they guide their own learning.

These beliefs reflect the pedagogy of plenty philosophy where students are actively involved in their education via a student-center approach to learning (Haberman, 2010).

Reasons for Implementation

The historical reasons for the implementation of JES's program were not clear. The gifted proposal listed the various programs already implemented at the school, as well as, how the school would be dedicated to implementing the new gifted program with fidelity. But the proposal did not include specific reasons for why JES wanted to implement a gifted program. However, the proposal did state that staff were capable of providing gifted services. The proposal stated that the staff at JES were "highly qualified, dedicated, and [would] work diligently to establish a quality learning environment that challenges and enriches the lives of all students." The major strategies for creating such a learning environment were collaborative learning teams and professional development. The principal (JP) and gifted resource teacher (JGT) provided information about the current rationale behind the gifted program. The school, according to JP and JGT has a commitment to challenge and prepare students for the real world, a desire to keep students in the community schools, and a belief in the benefits of the program.

Keep Students in the Community School and Commitment to Services

Both JP and JGT discussed a commitment to providing gifted services in the community school. As the gifted resource teacher explained, “They deserve an opportunity to problem solve at the highest levels and remain with their own community.” A few years prior to JP and JGT arriving at the school, the school experienced a large outflow of students to the magnet program because the fidelity of the gifted program was weak. As a result, JP and JGT have emphasized revitalizing the rigor of the program so they can keep the children within the community school. The gifted resource teacher (JGT) added a personal reason, stating, “…when they leave, it breaks my heart. We invested all this time and energy, and I want to see them grow.”

Known Benefits of the Program

Another current reason for the gifted program is that the revitalized full-time program is thought to be beneficial or working well. JP drew upon her experiences at other full-time schools. She said, "It was exciting to see the kids thriving with that experience," so when she arrived at JES, she wanted to continue the program and strengthen it. School leaders view the full-time program as a way to advocate for children and to nurture the learning needs of a diverse student population, both those who qualify for the magnet program and those who do not but show potential for advanced learning. JP drew upon her experiences and said,

> I have a passion for gifted education. I was a resource teacher. So, I understand the need for it and the opportunities that we need to provide our children. So, when I was a classroom teacher, I was one of the first Young Scholar teachers. And once I had that training under the former gifted coordinator, it was just – my mind was open. Because I believed all my kids could do it. It was an opportunity – an experience that I was going to give them, that would provide them with some information about who they were, and what they wanted to be.

She further explained, “Our students deserve the best educational opportunities regardless of background. We take our role of advocate very seriously.” JGT also empathized this when she said, “that's a moral imperative to make sure that kids rise up and feel empowered to make decisions and change the world.” I further discuss this reason under the benefits section.

Benefits

When asked about the benefits of the gifted program, the principal (JP) and gifted and talented teacher (JGT), identified benefit quite similar to those identified by their counterparts at the two other Title 1 school included in the study: (a) broader access to challenging instruction, (b) gains in test scores used for accountability, (c) more reliable identification procedures, and (d) improved student mind-set.

Broader Access

Broader access to challenging instruction was a much-repeated theme in my interviews with JP and JGT. They emphasized that the gifted program provides opportunities for children to stay at the community school to attend the full-time program and it broadens access for children across the whole school. Interestingly, it was the latter benefit that JP and JGT continually returned to during our conversations. Neither they nor the documents about the gifted program listed benefits for the eligible gifted students in the school, other than that the program provided them with an opportunity to receive these services in their community school. What I took away from the conversations with JP and JGT is that the full-time program is doing what it is intended to do, so they focused on describing the spill-over benefits of the program. To other children and teachers at the school.

Both JP and JGT described how the gifted program has enhanced access to enriched services across the whole school. The program was viewed as an opportunity for all children. JP said,

> If you're never exposed to it, then you can't say that they can't do it. You have to give them the opportunity. And because they've never had the opportunity, you have to scaffold it in a way that they can understand it.

JGT viewed the program in a similar way when she said,

> We're making the difference in the community of this diverse group of learners. We're giving them opportunities not only now, but we're creating a pipeline for them to be successful in the future for middle school, high school, and beyond.

Each saw the implementation of the gifted program as providing new opportunities for students to access challenging curriculum and develop cognitive skills that will help them be more successful in the upper grades.

A commitment to broader access to challenging instruction is written in the school improvement plan and the school's Title 1 plan. JGT relayed that it is in the plan so,

> …that everybody will be using the gifted curriculum. We add more every year, but we've been pretty consistent about using the curriculum. So, that's the spill off is that we know that rigor and higher-level questions are good for everybody.

This year, the school also adopted the use of M2/M3, which are gifted K-5 mathematical units; Jacob's Ladder, which is a K-6 reading gifted program; the Caesar's English series, which is a vocabulary building program for grades 3-5; and Project Clarion, which is a K-2 gifted science curriculum. The adoption of these materials across K-5 shows how the school is committed to challenging instruction for its students. JGT noted that the general education classes are trying pieces of gifted curriculum and displaying the use of enhanced curriculum to parents. She reflected on the success in trying little pieces when

she said, “During the back to school night there was like Mind Maps everywhere. I was like, ‘That's good.’”

In addition to the spillover of gifted curriculum into general education classes, the school has committed to implementing an advanced math class at each grade level so as to expose children to a one-year advancement in grade-level math. This is not a norm in Lirah Central School District but an exception. The adoption of more rigorous curriculum throughout the demonstrates a commitment to providing broader access to challenging instruction throughout the school. Flexible grouping also provides an opportunity for more children to have access to gifted instruction if teachers see the need. As JP explained, "…if the gifted class has a student who’s in math who is lower, they can be flexed out into the gen. ed. [general education] class. And if the gen. ed. has someone who’s really good in math, they can be flexed in.”

Accountability

James Elementary School is not immune to the pressures of the federal and state accountability systems that have been in place for over fifteen years. Although these accountability systems pose a challenge, which is discussed more in the next section, some benefits have emerged from implementing the full-time gifted program. For example, without the gifted program, JES risked losing 50 students in each grade for grades 3-5 to the magnet gifted program, which is about 1/3 of each grade level. The loss of the students also meant a loss in passing test scores which could have grave effects on school accreditation. JP said, "Unfortunately, it's so sad that principals have to worry about test scores, but it is a reality. And the reality is what we're judged on. And that's so unfortunate, but it is a benefit when you get to keep your magnet-eligible kids."

The use of the gifted resources across the school has helped to increase test scores. JGT said,

> So, we're starting to track the data more closely, but just in one small anecdote like when they did decimals in fourth grade, the year before, and they didn't use Pet Sanctuary, the scores were lower than when we used Pet Sanctuary…. But we found that we are seeing some growth in that area.

The school principal and gifted resource teacher also noted that assessments that go beyond state multiple choice tests have shown growth. JP said,

> You can add more kids to the program because your scores will go up because your kids are thinking critically. So, it doesn't matter what the question is on the test, and they're able to analyze it because they have that thought process.

JGT concurred, “I feel like not just the standardized scores, but also on performance tasks and being able to do open-ended projects that that growth has been there."

Identification

Broader access also comes from the more inclusive identification strategies used for the gifted program. The school has moved to a system of advocacy by providing students with more opportunities to show rigorous learning and using work samples to strengthen the screening process; these practices go well beyond the traditional methods used for identifying students for gifted programs. I asked JGT to walk me through the screening process and the rationale for the process, and she spoke about starting with a question to teacher and went on to say the following,

> "Can they do the work?" So, I found that there were students that could benefit or could do the work or close to doing the work. It's really just looking at their work products and their thinking and the fact that they're learning really quickly…but we're just very glass half-full.

According to JGT, this shift in identification practices has increased the number of students who are eligible to receive gifted services at the school.

The new screening practices have also changed the demographics of the students enrolled in the gifted classes. JGT and JP both mentioned that when they arrived at the school the gifted program did not reflect the school's demographics. The majority of the students in the program was White or Asian and middle class. JGT said,

> So, I was like, 'How did this happen? That's not our school. That's part of our school, but we're – that's the opposite of closing the achievement gap.' They were looking at test scores, but they weren't looking at the other measures and putting much weight to it. So, that bothered me. So, it wasn't like that the next year.

The principal also mentioned that the school is making progress in diversifying the gifted enrollment, though she acknowledges that sometimes teachers need to be reminded that the most important criterion is whether students can do the work. She noted, "…there are still teachers who say, 'Well, that child has behavior issues.' Or, 'That child doesn't have the language.' And we're like, 'Yeah. But that child has something, so put him in there." According to the principal and the gifted resource teacher, this form of persistent advocacy has paid off. The current gifted enrollment reflects the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price meals, and JGT reports that the program is equitable for gender and race. JGT says she is purposeful in checking to make sure the numbers align because she views it as a problem with screening policies and advocacy if it does not align.

Student Mindset

Another benefit of the program is the change in children's perspectives on coming to school and working at challenging levels. JP and JGT spoke about children not always believing in themselves. JP spoke about shifting children's mindset to empower them.

> If your parents tell you, 'Oh, you're never going to grow up and be anything,' or degrade you in any manner, that all has impact…. What they think of themselves and what they can do. A lot of our kids will say, 'No. I can't do that.' And we have to change [that] mindset.

One of their goals has been to change children's mindset, to raise students' expectations for themselves and to challenge children to tackle more difficult work.

JP and JES told me that the gifted program has improved children's beliefs about themselves and their academic ability. They argued that students have responded to improved fidelity in the gifted program and the adoption of more rigorous instruction across the school by raising their own expectations for learning. When I spoke with JP about students' expectations, she was very passionate about this benefit. She said,

> I would have to say that the children now – versus the children who, when I first got here – my first year – who are now in fifth grade, they are more confident. They are confident, and they are able to articulate. They're able to advocate. You can see that when a program is done with fidelity, and some expectations regarding around what it should be, children's mindsets have definitely shifted, in a fact that they're more confident about what they can do.

JGT concurred, "They feel that they can do it and it's important for them to feel that." The advocacy of school leaders and this shift in student thinking reflects a belief system that contradicts the pedagogy of poverty, which does not allow for students to create goals and see themselves as high achievers capable of doing hard work.

Challenges

My interviews with the principal (JP) and gifted resource teacher (JGT) identified three major challenges to implementing and sustaining the gifted program: (a) maintaining the fidelity of the program, (b) fostering high expectations for learning among staff, and (c) accountability pressures. These challenges are similar to those identified in the other Title 1 schools in the study.

Fidelity

Even though the program has been established for ten years, students began to leave the school due to fidelity issues with the gifted program. Five years ago, only four

students remained at the school to attend the full-time program. However, the full-time gifted program has experienced a renaissance over the last four years. The school has seen significant growth in the number of students who opt to stay in the full-time gifted program. In 2012, only four eligible students remained at the school, and now there are about 50 students per grade level.

The addition of a new principal with a background in gifted education, as well as, a new-to-the-school, but experienced, gifted resource teacher, has helped strengthened the gifted program; they identified the weaknesses in the program and committed to strengthen the program. JGT said,

> My goal is to make sure that those classes are using the curriculum with fidelity, that there is a collaboration and articulation, when possible, to make sure that we're supporting each other, and we are. I think it's interesting because I have parents who have kids in the third and fourth with multiple children. They'll say, 'Are you guys working – did you write this part because they're doing the same thing in the other class.'

The school has the data to show that their investment has paid off. JP said,

> You can see that in our data if you look at our gifted data, and the number of kids, and how we evolved over the years. Absolutely. Because even the parents are trusting that we can educate their children at these higher levels, so they're choosing not to go to the magnet program. They're choosing to keep them here at their local school. That's huge. That says a lot.

Both JP and JGT said that fidelity of implementation is not easy, but it is worth the results. As the interview was coming to a close, JP said, "I think that the community-based, full-time gifted program is probably one of the best programs that I have ever seen in a school district. It provides students with an opportunity to really access that higher-level thinking." According to both the principal and gifted resource teacher, a school needs committed school leaders to articulate a vision for gifted instruction and follow through with it, especially in a Title 1 school.

Belief Shift

The program renaissance that the school has been facing is also attributed to a belief shift amongst school staff members. The belief shift is not isolated to the actual full-time program, but to the commitment to providing access to challenging instruction for all. JP said,

> Teachers had the mindset of nurturing and low-level curriculum. And starting there, and trying to scaffold up. And then, those who were in the magnet program – which was mostly Asian males – and that's who they were putting in. So, if you looked at the trend and the history, all you saw were Asian males, females, whites**…** There was a stereotype. And there were no other ethnicities in the program until that second year when I started putting other kids in. And they were questioning, "Well, why would you do that? They can't do that." And it's like, "Well, let's give them a chance." So, it was definitely a mindset not only on the community side but on the staff side, as well. So, that took a while to change.

