What the Research Says About ADVOCATING for Gifted Education

Many challenges exist in developing and implementing programs and services for gifted and talented students. Researchers have reported that high achievers' scores have declined nationally since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB; Loveless, Parkas, & Duffett, 2008; Plucker, Burroughs, & Song, 2010; Plucker, Giancola, Healey, Arndt, & Wang, 2015; Plucker, Hardesty, & Burroughs, 2013). Wyner, Bridgeland, and DiIlulio (2007) have also noted the growing disparity between low-income high achievers and their higher income peers, suggesting that low-income gifted are particularly at risk for being underrecognized and underserved. Because teachers report that academically advanced students are simply not a priority and feel more pressure to raise lower achieving students' test scores (Loveless et al., 2008), gifted students have been largely ignored in the general education classroom (Roberts & Siegle, 2012). Standards and policies need to accommodate the needs of all students (Loveless et al., 2008; Plucker et al., 2015; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Walker & Pearsall, 2012).

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Advocacy is the cornerstone for addressing these challenges and providing a voice to gifted students and their families. Effective advocacy takes time (Robinson, 2012) and resources (Gallagher, 2013), and requires collaboration among many groups: parents, teachers, school administrators, professional organizations, researchers, and policymakers (Besnoy, 2005; Duquette, Orders, Fullarton, & Robertson-Grewel, 2011; Speirs Neumeister, Yssel, & Burney, 2013; Matthews, Georgiades, & Smith, 2011; Roberts, 2010; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Wiskow, Fowler, & Christopher, 2011). In order to compete as a nation in the international arena, gifted children must be considered (Gallagher, 2013). Educators

have a responsibility to advocate for gifted children and to know the best strategies for advocating well.

To better understand advocacy, this review included articles that had been published since 2005 in *Gifted Child Today*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *Journal of Advanced Academics*, and *Roeper Review.* To be included, articles needed to address advocacy for gifted education programming and services. Articles from other countries and those whose focus was not advocacy were excluded. Using these criteria, 20 articles were identified and summarized.

Although the articles primarily expressed the opinions of authors, one used historical research (Robins & Jolly, 2013), two described the results of advocacy efforts (Matthews et al., 2011; Roberts, 2010), and four used qualitative methods (Besnoy et al., 2015; Duquette et al., 2011; Speirs Neumeister et al., 2013; Walker & Pearsall, 2012).

Educators need to understand what is possible and what the goals are (purpose), create a positive climate around the topic of gifted education while simultaneously knowing the data and fostering relationships to sway policymakers (preparation), and have stamina to make these things a reality (persistence).

FOCUS OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

The vast majority of the articles described the focus of advocacy efforts by different advocacy groups (N = 17). Ten of these articles were written for educators. The authors suggested teachers advocate for their gifted students and services at the local school level (Besnoy, 2005; Roberts & Siegle, 2012), using the arguments that gifted education can actually benefit general education (Johnsen, 2014; Kaplan, 2009) and dispelling myths about gifted students' ability to make it on their own (Besnoy, 2005). Educators should also advocate for specialized curriculum (Johnsen, 2014; Roberts & Siegle, 2012), talent development (Robinson, 2012), and specific strategies such as acceleration (Hargrove, 2012) and scholarliness (Kaplan, 2006). Other areas for educator advocacy included professional development for teachers (Besnoy, 2005; Roberts & Siegle, 2012). Walker and Pearsall (2012) described specific advocacy efforts to include more Latino students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes.

Areas for parent advocacy were examined in two articles. Besnoy et al. (2015) addressed ways that parents can advocate for their children who are twice-exceptional (i.e., gifted with a disability). Duquette et al. (2011) described four dimensions of advocacy where parents might focus on providing their students with a challenging curriculum and extracurricular activities.

Gifted students also need to learn how to advocate for themselves (Kaplan, 2012; Robins & Jolly, 2013; Siegle, 2008; Speirs Neumeister, et al., 2013). Siegle (2008) encouraged educators to discuss with gifted students their giftedness and their responsibility to develop their talents. Professional organizations have historically emphasized the importance of student advocacy with not only an emphasis on understanding one's potentialities but also how to use them for the common good (Robins & Jolly, 2013).

Advocacy suggestions were also made for policymakers (Gallagher, 2013; Johnsen, 2014; Plucker, 2012; Roberts & Siegle, 2012). These articles emphasized the importance of using current vocabulary regarding special education and national issues (Gallagher, 2013; Roberts & Siegle, 2012); describing how current models and systems can be adapted for gifted students (Johnsen, 2014); and how serving gifted students is a part of social justice and economic development (Plucker, 2012).

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Eight of the articles described specific ways that families might advocate for their children, five suggested strategies for school personnel, and two described methods at the state and national level.

Families

All members of the family have different ways they can help their gifted and talented student. Duquette et al. (2011) noted that there are four dimensions of advocacy: awareness, seeking information, presenting the case, and monitoring. Awareness includes understanding the needs of the student and the issues. After identifying needs and issues, families need to seek information to justify the gaps in gifted services and help present a solution. Forming parent groups can collectively bring awareness to the issues at the local level and find relevant information necessary for advocating (Matthews et al., 2011). Based upon their own experiences, Matthews et al. (2011) listed important steps in establishing a group and provided tips for effectiveness, such as building involvement, using electronic contact,

and dealing with logistical aspects like paperwork and budgets. These parent groups build upon the expertise of all involved and help parents find the necessary information to make a case for their students.