According to the principal and the gifted resource teacher, raising teachers' expectations for students is an ongoing challenge to the program.

JP said that raising expectations took a lot of persistence. She would have conversations with teachers and say, "This is the reason why the kids are not accelerating because they've never had these experiences. But we're going give them those experiences." It was also about tapping into the school's instructional leaders – coaches, reading and math support teachers, and the gifted resource teachers – to carry the message and nurture actions of commitment across the school. JP said, "It's really about getting the right people on board, to understand the vision of, 'Everybody can access this curriculum.'"

One year after JP's arrival, she hired JGT, and she was a major contributor to helping the staff shift to thinking about rigor for all, as well as changing the identification process. JGT has worked with staff – for the full-time program and across the school – by planning with them, co-teaching, and providing professional development. The

investment in supporting teachers has helped JES take on the vision of "access for all." This investment, though, has been a challenge during the tight budgetary time and is discussed further in the opportunity cost section.

Accountability

The pressures to meet accountability requirements are high at JES. Both JP and JGT used words like "urgency," "constraints," "expedite," and "on-track" to describe the pressures of meeting state passing standards. These pressures exist across the school, as well as, in the full-time gifted program. JGT spoke about how many students are second language learners, and they do not always pass the state standardized tests because the test is also a language test. Also, many students leave the country for weeks, which impacts how student do on the state tests. JGT said she has learned not to panic when it comes to those situations because it is only one way to measure student knowledge and often the next year in the program the students end up passing.

JGT acknowledged the pressure to meet assessment goals and the potential conflict with the school's pedagogical standards. She said,

> Unfortunately, it comes down to whether we meet accreditation, we make those scores. So, we don't teach to the test, but we use the test to make sure that we're aligning our teaching so that they're ready for that. So, as many wonderful things as we did today, and we're doing in the class and we are doing so many open-ended and interesting tasks, we still always have to make sure that we're following the standards of learning and we're getting them ready for the way it's going to look when they get tested. Because it doesn't matter how many wonderful things I'm doing if my kids don't pass at the end. We were in warning for science the year before, but this year, this past year we got ourselves out, barely. We just made the benchmark for science. So, we still have a lot to do.

While the school seeks to sustain the school's pedagogical standards, maintaining those standards can be difficult given accountability pressures.

This pressure is not isolated to the full-time program, but it is also pressure to achieve accountability standards across the school. JP said,

> You have to be very patient and nurturing. Our children require time, and time is not a luxury that we have as teachers. Because there's a set amount of days, a set amount of hours. And then you have deducted lunch, and specials, and recess. So, you're really crunched for time. So, teachers want to expedite the curriculum. And with our children, you can't expedite through the curriculum.

JGT concurred, “So, trying to just help them get basic skills and language skills while trying to help them learn content while trying to give them opportunities for choice and rigor. It's just a very challenging dynamic, for sure.”

Opportunity Costs

Like the other interviews conducted for the study, the principal (JP) and gifted resource teacher (JGT) at JES found it difficult to identify “lost opportunities” associated with the implementation of the gifted program. While they did identify costs, they characterized these costs as good investments. Major costs identified during the interviews were budgeting and implementation of a gifted immersion program.

Budget

Budgeting for the program is a major cost to the school. These costs are borne largely by the school’s Title 1 budget. JP is given a specific amount of funds to support the Title 1 program. To fund the gifted program, JP divert funds from remediation type programs to enrichment programs and she calls it “creative funding.” JP said,

> You have to prioritize what’s important to you. And my predecessor spent most of his money on the other side. I decided that, in order for us [to succeed],… You have to spread the wealth, and you have to do it in an equitable way. So, when I realized that we have this population of kids that are proficient, that are just stuck, and we just need to entice and move them along.

JP’s belief on how to move a school forward has strengthened academic learning across the school. She has invested money for staff members, supplies, and professional

development to promote challenging instruction in the gifted program and throughout the school.

The school principal reallocates positions to staff six full-time gifted classroom teachers and use Title 1 funds to staff a full-time gifted resource teacher, where typical funding from the school system is allocated for a .5 position from the gifted and talented office. The cost to provide the school with full-time gifted teachers is outlined in the school's Title 1 plan that is submitted to the district's Title 1 office and approved by the leadership team. On the plan, it notes that the gifted resource teachers will work with general education teachers to foster enrichment activities like a robotics club, attend and plan for collaborative learning team (CLT) meetings to support enrichment and contribute to data talks, and teach weekly critical and creative thinking and problem-solving lessons in the primary grades. Also, the gifted resource teachers work with the full-time gifted classroom teacher to plan and implement interventions, conduct screening for the full-time program, create awareness of gifted behaviors to help advocate for children across the school and work with parents to promote the program. In the past, the role of the gifted resource teacher was to provide services outside of the full-time program, but the school investment for additional time for full-time gifted resource teachers enables the school to go above and beyond the standard resource teacher practices.

JP also makes decisions about how to spend Title 1 funds for curriculum resources and professional development. She decides whether to divert funds to intervention programs or use it funds to support gifted resources and training for instructional strategies across the school. One example of how the funds were used in the

past was when she purchased all K-3 classrooms the Project Clarion science units, which is a component of the gifted curriculum framework. The Project Clarion units are used instead of the typical district science materials. The investment in these materials shows how JP believes in the results that access to this curriculum produces. JP also spoke about the cost to replenish items. She said,

> Although we have been a community full-time school for over a decade, the resources were not there… So, I had to spend a lot of money catching us up on all the resources… So, that's definitely money that you need to trade off from somewhere to make that work.

JP noted she also uses funds to support teachers to attend professional development sessions and conferences, as well as, paying for subs so teachers can meet in full-day collaborative sessions, above and beyond typical the weekly hour meetings.

Two-Way Immersion Program

Another cost is the opening of a second full-time class in grades three through five, which is not typical across the school system. While full-time language immersion programs are not unique in the district, gifted immersion programs are rare in the district. JP argued,

> Parents and students have to choose between, 'Do you want to stay in your two-way immersion classroom? Or do you want to go to magnet gifted program?' So, the students would want to go to the gifted program, and then the two-way immersion numbers would be really low for staffing.

The school opted to open the second gifted class because if they did not, they would lose more students to the magnet program. They also felt that these students would be better served by a community program that included immersion.

Since JES is a community based full-time program, there is more flexibility on how the school shapes the program. JP and JGT spoke with parents and asked them if

they were interested in a gifted two-way language immersion program. JGT said, “They cried tears of happiness because they thought that was great.” This investment has helped keep the numbers in the language immersion program high, as well as, keep the students within the community school. JGT relayed that opting to open a second class, which is the Spanish language immersion class helped to “recognize and support the primary language of our students which is Spanish…which is respectful of our community.”

Summary of Key Findings

The last chapter presented the case of James Elementary School, which is the final school of this collective case study. During this chapter, I gave a basic overview of the school's philosophy of teaching and learning. The school believes in making sure that students basic needs are met and that their students are presented with learning opportunities that are high in rigor and student-centered. These beliefs transfer to the gifted program, as well as the general education program in the school. Although there are recognized benefits to the program, the school faces challenges in implementing sustaining the program. These challenges include overcoming past fidelity of implementation issues, raising staff members' beliefs about what students can do, and dealing with pressures from federal and state accountability requirements. A challenge and the school's most significant opportunity costs come from budgeting for the program, but the school views the rewards as worth the investment. School leaders also have invested in a combined language and gifted class.

In the next two chapters, I combine the cases of central office and the three schools that implement this unique program to develop a comprehensive collective case study. In addition to going over the reasons, benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs, I

provide conclusions for which this study aimed to answer. I also go over the limitations of this study, implications for future research, and a summary of the study.

Chapter 8: Collective Case and Conclusions

In this chapter, I use the four unique cases of central office and three Title 1 schools that implement the community-based, full-time gifted program to develop a cross-case analysis. I first look at the cross-case beliefs about teaching and learning as it relates to the study's conceptual framework, the pedagogy of poverty. I then examine the reasons why school leaders implement the community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools, and the associated benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of the program across all four cases.

Given the collection of sites and participants, Table 8.1 reviews each of the names and codes that I used in each case. I use these codes to distinguish the cases and the participants of the study.

Table 8.1

Review of Codes

Location	Location Code	Administrator/ Principal Code	Gifted Resource Teacher Code
Winnifred Elementary School	WES	WP	WGT
E.S. Hughes Elementary School	ESH	HP	HGT
James Elementary School	JES	JP	JGT
Central Office	CO	CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4	Not applicable

Pedagogy of Learning and Teaching

Although the study did not have a specific research question about the school leaders' beliefs about learning and teaching, I asked a series of questions to ascertain their beliefs about pedagogy, especially as it pertained to Martin Haberman's (Haberman,

2010) description of the pedagogy of poverty. According to Haberman, a pedagogy of poverty dominates the instructional practices and curriculum experiences by low-income students, so I wanted to be able to contrast that philosophy with the philosophy of the community-based, full-time gifted program in the district's Title 1 schools. During the interviews, I specifically asked questions geared to compare the pedagogy of poverty with school leaders' beliefs about teaching and learning, including – *What is the teacher's role in the classroom?; What is the student role in the classroom?; What impacts student learning?; What are the prerequisites for learning and living? What instructional strategies are important to learning?;* and *What is an ideal learning environment?*. Table 8.2 provides an encapsulated view of the themes that emerged from these questions at each of the locations.

Table 8.2

Overview of Learning and Teaching

CO	WES	ESH	JES
Safe Relationship Building	Basic Needs • Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs • Safety, security, and community for students and staff. Purposeful Instruction	Rigorous Instructional Practices Positive Culture-Safe and caring environment Engagement	Basic Needs Best Instructional Practices

These themes can be broadly characterized as meeting students' basic needs and engaging students with rigorous instruction. I discuss these themes in further detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

Basic Needs

Across all the cases, school leaders said that students need to have their basic needs met in order to learn in the classroom. In particular, the basic needs of food, shelter, safety, and feeling of being a part of a community surfaced, themes consistent with the research on children in poverty identified by other studies (Berliner 2009, 2013; Gorski, 2012, 2013). While participants acknowledged that their students face serious hardships at home, including the deportation of parents, lack of food, and homelessness, participants did not list those factors as reasons why children cannot succeed. Rather, and contrary to a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010), school leaders thought that they could put in place social and emotional supports to guarantee that student needs would be met at school so that students would be capable of performing academically at high levels.

Two consistent characterizations of those supports that emerged, and the ones participants felt they had the most control over, were helping students feel safe and helping students feel part of a community. Promoting a feeling of safety went beyond physical well-being to include emotional safety and community. Emotional safety, according to research (Gorski, 2013), is developed in a learning environment when teachers believe in each student, promote a sense of community, and support the emotional well-being of each student. According to the central administrators and each of the school leaders interviewed, an important goal was to create such an environment by promoting strong, supportive relationships between students, peers, and teachers.

All three schools adopted the Responsive Classroom model, which focuses on creating a safe, challenging, and joyful environment in school (Responsive Classroom,

2018). The model challenges the pedagogy of poverty's belief that teaching and learning are individual processes, separate from relationships inside and outside of school. Rather, Responsive Classroom practices focus on nurturing relationships, so as to create an environment that helps students to put aside some of the hardships that they may face at home and to feel safe to take academic risks (Gorski, 2013; Responsive Classroom, 2018).

Rigorous Instruction

The second most significant theme that emerged from these questions is a belief that all students need access to highly-engaging, student-centered, rigorous instruction. Schools that have a culture that mirrors the pedagogy of poverty create a school culture that often stereotypes poor students as less capable than their more economically advantaged peers and thus unable to benefit from more rigorous and engaging educational opportunities (Gorksi, 2012, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Howard, Dresser, & Dunklee, 2009; Knapp and Associates, 1995). However, across all the interviews, participants used examples that contradicted the low expectations for students that characterizes a pedagogy of poverty; rather, school leaders argued that their students, despite coming from low-income households were competent and capable of excellence, beliefs that echo findings from other studies of low-income schools where teachers have high expectations for student performance (Gorski, 2013; Knapp & Associates, 1995; Silva Mangiante, 2011).

One of Haberman's false syllogisms of the pedagogy of poverty is, "Basic skills are a prerequisite for learning and living. Students are not necessarily interested in basic skills. Therefore, directive pedagogy must be used to ensure that youngsters are

compelled to learn their basic skills (p. 83).” Across all my interviews, no one mentioned that basic skills are a prerequisite of learning, and one principal, HP, said, “We can’t wait for every basic skill, it will come through high instructional strategies.” When asked what children need to learn, participants said that learning is natural for children; it is embedded within us; that when you are born, you start learning; and teachers serve as a facilitator for learning. Each school leader acknowledged the teacher’s central responsibility to help students achieve excellence, a belief consistent with the research on teaching (Gorski, 2013; Silva Mangiante, 2011).

When asked about the type of instruction students need, participants spoke about student choice, hands-on learning, independent work, collaborative time for academic discourse, problem-based learning, access to technology, conceptual knowledge versus specific facts, and real-life connections. School leaders and staff in the study rejected a deficit model of instruction and instead embraced what has been called an asset model of instruction focused on higher-level thinking and learning connected to children’s lives (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995). Because these school leaders believe that low-income students can benefit from the same rigorous instruction as their more advantaged peers, they urged teachers to use rigorous practices, often restricted to gifted education (Knapp & Associates, 1995), with all students in their schools.

While all the central office administrators and school leaders interviewed mentioned that Title 1 schools face greater pressures with meeting state accountability standards, with four participants using the word "urgency" to describe the pressures that they face to meet standards, no one suggested that teachers should return to drill-and-

practice to promote higher test scores. Rather, participants acknowledged using remediation strategies when assessments showed a need to go back to reteach, but they cautioned remediation strategies were not a substitute for rigorous instruction. The emphasis on rigorous instructional strategies contradicts what research has documented as common in many of Title 1 schools across the county, which emphasize the need for remediation before giving students enrichment activities or accelerated learning (Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Knapp and Associates, 1995).

Reasons

The first research question to the study examined the reasons behind why school leaders at Title 1 schools opt to implement a full-time gifted program. Through the examination of school documents and individual interviews, I explored the historical and current reasons for the implementation of the program in the district and the three schools included in the study. School leaders gave similar reasons to why the community-based, full-time gifted program was started and continues to be implemented. Table 8.3 provides an overview of the reasons broken down by each site.

Table 8.3

Overview of Reasons for Implementation

CO	WES	ESH	JES
Keep Students within the Community Moral Responsibility • School can educate the students • Opens access Accountability Political Pressures	Keep Students in the Community Moral Responsibility	School is Capable of Providing Services Expand to Range of Gifted Services Keep Students in the Community Known Benefits of the Program	Committed to Providing Challenging Gifted Services Keep Children in the Community School Known Benefits of the Program

I encapsulated the themes into three categories: (a) to keep children within the community, (b) the school felt it had a moral obligation to provide the services to its students, and (c) the strong reputation and benefits of the program in the district. Some of the themes that emerged had associated subthemes. In the subsequent paragraphs, I explain how the themes and subthemes tie together, and I support them with research and examples.

Keep Children within the Community

The greatest reason why schools opt to do the community-based, full-time gifted program is that schools wanted to keep their community students in the local school instead of having them go to the magnet program in another school. Multi-layers of explanation emerged from this theme. One layer was a belief that students should have the opportunity to remain with their community. Across my interviews, I heard a variety of reasons why changing schools could be a hardship for families: because siblings would

be on different schedules; children would more likely have to take a longer bus ride to get to school, instead of walking or a short bus ride to the community school; children would have to leave their friends who they have been in school with since kindergarten; and children and parent support groups would change. These changes, the school leaders argued, can be stressful for children and their families. A gifted resource teacher emphasized this point when she said, “We have a lot of different countries that are represented at our school, so a lot of the students feel very comfortable that this is their home base.” Although Title 1 schools have a reputation for lacking necessary supplies, buildings that are run down or in need of repair (National Commission on Teaching America's Future, 2004), and fewer high-quality, experienced teachers (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Gorski, 2013), the three schools included in this study did not fit that profile. The schools were in excellent condition, had access to basic supplies, and the teachers within the program were highly-qualified.

A more pressing reason for implementing the program was that it was an effort to keep children at the community school due to accountability pressures associated with the state’s policies and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In every interview, school leaders described the demands of federal and state accountability measures with words like *urgency*, *pressure*, and *constraints*. When schools lose their top academic achievers to the magnet gifted program, it places the community school at a higher risk for not meeting accountability requirements. The loss of students can be up to 25% of their enrollment, all high achieving, which can significantly affect a school’s accreditation pass rates. Moreover, the community-based,

full-time program satisfied Title 1's policy that schools implement practices to improve student learning (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Elmore, Abelmann, & Fuhrman, 1996; Fuhrman, 1999). According to central administrators and school leaders, since students began to stay in their local schools, each of the school's pass rates increased, which also met the funding stipulations of the federal government in the form of proof of student achievement through the use of accountability measures to assure that the funds were used effectively (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009).

Moral Obligation

School leaders also felt they had a duty to serve children within the community school. I characterized this as a moral obligation to students. When I spoke with the school administrators, central office administrators, and gifted resource teachers, they recognized that students who have high ability have different learning needs (Marland, 1971; National Association for Gifted Children, 2015b; VanTassell-Baska, 1998), and all emphasized that students should not have to leave their community school to receive services that they need. Across all schools, participants felt that school staff had the capability to provide services to their magnet eligible children. ESH's gifted program proposal argued the importance of being a "full-service school." "This full-time [gifted] program," the proposal stated, "will allow us to continue to build our school's reputation for excellence and let our community know that we are indeed a full-service school, able to meet the needs of all our students."

In addition, study participants viewed the community-based, full-time program as a way to open access for gifted services to children who are not eligible for the program, but whom teachers believed are capable of performing at higher levels. The central

administrators and school leaders also viewed the community-based, full-time program as a way to correct underrepresentation within gifted programs, which is a wide-spread problem across many school districts and schools in the country (Cross & Dockery, 2014; Ford & Harmon, 2001; Levy, Heissel, Richeson & Adams, 2017; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Reis, 2015; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Yoon & Gentry, 2009). By implementing a gifted program in a Title 1 school, they believed that they could broaden access to rigorous and engaging instruction to students who too often are denied such opportunities.

Strong Reputation

Another reason why school leaders opted to implement the community-based, full-time gifted program was due to the strong reputation of the program. Administrators noted that principals who are interested in implementing the program in their school often refer to the reputation and benefits associated with programs at other schools. The only school where this was not a reason for implementation was WES because it was the first school to implement the program. Central office administrators described the political pressure to authorize new programs due to the positive reputation of the program in the district. A central office administrator (CO2) spoke about this when she said, “Principals see other principals doing it, and they're successful. And that's how the community full-time gifted programs have grown...” Central office administrators also noted that schools face parent and supervisor pressures to implement the program because of the widespread beliefs about the benefits of the program. The strong reputation of the community-based, full-time gifted program serves as an important reason for its implementation.

Benefits

Across the three schools and central office, school leaders identified were similar benefits of the community-based, full-time gifted programs, and many of the benefits overlapped with the reasons why the program was implemented. Table 8.4 provides an overview of the benefits broken down by each site.

Table 8.4

Overview of Benefits

CO	WES	ESH	JES
Access • Choice • Broader Access • Across the School Instructional practices • Changes instructional practices for the better • Increase CLT • Professional development	Broader Access • Rigorous instruction • More inclusive identification • Flexibility Instructional Improvements Across the School Mindset	Broader Access • Actual implementation of the program • Flexible grouping Instructional Strategies • Professional development • CLTs/Co-Teaching Identification Student perception of school	Broader Access • Within the full-time classroom • Across the school Accountability Identification Student Mindset

The four themes that emerged as program benefits include various levels of program access, more inclusive identification procedures, a change in instructional practices, and a positive change in mindset. In the subsequent paragraphs, I tie together the themes and support it with research and examples.

Range of Access

The theme of access appears to be the most significant benefit as it was the most prevalent theme identified by participants across the entire study. There were three subthemes to access that emerged: actual implementation of the program; broader access to the full-time program; and expansion of the program across the school. These themes are consistent with the most current thinking in gifted education under the talent development model, which focuses on the development of emergent talent and potential by offering students opportunities to access a broader range of services (Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015).

Actual implementation.

A benefit of the program is access based on the actual implementation of the full-time gifted program. As discussed in the reasons section, schools opt to do the community-based, full-time program because they want to keep the children in the school. By providing the program in the local school, students have the opportunity to access full-time gifted services without having to leave their community school. The program provides high-ability students in Title 1 schools with the opportunity to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to develop their talents, an opportunity denied high achieving students in most Title 1 schools (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Reis & Renzulli, 2010; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Schmidt, Burroughs, Zoido & Houang, 2015; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). The actual implementation also gives families a choice of where they want their children to attend school, which is a luxury that many students who live in poverty do not have (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014). If students had to attend the magnet school to receive services, children might be divided from their

siblings and friends, disrupted their teacher support structures, and weakened supports provided to their family.

Broader access to the class.

The second subtheme under access is the broader access to the full-time program for students not eligible for the magnet program. Every central office administrator and school leader mentioned this benefit; many program proposals and other school documents also listed broader access as a benefit. Within each community-based, full-time program, the students who are qualified for the magnet program are automatically eligible for the community program. Often in the community-based program, there are not enough magnet-eligible students to fill the class, so the school identifies students who show high potential and places them in the full-time class as well. Many schools had a pool of students who were supported by the Young Scholar model, which is an early-grade intervention meant to challenge students academically identify potentially gifted students (Horn, 2015).

School district documents make the case that the community program provides "another avenue to access gifted services to students who may need to practice and strengthen their basic skills but have the capacity to think, reason, and problem solves on very high levels." The broader access aligns with the talent development model, which is the most current recommendation for gifted services by researchers (Dai, 2010; Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015; Subotink, Olszewski-Kubillus, & Worrell, 2011). By nurturing student academic growth, teachers can prepare more students for more challenging instruction in the upper grades. One of the gifted resource teachers

(JGT) said, “We're giving them opportunities not only now, but we're creating a pipeline for them to be successful in the future for middle school, high school, and beyond.”

At each of the schools, the principal and gifted resource teacher described ways that they sought to broaden students’ access to the full-time gifted program. First, was full-access to the full-time program where students were placed in the full-time class every day and all day. A second form occurred through flexible grouping based on a student’s strength and needs, a practice recommended by scholars of gifted education (Feldhusen & Moon, 1992; Neihart, 2007; Tieso, 2003) For instance, a student in the gifted class who needs more support for English might “flex out” for language services, but be “flexed in” for instruction in advanced mathematics. Winnifred’s principal (WP) said, “We really are a pipeline of success for them [students]. And even if they don't do it full time, they still are able to access it even part time, and that really opens a lot for them." Across all schools, the participants felt that being a part of the elementary gifted program opened more educational opportunities for students in the future.

Implementation across the school.

Across all three schools, the community-based, full-time program initially started out as a single classroom for each grade level in third through fifth grade, but it expanded beyond those classrooms and gradually spread across the whole school. Since the implementation of the full-time program in each of the schools, school leaders developed a vision to offer gifted services to all students by adopting portions of the full-time curriculum in other classrooms. General education teachers not only use the parts of the gifted curriculum and instructional strategies in their classrooms, but some schools offered additional opportunities for enriched instruction, such as once-a-week drop-in

lessons from the gifted resource teacher and the creation of STEM labs. The principal at E.S. Hughes said, “The program has exposed the rest of the school to the curriculum. We have exposed more children to higher levels of learning.” Researchers argue that low-income students can benefit from these forms of instruction, though they are often denied the opportunity to do so (Gorki, 2013; Haberman, 2010).

The widespread implementation of gifted curriculum and practices across each of the Title 1 schools contradicts the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995). School leaders promoted the belief that achievement difficulties for children who come from low-income household was not so due to personal deficiencies but rather opportunity inequalities (Breen and Johnson, 2007; Rank, Yoon, & Hirschl, 2003). Central administrators, principals, and gifted resource teachers argued that exposure to challenging instruction led to an increase in the number of students passing state tests; higher educational expectations among teachers, students, and community members; and a higher number of students with access to gifted services. In an age of accountability, where the primary goal of education is to meet a minimum mandated mark for student achievement, these three schools opted to prioritize resources to achieve federal and state accountability goals based on rigor and higher expectations, which is the opposite of what of what is typically found in high-poverty schools (Lauen & Gaddis, 2012; Plucker, J., Burroughs, N., & Song, R., 2010; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012; Ross, 1993; VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

Inclusive Identification

Another benefit to the community-based, full-time program is that it allows for a more inclusive way to identify students. The students who are eligible for the magnet

program are automatically eligible for the community-based, full-time program, but since there is typically not enough students to fill the full-time class, the program opens spots for additional students. The openings enable a pathway for students who may not be found eligible using traditional methods but would still benefit from gifted services. Gifted identification strategies often rely heavily on test scores, which often limits the identification of low-income children for gifted services due to test biases (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Peters and Engerrand 2016; Slocumb and Payne, 2000; Warne, Anderson, and Johnson, 2013). While each of the schools continue to use testing to screen students for the magnet full-time program, local eligibility guidelines permit a greater emphasis on teacher observation and the collection of student work samples.

Across all schools, the participants noted how the implementation of the Young Scholars program paved a path for higher levels of services for more students. Because teachers were able to nurture and develop students' cognitive skills in earlier grades, more students were identified as potentially benefiting from gifted services. At the same time, teachers were able to observe children's performance when presented with higher-level instructional challenges, as well as, students had more opportunities to produce work samples that demonstrated their abilities that could be used in the screening process. These practices are in line with gifted research which recommends identifying potential early and programs to nurture student talents (Cross & Dockery, 2014; Horn, 2015). These practices, coupled with alternative methods of screening, created a higher probability of identifying a broader range of high-ability students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Peters and Engerrand 2016).

As a result, the community-based, full-time program also has long-term benefits for identifying students who are historically underrepresented in gifted services, in particular for low-income students. Students who are eligible for the full-time community program, but not the magnet program, have opportunities to further develop their academic skills and portfolios within the full-time class. The time spent in the community-based, full-time classroom allows for further data collection that can be used for future identification for the magnet program. While students are in the full-time class, teachers can collect additional data, such as work samples and teacher observations, that may counterbalance lower ability tests scores which are more prevalent with students from low-income households than their more affluent peers (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Peters and Engerrand 2016; Slocumb and Payne, 2000; Warne, Anderson, and Johnson, 2013). Each of the gifted and talented resource teachers said that non-eligible students who spent time in the community-based, full-time program, often were identified later as eligible for the magnet program.

Change in Instructional Practices

School leaders described the initial implementation of the community-based, full-time program as targeting services to students eligible for the magnet program or identified as potentially benefiting from gifted services. The full-time program at each school provided a magnet-like program in a community setting, without children needing to leave their community school. Although schools that implemented the full-time gifted program initially opted to serve a select group of students who qualified for gifted services, over time, the program had a more substantial impact on instructional strategies and educational expectations across the school.

Barr and Parrett (2007) maintain that "the most significant element separating high-achieving, high-poverty schools and their low-performing counterparts is a willingness to change the manner in which instruction is delivered" (p. 183). School leaders at all three schools committed themselves to not only implementing the gifted program with fidelity but to changing the manner of instruction for all students. They purposefully infused gifted curriculum and instruction in the general education classrooms by promoting concept-based instruction, student debates, independent inquiry, higher level questioning, and critical and creative thinking. While such practices are considered to be best practices for gifted classrooms, they are more rarely attributes of general education classrooms (Marland, 1971; NAGC, 2016; Tomlinson, 2003; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). Haberman (2010) calls these attributes of instruction a pedagogy of plenty, where teaching involves students with real-life issues; engages students in concept-based instruction; promotes student planning and goal setting; encourages students to reflect on and revise their work; and facilitates students use of technology to access information.

In addition to changing the curriculum and instructional strategies, the three schools relied heavily on the power of working in collaborative teams. In these collaborative teams, grade-level teachers worked with the gifted resource teacher, reading and math coaches, or instructional coaches to plan for differentiated instruction and receive professional development. As reported by the gifted office's programming documents, "collaboration that occurs…results in general education teachers learning about and then using powerful instructional methods common to the full-time gifted program." These teams helped to extend the benefits of the gifted program to students

throughout the school; they also provided general education teachers with ongoing teacher training and opportunities to confront myths about the exclusivity of gifted learners, myths that perpetuate the cycle of underrepresentation.

Change in Mindset

The final theme about the benefits of the community based gifted program that emerged is the change in mindset across the school for teachers and students. Since the schools have embedded more gifted strategies across the school, the principals and gifted resource teachers reported that there was a general shift in teachers' mindset about learning. Teachers shifted their belief from students need basic skills before they approach higher-level activities to a belief that students can learn basic and advanced skills through higher-level, more challenging activities. All three principals mentioned that the shift occurred once teachers saw the benefits of the program's curriculum and instructional practices, not just for students eligible for gifted services but also for non-eligible students. Participants also reported that many students also experienced a changed mindset, where they started to believe in themselves, felt happier to be in school, and were more engaged in their learning. Although a positive change in mindset was a benefit, changing those mindsets was also a challenge for school leaders, teachers, students, and community members, and I discuss this and other challenges in further detail in the next section.

Challenges

Across each case, participants were enthusiastic about the community-based, full-time gifted program located in the district's Title 1 schools. However, even with the best of programs, there were challenges associated with the implementation and continuation

of the program. Across the three schools, central office administrators and school leaders identified a range of challenges, some of which required continued effort to address. Central office administrators presented a more extensive range of challenges than the school leaders, partly because central office administrators had a broader perspective on the program at multiple local schools, while school leaders identified challenges unique to the needs of their school. Table 8.4 provides an overview of the challenges broken down by each site.

Table 8.5

Overview of Challenges

CO	WES	ESH	JES
Mindset and Buy-in • Leadership vision • Teacher • Buy-in Fidelity of Implementation Accountability Staffing Student grouping Political Pressures from Parents.	Staffing Community Understanding Size of School	Mindset Parent Understanding	Fidelity Belief Shift Accountability

Six themes emerged as program challenges: fidelity of implementation, mindset and buy-in, staffing, accountability pressures, student grouping, and community factors. In the subsequent paragraphs, I discuss these themes and support them with research and examples.

Fidelity of Implementation

Sustaining commitments to implementing the program with fidelity is a challenge for Title 1 schools. While the school system uses program standards and a self-study tool to help ensure that schools maintain fidelity and meet their proposed program goals, other factors, including budget constraints, staffing and accountability pressures (all challenges I discuss later), can undermine the fidelity of the program, particularly in Title 1 schools. Similar to gifted programs in general though, limited access to teacher training and curriculum resources can also weaken the quality of a program (Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010; Ford, 2014; Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994). Central administrators especially identified the importance of ongoing professional development and renewed curriculum materials as important to maintaining the fidelity of the community-based gifted programs.

The community-based, full-time gifted program has the same curriculum requirements, higher-level instructional strategies, extended standards, and the same teacher training expectations as the magnet, full-time program; however, there are no dedicated funds to support the ongoing professional development and curriculum improvement in these schools. The district's office of gifted education has sought to address these challenges by developing a robust professional development series for teachers – gifted teachers and general education teachers –
and providing teachers with curriculum resources after they attend the training, two components of successful gifted programs according to research (Corcoran, Fuhrman, Belcher, 2001). However, the school system has faced significant budgetary difficulties and has cut back on funding to support professional development, and the demand for

training is much greater than the supply, which is common in gifted education (Callahan, Moon, & Oh, 2014; NAGC, 2015a). To address the shortfall in professional development opportunities caused by budgetary cuts, principals rely on the gifted resource teachers to do in-house training during collaborative planning meetings or in-service days, which is not at an additional cost to the school.

Sustaining fidelity can be especially important in Title 1 schools. If parents believe the community-based program to be inferior to the magnet program, they are unlikely to keep their children in their local school. If the local school loses a large proportion of its top-academically achieving students to the magnet program, the school's passing percentage rates for accreditation is likely to suffer. JES, as described previously, faced this problem over five years ago when the majority of students eligible for the full-time program left to go to the magnet school because the fidelity of JES' gifted program was low. While the program has increased fidelity, as well as increased the number of eligible children who participate in the community-based gifted program, it required a renewed commitment to professional development and the adoption of rigorous curriculum, commitments thought to be fundamental to high-quality gifted programs (Corcoran, Fuhrman, Belcher, 2001; NAGC, 2015a).

The importance of meeting the challenge of maintaining fidelity was acknowledged by the central office administrators and many school leaders, especially at WES and JES. While there was general agreement that the community-based, full-time gifted program is a worthy program that all schools should consider implementing, participants cautioned that broader implementation should not come at the cost of fidelity. Several participants contended that it is not realistic to have all schools

implement the program if the school is not ready to commit to doing so with fidelity. The principal at WES said,

> As a parent and as a principal of a school that's implemented this, I think that we risk watering down the integrity of the program before a school is ready to implement it. I think the school needs to be the one that buys in. I think the school leadership needs to buy into it, and I think the teachers need to buy into it, for it to truly retain the integrity of the program.

Across the interviews, none of the participants said that implementing the program was exceptionally difficult, but participants did take an exceptional commitment from the administrative staff and teacher leaders to move the program forward and to maintain its fidelity.

Mindset and Buy-In

One of the greatest challenges identified by participants was the process of initially changing teachers, students, and parents minds about the gifted program. The community-based, full-time programs are grassroots programs that require school leaders to advocate for the program and then guarantee teacher, student, and parent buy-in for the program. This meant convincing stakeholders that their school could provide and that students could acquire basic skills through access high-level learning. Participants argued that it was usually the principal who took on this challenge, by presenting a vision for implementing the community-based program and for extending the gifted curriculum and practices beyond the full-time classroom to the entire school. CO2 spoke about the power of leadership,

> You need principal and teacher leaders that embrace these practices, have a vision of what kids can do, have a growth mindset community. And then the spillover effect so that all kids are getting a higher, more engaging… higher level, more challenging and engaging curriculum, and all kids are achieving at a higher level.

Across the study, participants described the shift in beliefs about the program and expectations for teaching as not something that came quickly, but something that happened gradually as the school leadership promoted a new mission to open access to rigorous instruction to all students.

After setting the vision, the school leadership had to transform the staff's beliefs about instructional practices and then garner buy-in amongst the staff to reap the benefits of not just the full-time gifted classroom experience but the benefits of a broader shift in educational expectations across the whole school. JP spoke about changing teacher's mindsets as a challenge because, prior to the shift, teachers had the mindset that students needed low-level curriculum because they lacked academic background knowledge, needed to meet the state standards, and pass the high-stakes state exams. She would hear questions like, "Well, why would you do that? They can't do that." And her response was, "Well, let's give them a chance."

The culture of low expectations and subsequently low-level instructional strategies mirrored that of the pedagogy of poverty, a predominant mindset in many Title 1 schools across the country (Haberman, 2010). School leaders had to nurture a culture of believing, that despite economic hardships, children can learn at high levels. The nurturing came not only from heightened expectations by school leaders but also the professional development that gave teachers the tools to support the vision. The district provided two courses gifted education specifically underrepresented populations, and all teachers had free access to the classes. By providing comprehensive, multicultural professional development to teachers, the district was able to gain buy-in from teachers

and encourage policies that made access to gifted services more equitable (Banks, 2007; Castellano, 2010; Ford, 2011; Lewis, Rivera, Roby, 2012).

The shift in thinking and buy-in was not isolated to teachers and related staff, but it also extended to students. When teachers increased instructional rigor, students needed to learn how to be more active in their learning and have higher educational expectations for themselves. The support structures and emotionally safe community environment that each school nurtured allowed students to take on these new academic challenges and take risks (Gorski, 2013; Responsive Classroom, 2016). Additionally, the increased expectations of teachers, along with their assurances that children could do more rigorous work, helped the children to engage more confidently in rigorous work. Because teachers started to believe that children could perform at higher levels of thinking, it helped children to believe that they could do it, too. As several studies demonstrate, when teachers have higher expectations and confidence in their students' abilities, their students perform in ways that contradict a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010; Gorski, 2013).

Staffing

Every participant in the study acknowledged that staffing is a challenge for the community-based, full-time gifted program, one which can require difficult tradeoffs and budgetary decisions. The first subtheme relates to funding because LCSD has faced significant reductions to how programs are staffed due to mandatory cuts in the district's budget, which in turn impacts the number of staff members a principal can hire. The community-based, full-time gifted program does not receive targeted funds to staff its program, though the central office does provide limited funding to partially support the

staffing of gifted resource teachers. As a result, principals need to be creative in how they reallocate funds to support the program.

Most of the principals use Title 1 budgets to supplement positions to support the gifted program. Doing so is consistent with Title 1 goals, which urge educators to use funds to provide an enriched and accelerated educational program and to promote scientifically-based instructional strategies and challenging academic content (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c). In addition, principals “trade-in” or “swap out” positions, such as switching out a general education classroom teacher position for a full-time gifted teacher position or trading an ESOL position for a full-time gifted resource teacher. WP repeatedly spoke about how she hopes her staffing can be maintained, despite budgetary pressures. Nonetheless, she has alternative plans staffing if positions continue to be cut, which include shifting to a multiage classroom or larger class sizes, just so the gifted program can continue.

Another challenge with staffing is finding teachers who are qualified to teach the program. Neither the state nor the federal government requires teachers of gifted students to have a gifted endorsement, finding highly-qualified teachers can be difficult (Callahan, Moon, & Oh, 2014; NAGC, 2016). While every school must complete for a limited pool of highly-qualified teachers, including gifted teachers, attracting highly-qualified teachers to a Title 1 school can be a challenge (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Despite the regular challenges associated with position movement, maternity leaves, resignations and retirements, the community-based, full-time gifted programs must also compete with the magnet schools in the district for qualified teachers.

WP spoke about how she purposely develops a pipeline of teachers who are certified for two reasons: (a) if she has an opening, she can move a staff member who is not in the gifted program into the open position, and (b) she sees the training as a way to benefit children who are not enrolled in the full-time program because the teacher uses those skills in the general education classroom. Central administrators and other school leaders also argued the importance of developing strategies to address the fundamental challenge of staffing the community-based, full-time gifted programs.

Accountability

A challenge to the implementation of the gifted program in Title 1 schools is helping administrators and teachers deal with the threat of failing to meet state standards. Typically, in Title 1 schools, the fear of not passing state tests is high, and this fear often results in an emphasis on low-level, repetitive learning opportunities similar to those emphasized by a pedagogy of poverty (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Jones, 2007; Knapp, 1995). CO1 referred back to how the pressures of accountability also relate to the teachers' mindset and instructional decisions. CO1 said,

> It's not intentional, but it's just a mindset that has kind of developed as an unintended consequence of the accountability system that you almost start to develop a mindset of low expectations. And that's what you're focused on – is hitting kind of that minimal performance target whereas if you take a step back and say, "Well, maybe the way that we're really trying to target this is maybe we're sending bad messages to kids, and maybe we don't have high enough expectations that we're messaging to students. And maybe the ways that we're going about trying to ensure that students master these foundational skills actually are just perpetuating students not being able to master these skills."

During the study, all participants discussed how accountability pressures imposed from the ESEA's requirements to raise proficiency levels and close achievement gaps creates a sense of urgency for administrators and teachers to increase test scores. But the

challenge, they explained, was to continue to use high-level engaging activities instead of falling back on low-level, remediated tasks as the “go-to” for instruction.

Although the fear of not meeting accountability measures was high, school leaders at the three schools noted that the use of community-based, full-time program curriculum within the full-time classroom as well as the adoption of gifted curriculum resources across the school has improved achievement and narrowed the achievement gaps on the state-mandated tests. While the school leaders at WES and ESH acknowledged the accountability pressures, they did not discuss these pressures at length. Central office administrators and school leaders at JES, however, addressed at length how accountability measures pose a challenge for the community-based, full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools. For the school leaders at WES and ESH, the fear of accountability may not have been as high as it was for the school leaders at JES, for WES and ESH are not in jeopardy of losing accreditation, whereas JES test scores are teetering at the edge of satisfactory performance. Moreover, the gifted programs at WES and ESH are considered to be strong and had a reputation for high fidelity for many years, while JES’s program has regained strength in the last couple of years.

Student Grouping

Historically speaking, the way schools have grouped students has brought about much controversy, where decades ago tracking students based on perceived ability was a tool to segregate schools further based on race and economic class (Oakes, 1985). Schools still face critical questions about how students are grouped, and the community-based, full-time gifted program has faced these questions, as well. To address concerns about tracking, as well as to broaden access to gifted services, the school system uses a

model of flexible grouping within the community-based, full-time schools; this model is typically used in elementary schools and is more widely accepted as an appropriate approach to grouping students (Feldhusen & Moon, 1992; Neihart, 2007; Tieso, 2003). The model is flexible in nature where children move in and out of the gifted program based on academic strengths. For the community-based, full-time program, this allows students who do not qualify for the magnet program to receive the full-time services via an alternative method of screening students. For many low-income students, flexible grouping is a vehicle for access (Horn, 2015; NAGC, 2015a; Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018).

Most of the central administrators felt that addressing the perceptions of student grouping can be a challenge in schools, especially in Title 1 schools where student grouping may create a division between the teachers of the children in the gifted program and the teachers of children in the general education programs. School leaders at WES said this was a large challenge for their school due to the school's small size. There are only two classrooms per grade level, which meant that 50% of the students were in the full-time class and the other 50% were not. WP found a way to alleviate the feeling of "haves and have-nots" by implementing the curriculum in both classes. School leaders at each school emphasized the importance of using gifted strategies and curriculum across the entire school so that every child had access to higher-level instruction. Although teachers in the general education classroom use gifted strategies and curriculum less frequently than teachers in the full-time class, broader access to higher-level instruction softens the feelings in the school of "haves and have-nots."

School size also proved to be a challenge for school leaders at JES, but not because it was small but because it was large. Because of the school's size, the school housed another special program for students. The school had two special programs – the community-based, full-time gifted program and a language immersion program. Historically, the two programs were kept separate, but staff and parents raised concerns about the language immersion students not being able to participate in the gifted program. When the school had enough students who were eligible for the community-based school program and the language immersion program, school leaders decided to open a second full-time gifted classroom so that the children could access both the immersion program and the gifted program. Although this meant the school needed to find more teachers who qualified to the teach in the community-based program, it allowed the school to retain their students and provide them with the services for which they qualified.

Community Factors

Other the challenges that school leaders face involve community misconceptions about the community-based, full-time gifted program. While most school leaders felt that their school communities mostly supported the program, they acknowledged that it was sometimes a challenge to help the community understand what the program was about and how the program impacted other programs, including general education. The schools used activities funded through the Title 1 budget and their gifted resource teachers to conduct meetings with the community about identification procedures and the goals behind the gifted program. All of the participants described a need to use a proactive approach to keep the community informed and updated about the program. The gifted resource teachers in JES, WES, and ESH also discussed a need to encourage parents to be

advocates for their children and the gifted program, since at times parents did not take full advantage of the program or were not as actively supportive about the program within the school community.

Participants also identified misguided beliefs about the magnet gifted programs and the community-based gifted programs as a challenge. First, the magnet, gifted program has a long history within the school system, with various conflicting opinions. Some proponents of the magnet program fear that the opening of the community-based, full-time gifted program waters-down the magnet school program because fewer children attend the magnet school and therefore there are smaller peer groups with which to work. In addition, some parents perceive the magnet program as more prestigious, so no matter how great the community-based program is, there are parents who will opt to go to the magnet program because it is seen as more selective and having greater status. Even when parents choose to send their children to the community gifted program rather than the magnet program, they sometimes resist the inclusion of students who are not magnet-eligible in the community-based class. Parents of children in these community programs fear that allowing non-eligible students to participate in the program will lower the quality and rigor of the program.

According to the participants of the study, school leaders continually face the challenge of explaining and justifying the community-based, full-time gifted program to parents. Because school leaders at each of the schools included in the study believe that they operate high-quality gifted programs that are not watered-down versions of the magnet program, they seemed confident in their ability to convince the community of the merits of their programs. Indeed, one central administrator even argued that some of the

community-based, full-time gifted programs have greater fidelity than some of the magnet school programs.

Opportunity Costs

The opportunity costs, or trade-off decisions, that need to be made to implement the community-based, full-time program had the most varied of themes across all the questions that I asked during the interviews. One reason for the range of answers was that central administrators and school leaders had difficulty identifying any alternatives to implementing the community-based, full-time gifted program. On the contrary, each was fully committed to the program and unwavering in their support for the gifted program. The commitment could be viewed a "means of forming human capital that will yield benefits throughout the working life of an educated person" (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985, p. 171) because the program creates opportunities for low-income children, who in the past were left out of gifted programs. While they could identify "costs," participants often also identified these costs as challenges to the program, so there is some overlap between the challenges discussed earlier and the "opportunity costs" identified by participants. In general, I found that the costs associated with implementing the program were higher for the school principals than for the central office staff and gifted resource teachers because the principals are directly responsible for the gifted program at their school.

Within the opportunity costs, there were some intersecting themes, but since each school also has unique needs, some singular themes emerged in my analysis. I present these singular themes as well because I think they are plausible opportunity costs in other Title 1 schools that might implement a gifted program. Table 8.6 gives an overview of

the themes associated with opportunity costs, and I break them down by each unique case.

Table 8.6

Overview of Opportunity Costs

CO	WES	ESH	JES
Budget Time	Start-up Human Resources Buy-in	Staffing Investment in Training	Budget Two-Way Immersion

Across the cases, the overlapping themes that emerged were budget limitations, staffing decisions, and various investments in the fidelity of the program, such as time and training. Two unique themes that emerged were the political cost associated with acquiring buy-in and conflicts with special programs that run concurrently with the full-time gifted program.

Budget Limitations

Although central office administrators and school leaders saw the opportunity costs associated with budget limitations as of varying importance, all acknowledged that the program comes at a financial cost not covered by mandated gifted funds. These costs are borne by the district and local schools because the community-based program does not have funds specifically allocated to it by the federal, state and local budgets (NAGC, 2009). Typically, school administrators make decisions to reallocate funds using their Title 1 budget and then work with central administrators to reallocate discretionary funds to pay for additional teachers, curriculum resources, and staff training. A central theme in the interviews with central administrators and school principals was the need to be

creative in how they reallocate their funds to support the program – including swapping positions to make it happen.

Compounded by the lack of gifted funds is the budgetary challenges the school system has faced for the last eight years. The budgetary challenges have forced Lirah to cut back on staffing, freeze salaries, reduce benefits for employees, and reduce programs, but the community-based, full-time gifted program has not lost momentum. In fact, the number of schools opting into the program has increased with 1-4 schools joining each year. While these cutbacks were not explicitly identified as opportunity costs, they may well represent tradeoffs between some district programs and the gifted program, especially if any cutbacks or reduction in programs occurred so that the community-based, full-time gifted program could continue to be supported.

Staffing

Although staffing is related to budget costs, I note staffing as a separate theme because it was large enough to be mentioned in some regard at every site, either as an aspect of budgetary decisions or some aspect of human resources. Principals noted that they do not receive additional funding to staff the community-based, full-time programs, unlike the district's magnet programs, which have allocated funds to support the gifted curriculum and the classroom teachers. As noted previously, principals use the district's general education staffing allocations to support the full-time gifted classroom teachers, so technically the classroom is staffed by replacing a general education position with a gifted education position. Principals also use reallocated local and Title 1 funds to "purchase" support teachers like the instructional coach, math and reading teachers, and gifted resource teachers, whom all have roles in supporting the community-based, full-

time classroom. Under the Title 1 funding allocations, this is allowed for it meets some of the programming goals of the policy (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c).

School principals appeared to try to limit any opportunity costs to the general education program resulting from their staffing of the gifted education program. For example, all three Title 1 schools rely heavily on the gifted and talented resource teacher not only for support in the gifted education program but for support in the general education program, too. The gifted resource teacher's job expectations include working with students in the lower grades, providing professional development for all teachers, and screening children for gifted identification. For each of the schools in the study, the school principal viewed the gifted resource teacher as an instructional leader for the school and relied on their gifted resource teachers to help support the full-time program through collaborative planning, co-teaching, or professional development, which went beyond the typical duties of a gifted resource teacher.

The gifted resource teacher was also crucial in ensuring an inclusive identification process. This meant that the gifted resource teacher spent greater amounts of time working in the general education classroom to nurture talent, conducting observations, and collecting work samples to use for screening purposes. The time spent modeling and collecting alternative forms of identification data provided general education students access to instructional strategies and curriculum atypical for in children living in poverty compared to their more affluent peers (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Peters & Engerrand 2016).

The school system specifically allocates funding for all schools to have a half-time gifted and talented resource teacher at each school. At JES and ESH, the school

principals believed that these positions were important enough for their entire school program to use reallocated funds to “purchase” more time for the gifted resource teacher. At ESH, there were two full-time gifted resources teacher positions, and at JES there was one part-time and one full-time gifted teachers. Due to the small size of the school, WES does not employ a full-time gifted resource teacher, but the principal uses the resource teacher the same way WES and ESH – to support the full-time gifted program but also to extend these instructional practices and curriculum to the entire school.

Investment in Fidelity

The budget and staffing opportunity costs have a direct impact on the fidelity of the gifted program, because, without an adequate budget and staffing, program fidelity would suffer. Since central administrators and school principals have identified are workarounds for budget limitations and staffing costs, schools have an opportunity to implement the community-based, full-time gifted program, but there are still additional investments that school principals must make to ensure the fidelity of the program.

Like any program, school principals must make decisions about how to allocate time, human resources, and materials to ensure that the goals of the program are met. At the inception of each community-based, full-time gifted program, LCSD relies on a program proposal tool to outline what these costs are and request information about how the school aims to deal with these costs. On the program proposal, schools are asked for an initial plan to prepare teachers to teach the full-time classes and a long-term plan to develop teachers as the program continues. The plan involves selecting classroom teachers who commit to attending professional development. The professional development focuses on curriculum resources and teaching strategies, the social-

emotional needs of gifted students, serving underserved populations, and identification tools. Training teachers to implement these services help to alleviate misconceptions and biases of giftedness, under-identification of students from poverty and other underrepresented populations, and the use of inappropriate instructional strategies (Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010; Ford, 2014; Piirto, 1999; Siegle, 2001).

The financial costs of professional development are borne not only by the school but also by the central office, though the central office covers most of the costs for providing gifted training in the school district. In addition to financial costs for professional development, the schools face potential opportunity costs associated with sending teachers to a full-days' worth of training; sometimes training involves an entire grade-level team. However, central office administrators and school leaders appear to believe that investment of having teachers out of the building for a full day pays off because the teachers are learning how to properly provide services to students, which sustains the fidelity of program (Brulles, Saunders, & Cohn, 2010). Moreover, as described previously, school principals also believe that investments in professional development help to spread the benefits of the gifted program to other students in the school.

Assuring fidelity also requires investments in curricular materials and other resources. Although the district provides some materials through the professional development that it provides to teachers, the majority of the costs are borne by schools that implement the program. Historically, in a Title 1 school, the choice is between low-level, remediation materials or higher-level, higher engaging curriculum. These costs are borne by a school initially, when the community-based, full-time gifted program is

implemented, and annually when materials need to be renewed or updated. Across all three schools, the principal not only opted to provide more challenging curriculum and resources for each full-time gifted class but across the grade levels. Doing so supported the fidelity of the gifted program and extended the benefits of these investments to students in the general education program.

Buy-In and Associated Political Risks

In the challenges section, I spoke about obstacles that the schools face when it comes to acquiring buy-in for the gifted program. Promoting buy-in comes with political risks for principals because they are challenging assumptions about teaching and challenging the way the school operates. In the age of accountability, which place enormous amounts of pressure for schools to improve performance and close achievement gaps (Barr & Parrett, 2007; Duncan and Murnane, 2014), principals take a risk when they attempt to convince teachers and supervisors that the investment in rigorous opportunities for children is academically better than the typical low-level, remediated, teacher-directed instruction that is found in many Title 1 schools (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter, & Rogers, 1990; Knapp and Associations, 1995). A central office administrator (CO1) said, "It takes some belief that it's okay to take risks and it's okay to maybe miss those performance targets right away because we're trying something different." Other participants also acknowledged a risk for Title 1 principals who seek to implement the gifted program, but all felt that it was worth it.

These political risks often take the form of convincing supervisors, teachers, and community members that potential opportunity costs associated with the community-

based, full-time gifted program are either worth it or limited. School principal discussed the need to convince supervisors that the program needs to continue despite budgetary concerns. In the face of many program reductions across the school district, JES, WES, and ESH continue to implement the program, even at the cost of other programs. One example is how WP decided to decrease the number of English Language teachers she hired, which changed the formatting of how EL students received services. When questioned about the decision, WP used data to show that the change in staffing has not negatively impacted EL students, while helping to sustain the gifted program at the school.

Another example of managing opportunity costs was identified by school leaders at JES, where they adjusted the way their community-based, full-time gifted program and language immersion programs were run. Prior to the adjustment, parents needed to decide between the two programs because children could not attend both, which created a conflict between the programs. To minimize the opportunity costs for parents, school leaders decided to open a new type of community-based, full-time gifted program, one which included the inclusion of practices from the language immersion program. JES was the only school in the district to take on this risk but did so to maintain fidelity of both programs without having to lose students and reduce the opportunity costs involved in choosing between the two programs for parents.

The perception of opportunity costs can sometimes be minimized when principals are proactive. Although principals have the flexibility to decide how to re-allocate funding, they must get approval from their supervisor and directors of human resources. This approval, according to central office administrators and school leaders, often is

weighted on school performance. The principal of WES confirmed the importance of school performance when she said, "the closer we can get towards 100 percent [pass rate], the more people will back off and just say yes to my trade request." JP, WP, HP each spoke about how they used achievement data, like state standards tests, reading and math inventories, and performance assessments to show how the investments in the gifted program are supporting the needs of not only the gifted children but all children across the school. They also used political capital amongst stakeholders to encourage parents to advocate proactively for the gifted program central administrators. The political risks that the principals take to implement the program can come at a cost to their reputation, but after speaking with the principals about the benefits of the program, they believed these risks were both worth the rewards and manageable.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I conducted a cross-case analysis of the central office and the three schools that I selected to examine the implementation of the community-based, full-time program. I presented the cross-case analysis of how central administrators and school leaders described their beliefs about teaching and learning and compared and contrasted those beliefs to the study's conceptual framework of the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010). I then explored the reasons that central administrators and school leaders said they implemented the community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools, and I examined their descriptions of the associated benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of the program across all four cases. In the next chapter, I answer my research questions, present my overall conclusions, describe the practical implications of my findings, identify limitations of the study, and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 9: Final Conclusions and Discussions

In this final chapter, I present the overall conclusions for the four research questions under investigation; these questions focus on the reasons for, perceived benefits of, challenges of and costs of implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools. After I present the conclusions, I delineate the limitations of the study, present implications for practice, and discuss implications of the findings for future research.

Overall Conclusions

At the onset of this study, I made the argument that students who live in poverty do less well in school than their more advantaged peers because of inadequate school resources and access to quality educational opportunities; high-ability, low-income students who are seldom identified for gifted programs are especially vulnerable to underperformance due to the absence of rigorous learning opportunities (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997; Cross & Dockery, 2014; Engle & Black, 2008; Gorksi 2013; Ladd, 2012; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Educators' low expectations, culturally-biased or restrictive identification procedures, and culturally-biased or restrictive services all contribute to the underachievement of students who live in poverty (Adelson, Dickison, & Cunningham, 2016; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Reis & Renzulli, 2010; Schmidt, Burroughs, Zoido & Houang, 2015; VanTassel-Baska, 1998). However, as demonstrated in this study, this need not be the case. In the school system and three Title 1 schools examined in this collective case study, school leaders implemented a community-based, full-time gifted program that substantially improved the educational opportunities afforded their low-income students.

The study was constructed to build knowledge of the intersection of poverty and student's access to gifted education. Specifically, the study attempted to understand the reasons why schools elect to use non-standard pedagogical practices in Title 1 schools via the community-based, full-time gifted program and the benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of doing so. In this study, I interviewed central administrators and investigated three schools in the school district that implemented the community-based, full-time gifted program to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What are the reasons expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff for implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools?

RQ2. What are the benefits expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ3. What are the challenges expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ4. What are the opportunity costs expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?

The design for the study was a qualitative, collective case study that used a purposeful sampling method of atypical or extreme cases – in this study, the selection of a school district that supports the implementation of gifted programs in Title 1 schools and three schools that implemented the program with high fidelity. The ten participants

interviewed for the study worked with the community-based, full-time program and various documents provided rich information to better understand the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). The study examined four cases: interviews with the central administration about the gifted programs in Title 1 schools and three Title 1 schools that had implemented the program, Winnifred Elementary School, James Elementary School, and E.S. Hughes Elementary School. For each case, I gathered and analyzed information pertaining to the research questions and used literature to support emerging themes. I then used a cross-case analysis approach that compared and contrasted each case and developed themes to answer the research questions. I also connected my findings to the literature about educational opportunities for low-income children and identified where the findings either supported current research or provided new directions for research.

Based on the themes from the cross-case analysis (see Table 9.1), I developed conclusions for each of the four research questions, as well as a description of the pedagogical and teaching philosophy at each school. While I did not have a research question about pedagogical beliefs, I obtained information about these beliefs because it provided a context for understanding why school leaders implemented the gifted program in Title 1 schools, what they considered to be the benefits of doing so, and how they characterized the challenges of operating the program. Although participants of the study did not identify many opportunity costs associated with the implementation of the program, they did describe some of the costs associated with the program and ways in which they sought to minimize the costs for children in the general education program.

Table 9.1

Cross-Analysis Themes

Pedagogy of Teaching and Learning	Reasons	Benefits	Challenges	Opportunity Costs
Basic Needs-Safety and Community Rigorous Instruction	Keep Children within the Community Moral Obligation Strong Reputation of the Program	Range of Access Inclusive Identification Change of Instructional Practices Change in Mindset	Fidelity of Implementation Mindset & Buy-In Staffing Accountability Student Grouping Community Factors	Budget Staffing Investment in Fidelity Buy-In and Associated Political Risks

The conceptual framework that I used for the study was Martin Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty, which describes ritualistic thoughts and behaviors about how students learn in high poverty schools. The ritualistic behaviors of the pedagogy of poverty are deeply connected to what teachers believe students can or cannot do, and uses basic, low-level styles of teaching that often stunts learning, widens the achievement gap, has low-expectations for students, and does not foster an intrinsic value of learning (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Gorski, 2013; Haberman, 2010; Knapp & Associates, 1995). The beliefs of school leaders, whom I interviewed in this study, counter the pedagogy of poverty. Rather, as demonstrated in the first column of Table 9.1, central administrators described the importance of meeting students' basic needs and providing students with rigorous learning opportunities. School leaders describe a pedagogy of teaching and

learning that assumed all students could strive academically at a higher level in a rigorous learning environment, especially if coupled with the school supports for meeting student's basic needs of safety and emotional wellness, despite the many hardships students from poverty face.

Reasons for Implementation

Case studies are designed to understand the "why" of a phenomenon, and this study aimed to understand why schools elect to use non-standard pedagogical practices in Title 1 schools by implementing an optional full-time gifted program. The impetus behind the community-based gifted program came from community schools losing their top performing students to other schools, in particular, to the magnet, full-time gifted schools. This posed a threat to accreditation for the community schools, especially for Title 1 schools where the stakes were higher to pass state tests required by the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. School leaders at the Title 1 schools wanted to keep their high-performing students so that those students' scores would contribute to school performance on state assessments, and if the community schools started a gifted program similar to the magnet program, they could retain their students and have a better success rate for the state's accreditation requirements.

In addition, school leaders at the three schools that I studied described a moral obligation to implement the community-based, full-time gifted program for the children in their schools. The loss of students was of interest to participants because it can be viewed in a way that schools are not able to serve the needs of all its children. Participants felt that their staff were capable of providing these services and that students

should not have to leave the school because of a lack of local access to gifted services. In most cases, participants could also point to other Title 1 schools that had successfully implemented the program, reaffirming their beliefs that such a program could be successful at their school. Moreover, many participants also identified the burden that changing schools can create for children and their families. When students leave the school, they also sometimes leave part of their support structure, such as siblings, prior teachers, and friends whom they have known since kindergarten. This sense of a moral obligation to meet the educational needs of their students aligns with current education research on poverty that highlight's responsibility of educators to help all their students achieve excellence (Gorski, 2013; Silva Mangiante, 2011).

Benefits

The most overarching theme about benefits was how implementing the community-based, full-time gifted program increased students' access to these services. At first, the gifted program in the schools specifically targeted students in grades 3-5 who qualified for Lirah's magnet, full-time gifted program. Because the community-based, full-time program gave children a choice to stay within the community school and receive the services for which they qualified, instead of requiring them to go to the magnet school, it increased the number of low-income students who took advantage of the gifted program. Across all three schools, the program met its initial goals achieve, which was to provide access to full-time gifted services for children in their community school. However, the program turned into something more substantial than originally planned because it expanded its services to more students by increasing access within the

full-time classroom to non-magnet eligible students and offered variations of gifted services across the school.

First, each school expanded access to students who showed high ability but who were not identified eligible using the district's traditional screening methods for screening, which relied heavily on testing. Since there were not enough students who were magnet-eligible to fill the full-time classes, the schools needed to find additional students. Each school conducted an internal screening, which allowed for more flexibility when identifying students because they were able to place greater weight on work samples and teacher observations. These procedures also provided more opportunities for parents and teachers to advocate for students they considered to be potentially gifted or talented in some way (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018). Given that all three schools had strong Young Scholars programs, which is a program to nurture academic potential in historically underrepresented populations (Horn, 2015), the school's gifted screening committee had relevant work samples and teacher observations that served as a counterbalance ability tests scores. Also, the commitment to the Young Scholars model meant that early grade teachers received training in the identification of gifted behaviors, as well as, encouragement to serve as advocates for their students (Horn, 2015). Research on gifted education has found that such procedures and programs allow more students from underrepresented populations, in particular students living in poverty, to access gifted services (Olszewski-Kubillus & Thompson, 2015).

As the full-time program increased in strength and reputation at each school, gifted instructional practices and curriculum spread to the general education classrooms. Although the duration and intensity of the curriculum and instruction strategies in the

general education classrooms were not equal to those in the gifted classrooms, the adoption of aspects of the gifted curriculum and instruction gave more students access to high-level curriculum, as opposed to low-level, remedial tasks which are common practices in high poverty schools (Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2010; Gorski, 2013; Knapp & Associates, 1995). Central administrators and school leaders explained that while the schools did not identify all students as "gifted," the most teachers adopted the belief that the gifted instructional practices and curriculum resources were suitable for all students.

Over the course of implementation, the principals shaped a vision in the school that all students need access to high-level, high-quality curriculum that uses real-world problem solving, concept-based instruction, and academic discourse among students. Tied to the vision was a set of policies that increased the likelihood of the successful adoption and implementation of gifted instruction and curriculum by general education teachers. The gifted resource teachers, instructional, math, and reading coaches, and the full-time gifted classroom teachers worked in collaborative learning groups with their grade level teams to support the use of gifted resources and strategies in the general education classroom. Teachers also received professional development to strengthen their skills with the curriculum and practices, which is too often not available to teachers across the country (National Association for Gifted Children, 2009). Although the professional development gave teachers tools to implement the curriculum, it was the actual implementation of the curriculum that helped teachers buy-in to the school's vision and to change the mindset and practices of what instruction should be in Title 1 schools. According to the principal at each school, once teachers saw the benefits of more rigorous instruction in their classrooms, teachers raised their expectations for students.

Challenges

The community-based, full-time gifted program in the three schools under review faced multiple challenges, particularly accountability pressures, changing mindsets and gaining buy-in for the program, addressing staffing and budgetary limitations, and promoting grouping practices. Title 1 schools face enormous pressure to meet federal and state mandates (Duncan and Murnane (2014), and often in Title 1 schools, the pressures result in students facing more exercises in root memorization, test-taking skills, and lower-level thinking, which narrows learning and creates superficial knowledge (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Jones, 2007; Knapp, 1995). Although educators at all three schools felt these pressures, the school leaders believed that high-level curriculum and learning activities were a better way to meet accountability standards, which took a significant shift in mindset and considerable buy-in from the staff. Central administrators and principals discussed the challenge of helping teachers take the risk of providing students with more challenging learning activities when the general assumption was that low-income students required basic instruction and test remediation. While principals were successful in raising the educational expectations of teachers, students and parents, none denied the challenge of and difficulty in doing so.

Over the years, the school system also has faced signification budget reductions, often requiring difficult decisions about staffing. However, even with the budget challenges, school leaders at each of the schools in the study committed themselves to implementing the gifted program with high levels of fidelity. They purchased curriculum resources, provided gifted training to teachers, and hired additional support positions using Title 1 funds. The use of Title 1 funds was appropriate because it met the goals of

providing an enriched and accelerated educational program via robust instructional strategies and challenging academic content. Principals staffed the full-time classrooms using reallocated teaching positions, typically converting a general education position to a gifted position. To spread the benefits of such decisions, principals used the gifted resource teacher to support general education teachers and flexible grouping to broaden even more access to gifted services. Principals provided professional development, co-teaching, and planning with the gifted resource teacher to promote buy-in and spread more widely access to the gifted programs' resources.

Despite the challenges, all three schools have long-lasting, well-established, high-fidelity gifted programs that have expanded beyond their intended targeted population to benefit students throughout their schools. Because of the belief in what gifted practices can do for students and through the provisions of gifted professional development, resources, and leadership, these programs have gained more extensive support and approval from teachers, students, and parents (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Lewis, Cruzeiro, & Hall, 2007). One principal (HP) described the challenges the program faces as standard challenges that any program faces in education. She said you have to deal with staffing, budgets, and buy-in, and those are standard challenges for the operation of any program. Because the school system has a long history of gifted education, many educators have become accustomed to state requirements of the state and the different gifted programs that the school system has implemented to meet those requirements. So, it is quite possible that these challenges, though meaningful, are not seen as insurmountable obstacles. In addition, the school system has placed professional development as a

priority, so teachers are working from a trained perspective versus relying on past-dated myths about gifted education, whom it serves, and how services should be delivered.

Opportunity Costs

Across all the cases, participants did not see any significant lost opportunities when implementing the program; in fact, the majority of participants thought the program would be beneficial for every school in the district if the school leadership adequately committed to implementing it with fidelity. Most participants found it difficult to identify what else they would do if they had not implemented the gifted program. Despite the participants seeing this program as valuable, they did discuss opportunity costs in the form of potential tradeoffs associated with ensuring program fidelity, sustaining buy-in and taking political risks.

Across the cases, school leaders identified tradeoffs associated with implementing the program, particularly because the community-based gifted programs do not have designated funding from the district or the state. To fund the programs, principals repurposed general funds, including their Title 1 funds. Since many of the programs supported by Title 1 funds are remedial in nature (Baker, 2001), and few programs supported by Title 1 funds would be characterized as either enriched or accelerated, the decision to implement a program that is different from typical Title 1 programs required tradeoffs in professional development, curriculum and staffing. Principals used their reputation and credibility as instructional leaders to convince community members, teachers, and supervisors that the program benefits would outweigh the challenges, but, in doing so, they shifted priorities from remediation to enrichment. Using general education positions to staff gifted education positions also represented a tradeoff and a

risk that parents and teachers would see the gifted program as siphoning needed resources from other students, teachers, and classrooms.

In times of significant budget challenges, which have resulted in staff reductions, program cuts, and reductions in resource allocation, principals have continued to make these investments so as to maintain the fidelity of their gifted programs. According to the school principals interviewed for the study, principals have worked with their supervisors to convince them that how they are allocating sparse resources, in part to sustain the gifted program, was worth the investment. To persuade supervisors, principals used student achievement data to support the claims that the program was not only working with the targeted students but was making positive impacts across the school. The data also helped teachers and community members to understand that the program has not only targeted the gifted population but students across the school, which helps in convincing others that the opportunity costs associated with budgetary decisions are minimal. Despite the schools having students with some of the highest economic hardships, all the schools were fully accredited.

Limitations of the Study

With any study, there are limitations with a study's design. Every study can be improved or refocused to capture some aspect of a phenomenon overlooked or newly identified. In this study, I faced limitations associated with the study's sample, data collection, and potential selectivity bias. I discuss each next.

Sample

This study specifically looked at the implementation of the community-based, full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools from the perspectives of central office

administrators, principals, and gifted resource teachers. While this sample provides a range of experiences, roles, and perspectives, there are clearly missing voices. The sample did not include parents, other community members, students or teachers (either gifted or general education teachers); thus, this study is not necessarily representative of all of the perspectives and beliefs about the gifted and talented programs in these schools or the school system. Accordingly, perspectives about the program are limited to those that have implemented gifted programs and perhaps strong interest in the program's success. While I did not sense that participants were trying to "sell" me about the program, the individuals with whom I spoke are not the only people impacted by the program or with knowledge about the program. Future studies that include students, parents, community members and teachers, both gifted teachers and general education teachers, would provide a broader view of gifted programs in Title 1 schools.

Data Collection

Case studies use large volumes of data through the collection of multiple data sources (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003), and this study had over 200 pages of interview transcriptions and over 100 pages of document artifacts. Case studies may also use direct observations as a form of data collection. Such observations can be an important source of data that can be used to triangulate what participants say during interviews or how documents describe a program. For example, while school leaders described the use of more rigorous curriculum and instructional practices in general education classrooms, I have no direct evidence that teachers actually do so. However,

future studies could observe both gifted and general education classrooms so as to compare and contrast pedagogies and to verify descriptions of pedagogy given by participants during the interview or describe by documents (Patton, 2002).

In addition, the study looked at program impacts but only looked at perceived impacts. The study does not go into much detail about student achievement using standardized test scores as a data source for determining programming impacts. It used overall accreditation ratings to describe achievement across the school and anecdotal information from participants. In the age of accountability, readers may see this as a limitation of the study; however, student achievement results from standardized tests are not the only determination of instructional results on student learning. Nonetheless, these benefits, including the extent to which they are broadly shared by students, should be explored empirically in future studies.

I also did collect detailed information about the fidelity of each program included in the study. I had planned on using the school system's self-reflection study guide as a tool to better understand the fidelity of each program, as judged by district standards for gifted programs. However, completing the guide proved burdensome for participants, so they did not complete it. I use other means to check for fidelity of implementation of each program. I discussed the fidelity of the programs with administrators in the gifted office as part of my selection process. Also, the information I collected from the interviews showed alignment with the outlined standards, such as fidelity based on the responses participants gave about professional development, curriculum resources used, and identification procedures. Although the tool would have explored fidelity of implementation further, and given a more quantitative perspective to fidelity, ultimately,

the study was not about fidelity, but about the reasons for implementation, and the challenges, benefits, and opportunity costs of the program. Other studies, however, should examine whether program fidelity might influence these factors.

Potential Selectivity

The field of gifted education is diverse but small, and after many years as a teacher and administrator, I have met other researchers and practitioners in the field, including some of the participants in this study. To help strengthen the study, I attempted to control for bias acting professionally during the interviews, establishing expectations for candor and periodically reflecting on my interactions with participants. Also, I have thoroughly disclosed my background and experiences associated with this study in Chapter 1 and 3 of this paper (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1995), which provided a context for assessing the reliability and validity of findings.

Finally, the schools and participants that selected for the in the study had strong commitments to gifted education and the fidelity of the community-based, full-time gifted program. Since the community-based program is optional in the district, their commitment undoubtedly helps to shape their belief that the benefits of the program outweigh the challenges of the program. While these school leaders and schools provided an opportunity to examine what a high fidelity, gifted program in a Title 1 school looks like, by definition, they are “extreme” or “rare” cases. Thus, these case studies are selective and may not represent gifted programs in other Title 1 schools. Because each was an effective program with school leaders committed to his or her fidelity, it should not be surprising that the study identified more benefits than challenges or that

participants downplayed the challenges as typical or surmountable. I provide a suggestion for a future study that may confirm or disprove this limitation in a later section.

Implications for Practice

Across the entire study, two connected themes were prevalent – educator beliefs and student access to gifted services. These themes bring forward a number of implications for practice for the field of gifted education, as well as, how to provide greater access for students who come from financially impoverished backgrounds. Two significant implications that emerge from this study are: (a) the need for more challenging and rigorous instructional practices in Title 1 schools, and (b) the need for identification procedures and policies that are more inclusive for low-income students. Both of these practices could disrupt the cycle of poverty that has existed for over a century in American schools. The perceived benefits of the community-based, full-time gifted program motivated school leaders to promote more rigorous instruction at all three schools. Doing so, not only in the younger grades but in the general education classrooms, created an access pipeline for nurturing the academic potential of students for more rigorous coursework as students advance through secondary and tertiary education. The community-based, full-time gifted program was an example of how Title 1 schools can use Title 1 funds to provide rigorous, high-level instruction to close achievement and access gaps for low-income students.

These programs operated without a substantial infusion of additional school funds and yet met the state's accountability standards. As Duncan (2014) has argued, if accountability systems are done right, then they should promote a willingness to use resources in new ways and offers incentives to develop the skills of all students,

something that has rarely happened in Title 1 schools. Earlier in this manuscript, I used a quote from Hopfenberg, Levin, Mesiter and Rogers (1990), which described reform efforts in high-needs schools as challenging due to the burdens of mandates and regulations that jeopardize a school's ability to adopt new programs that were "deep, long-lasting, and comprehensive changes to curriculum, instruction, and organization" (p.6). However, despite the accountability pressures, all three schools were able to make deep, long-lasting, and comprehensive changes to curriculum, instruction, and organization. The participants committed themselves and teachers to improving the instructional practices and curriculum resources at their schools to reflect the best practices of gifted education. They also changed the beliefs of teachers, students, and community members that the community-based, full-time gifted program was beneficial not only for the gifted students but all students. This study has given three examples of schools that have used Title 1 funds to provide access to higher-level learning, which is not typical in Title 1 schools, and the schools have been successful. The belief in access and changing instructional practices to high-level learning opportunities can and should be used across all high-poverty schools, similar to the opportunities afforded students in more affluent schools.

The study contributes to research about historically underserved gifted populations, in particular students from low-income households. The students who were placed or what some participants called "guested into the program" thrived in the full-time gifted environment. Although this type of access was a benefit of the community-based program, it highlights that the screening practices for the magnet program are still in need of modification to develop a more fully-inclusive gifted environment for students.

If students selected for the community-based program, which mimics the magnet program in rigor and enrichment, are successful, then the screening procedures are more inclusive and accurate than the screening procedures being used by the magnet program (and many gifted programs throughout the country). While the school system moved away from a single data source (IQ tests) for screening and developed a portfolio system that uses multiple types of data over fifteen years ago, a practice encouraged by research (Bracken & Brown, 2006; Cross & Dockery, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; National Association for Gifted Children, 2012; 2015a), the state still requires gifted programs to identify students using nationally-normed standardized tests scores, which often keeps students from low-income households out of the gifted program (Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2012; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001). Thus, the requirement of a nationally normed IQ test ties the hands of Lirah to make screening more flexible and inclusive. Policy makers and educational leaders need to move away from the heavy reliance on intelligence tests because, despite advances in creating less culturally, linguistically, racially, and economically biased tests, the tests still limit access to gifted services for many talented but historically disadvantaged students.

Implications for Future Research

Often case studies are stepping stones for future research (Patton, 2002). Based on the study and my findings, I propose five different recommendations for future research. These studies would include an examination of a broader range of stakeholders as participants, schools that commit to the program but have a lower fidelity of implementation or student representation, longitudinal results, different underrepresented

populations, and of the implementation of gifted programs within a school system that has a different funding structure to support the program.

First, although the overall benefits of the program outweigh the challenges for the sample used in this study, it would be interesting to expand the study to include more participants' perspectives. While the purpose of this study was to understand the perspectives of key people who implement the community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools, it would be beneficial to examine more perspectives across the school system, including the full-time gifted classroom teacher and the general education teachers. Such participants might identify more finite benefits and challenges to the program from a classroom perspective. It would also be interesting to understand the perspectives of the teachers who teach in the magnet, full-time gifted program and their views about the impact of the community-based program on the magnet program. Future studies would also benefit from parents and students in the sample. Although school leaders reported higher educational expectations among students, it would be useful to check students' perspectives. Furthermore, I believe parents would provide a valuable take on the reasons why they opt to keep their child at the community school instead of sending their child to the magnet school.

Overall, the study presented the community-based, full-time program as a positive initiative that provided greater access to rigorous instruction in high-poverty schools. I selected from three of the fourteen Title 1 schools that have implemented the program. However, not all fourteen schools have the same level of fidelity or have schoolwide student representation in the program. Since fidelity of implementation was a challenge that the school leaders at the three schools under study experienced, school leaders at

schools with lower fidelity might identify different benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs. Furthermore, based on the three schools in this study, it is possible to develop screening and identification procedures that result in a more inclusive full-time gifted program. By involving schools with less inclusive representation in their programs, it may be possible to understand better the role of pedagogical beliefs, identification procedures, professional development and even community beliefs in limiting access to specific populations of students.

A third study would involve using the same research questions but follow students, teachers and the program using a longitudinal case study design. The purpose would be to examine a community-based, full-time gifted program from its initial start-up to five years or so after implementation. The study would allow an examination that explores the reasons, benefits, challenges, and opportunity costs of the program as they occur at various time points during implementation. Such a study would provide insights into the implementation process, including insights into changes in educational expectations, instructional practices, beliefs about gifted education and student achievement. Since Lirah adds new schools who implement the program each year, this study would be feasible.

A fourth study would broaden the examination of the scope of representation in the community-based, full-time program. Current literature discusses many groups of underrepresented populations in gifted education (Ford & Harmon, 2001; Levy, Heissel, Richeson & Adams, 2017; Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Reis, 2015; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Yoon & Gentry, 2009). This study specifically looked at elementary-age children from low-income families. The data I obtained only contained representation numbers

based on income and involvement in the program. A further study could include the examination of representation for additional populations, such African Americans, Latino/Latina populations, English language learners, and females. Such a study would help us understand if the community-based, full-time program expands access via its more flexible identification procedures to these populations, as well.

Finally, this study was conducted in a school system that is wealthy, where the majority (78%) of funds come from the local government, and only 2% of funding comes from the federal government. While the district has faced financial challenges, Lirah was able to provide some financial support for the program through professional development, partial support for the gifted research teacher and flexible budgeting that went beyond the regular Title 1 funds. However, many school systems across the country rely heavily on federal funds to meet the most basic of needs for their students; located in areas with weak tax bases, these school systems lack local or state funding to support their schools fully. Such a study would help us understand the feasibility of community-based, full-time gifted programs in a less wealthy school system. Can a school system that cannot rely on local or state funds to offset staffing budgets implement high-quality, inclusive gifted services in Title 1 schools? What additional educational, financial and community supports would be required for school systems to do so? A better understanding of these supports would contribute to the research that counters the typical spending of Title 1 funds in schools.

Chapter Summary

In this concluding chapter, I discussed how the community-based, full-time gifted program directly contrasts the pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices associated

with Haberman's pedagogy of poverty. I presented the overall conclusions for the four research questions under investigation; these questions focused on the reasons for, perceived benefits of, challenges of and costs of implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools. The schools implemented the program to meet federal and state accountability requirements and felt a moral obligation to provide gifted services to students who were eligible for them. Despite accountability and budget challenges, the schools provided more access to not only the students who were eligible for the gifted program but increased access to high-level learning across the school. School leaders used alternative processes that identified low-income children, who are too often left out of gifted programs, for gifted services; school leaders also encouraged higher expectations for student learning, which resulted in improved instructional practices throughout the school.

In the final sections of this chapter, I discuss some of the limitations of the study and implications for practice and future research. I delineated sample, data collection, and potential selectivity limitations of the study. I argued that implications for practice call for changing instructional practices from low-level to that of rigor in Title 1 schools, as well as, proposed changing gifted policies and identification practices for students who live poverty. Finally, I discussed implications of the findings for future research; I urged other studies to expand the sample to include other stakeholders in gifted education, to examine schools that are not as successful with implementing the program, to study other underrepresented groups in gifted education and to follow students and teachers over time to examine longitudinal effects.

Appendix A: Interview Protocols

A large source of data collection occurs through interviews. During the interviews, I am following a scripted, sequenced approach, which allows me to standardize the basic questions of the study and allows me to code data in a more efficient manner (Creswell, 1998 & Patton, 2002). Also, structured questions provide a support system to help me to remain focused on the purpose of the study. The interview questions will provide insight on the four questions under the study's investigation.

RQ1. What are the reasons expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff for implementing full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools?

RQ2. What are the benefits expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ3. What are the challenges expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools?

RQ4. What are the opportunity costs expressed in documents and stated in interviews by school leaders and instructional staff of providing full-time gifted and talented services in Title 1 schools?

The interviews are segmented into two different sections. The first section's purpose is to understand the values and beliefs of teaching and learning. The questions directly align to the pedagogy of poverty, which serves as the conceptual framework for this dissertation study. The second section of questions ties the implementation of full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools and ties directly to the main questions of the study.

Each interview occurs in a one-on-one person format, where the majority of the data will be collected in a single setting. Participants include school principals (P); assistant superintendent, the gifted and talented coordinator for the district, and gifted specialist (CO); and the gifted and talented resource teacher (GT). Tables B.1 notes which questions are posed to the participants.

Table B.1
Section 1 Interview Questions: Teaching and Learning Beliefs and Values

Question	P	CO	GT
What is the teacher role in the classroom?	X	X	X
What is the student role in the classroom?	X	X	X

What impacts student learning?	X	X	X
What is a prerequisite for learning?	X	X	X
What instructional strategies are important of learning?	X	X	X
What is an ideal learning environment?	X	X	X

Note: P- principal; CO- school assistant superintendent, gifted and talented coordinator, gifted specialist; GT- gifted and talented resource teacher

Table B.2
Section 1 Interview Questions: Community-Based, Full-Time Gifted Programs

Question	P	CO	GT
What is your understanding of a community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 school?	X	X	X
Why does your school implement a locally funded full-time gifted program?	X		X
Why do schools implement a locally funded full-time gifted program? Why does central office support implementing them?		X	
How do you support the community-based, full-time gifted program in your school?			X
Can you give a brief history of why the program at your school started and how the program has been implemented over the years?	X		
What are the challenges you identify with providing the community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools, and what strategies do you use to address the challenges?	X	X	X
What benefits do you identify with providing the community-based, full-time gifted program in Title 1 schools, including possible spillover effects to the rest of the school and the community, and what strategies do they use to maximize those benefits?	X	X	X
What evidence is there to support the benefits and spillover effects of providing the community-based, full-time gifted program services in Title 1 schools?	X	X	X

What tradeoffs do you need to make to implement the program at the school?		X

Note: P- principal; CO- school assistant superintendent, gifted and talented coordinator, gifted specialist; GT- gifted and talented resource teacher

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Letter

Date

Dear _____,

My name is Megan Tempel-Milner, and I am a doctoral student in the department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership in the College of Education at the University of Maryland. For my dissertation research I am conducting a case study on the challenges and benefits to implementing optional gifted and talented programs in Title 1 schools in a large school district. Knowing the work your school has done with the community-based, full-time gifted program, I think you may have insight to contribute to my study. I know your participation will involve a commitment, but I hope you will consider be a part of the study. Your expertise and contributions may ultimately help researchers, policy makers, and practitioners develop insights for the field of gifted education and Title 1 policy.

I will be collecting data for my study over the course of the 2017-2018 school year, and data collection will entail the following participation from you:

> I will ask you to engage in one interview lasting one hour, with a possible follow-up interview of a half-hour. The interviews will be in summer/fall 2017. During the interview I will ask you questions on why you opted to implement/support a community-based, full-time gifted program in your school and the strengths and challenges to the implementation.

The total investment of time required of you, including email or phone correspondence (to exchange documents and coordinate meetings) and interviews, is unlikely to exceed two hours over the course of the year.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and if you do participate, you may terminate participation at any time. Participation entails no overt risks to you and your school. As a token of my appreciation for your time and effort, after the data collection is completed, I would like to offer you free professional development for your staff or your choice of a curriculum resource for your gifted program. As an educator, I know how important your time is, and I am truly grateful for your support of my study.

Please also note that any information you provide me will be kept confidential. All data will be stored on my personal, password-protected computer. In my dissertation report, all identifying information about you and your school will be eliminated. Furthermore, identifying information about your students will not be collected at all.

I hope you will consider participating. Please let me know if you would like to further discuss your involvement in the study.

Sincerely,
Megan Tempel-Milner
PhD Candidate, Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership
College of Education, University of Maryland
Cell: 703-531-7147
Email: megantempel@gmail.com

Appendix C: IRB Consent Form

Project Title	*A Study of Benefits and Challenges of Implementing Gifted and Talent Programs in Title 1 Schools in a Large Urban School District*
Purpose of the Study	*This research is being conducted by **Megan Tempel-Milner** at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a central office administrator, principal, or an advanced academic resource teacher serving full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools. The purpose of this research project is designed not only to examine in greater detail the educational opportunities afforded to low income students, but also to examine principal-elected full-time gifted programs in Title 1 schools in a large urban school district.*
Procedures	*The procedures for this study include two types of data collection- data artifacts and interviews.* *The initial type of data collection for this study comes from document artifacts. The data collected includes information from statistical profiles, program proposals, self-study reflective practice tools, and school-improvement plans of the schools selected in the study, which are all text-based data sources. All identifying information from the document artifacts will be coded to keep confidentiality.* *Interviews will be conducted in a private area, away from where others can hear. Interviews will last for no more than an hour. Your name will be kept confidential, and you will be assigned a code in all research notes to protect your identity. You will be asked permission to record the interview. You may decline to give permission. If you decline to have the interview recorded, notes from your interview will be typed on a computer. Transcription of recorded interviews will be completed by a secure transcription service and your name will not be disclosed in the recorded interview.* *All research notes will be stored in a secure file-cabinet or a password protected computer and will only be seen by the researcher.*
Potential Risks and Discomforts	*There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. You may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.*

Potential Benefits	*There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, the results of this research may help educators and policy makers to understand the benefits and challenges of providing full-time gifted services in Title 1 schools.*
Confidentiality	*Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location including a locked cabinet or password protected computer.* *If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.*
Compensation	*Compensation will be in the form of professional development on advanced academic topics or a curriculum resource donation for your school.*
Right to Withdraw and Questions	*Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.* *If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:* ***Megan Tempel-Milner*** *3005 Farm Rd.* *Alexandria, VA 22302* *megantempel@gmail.com 703-531-7147*
Participant Rights	*If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*

Statement of Consent	*Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.* *If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.*	
Audio Recording	I give permission for the researcher to audio-record the interview. ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

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