Important information for families to know includes school policies about identification, accommodations, or specific programming (Duquette et al., 2011) and professional vocabulary to present the case effectively (Besnoy, 2011) and influence administration and lawmakers to act (Wiskow, 2011). Parent groups should stay transparent and inform the community about the gifted and talented program through any means that seems appropriate for the audience (Hargrove, 2010). Parents also can share the number of served students in the district along with the successes of this student population and their gifted and talented (GT) specialists. Further resources for parents include those provided by the National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagc.org) and state association websites, such as the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (www.txgifted.org).

Students also should be informed and recruited to share ideas they have about advocating (Hargrove, 2010). The youth can demonstrate the impact of a quality education through their performances or products (Wiskow et al., 2011) and speak of how gifted education has affected them (Hargrove, 2010).

After advocating for services, families must monitor to make sure that the changes discussed continue and that the new services truly benefit the child (Duquette et al., 2011). Without the presented accommodations, modifications, and/or services in place, the child may show signs of inappropriate behavior, a lack of academic progress, or dissatisfaction with school. Ultimately, the responsibility of advocacy falls on the shoulders of the parents (Hargrove, 2010).

School Personnel

Many important advocates exist within a school district. School board members can ensure the district complies with state mandates, encouraging administrators to make changes to existing policies if necessary (Wiskow et al., 2011). Gifted coordinators can mediate between the advocates and the administration or media. Finally, teachers can inform all groups of advocates and teach the students to advocate for themselves (Kaplan, 2012; Wiskow et al., 2011). In order for teachers to be most effective, they need purpose, preparation, and persistence (Roberts & Siegle, 2012). Educators need to understand what is possible and what the goals are (purpose), create a positive climate around the topic of gifted education while simultaneously knowing the data and fostering relationships to sway policymakers (preparation), and have stamina to make these things a reality (persistence). Teachers can inform those locally by talking to others in the profession and community or at the state and national levels by becoming members of larger organizations.

State and national organizations can help parents advocate by creating resources such as guides concerning relevant laws or strategies or providing discussion forums in order to better support them in their advocacy efforts (Speirs Neumeister et al., 2013).

Besnoy (2005) provided strategies for creating an advocacy campaign within the school community. He suggested taking a public relations approach, starting slowly in order to create quality information for the campaign. The steps for creating a campaign include establishing a purpose, creating objectives, producing activities for the intended audience, creating a timeline, and evaluating whether or not the strategies succeeded for the intended audience. Advocates should disseminate information through a variety of ways, print and otherwise, inside and outside of the school building. By tailoring the activities to the audience, the public relations campaign becomes more effective.

State and National Advocates

For those states aiming to create specialized schools, Roberts (2010) offered lessons from her experiences in building a residential school for math and science. These ideas can be generalized for other large gifted and talented projects. For making change at the national levels, Gallagher (2013) suggested that educational infrastructure must adapt the enterprises of health and defense: programs that commit to areas such as research, technology, curriculum development, and evaluation. By using the rhetoric of those two enterprises, the funding for education could develop a sound infrastructure and effectively impact gifted education policy.

Ultimately, the responsibility of advocacy falls on the shoulders of the parents (Hargrove, 2010).

REFERENCES

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Plucker, J. A., Giancola, J., Healey, G., Arndt, D., & Wang, C. (2015). *Equal talents, unequal opportunities: A report card on state support for academically talented low-income students.*

Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

Plucker, J. A., Hardesty, J., & Burroughs, N. (2013). *Talent on the sidelines: Excellence gaps and America's persistent talent underclass.* Storrs: University of Connecticut, Center for Education Policy Analysis.

Wyner, J. S., Bridgeland, J. M., & DiIulio, J. J. (2007). *Achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from lower-income families.* Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES

Besnoy, K. (2005). Using public relations strategies to advocate for gifted programming in your school. *Gifted Child Today, 28*(1), 32–65.

Besnoy stated that educators of gifted students need to advocate for their students at the local school level to combat the idea of gifted education as elitist or without its own merits. This advocacy would include exposing colleagues to gifted education because many teachers do not understand that gifted students cannot differentiate their own curriculum. Teachers should start their advocacy efforts slowly due to the time commitment and effort required of the process and use print, nonprint, and other media strategies. Besnoy included a step-by-step public relations model (Karnes, Lewis, & Stephens, 1999) along with examples at each of the five steps. He also included examples of public relations strategies for different subgroups within the school, including general education teachers, specialists, and administrators. He concluded by stating that a year-end evaluation is fundamental to successful advocacy efforts for the next year.

Besnoy, K. D., Swoszowski, N. C., Newman, J. L., Floyd, A., Jones, P., & Byrne, C. (2015). The advocacy experiences of parents of elementary age, twice-exceptional children. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *59*, 108–123. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016986215569275

In this particular study, the researchers interviewed eight parents of six elementary twice-exceptional children about their past advocacy efforts. The researchers gave the parents questionnaires, interviewed the parents (lasting from 70 to 120 minutes), and then conducted focus groups. The researchers used a constant comparative method with open coding to analyze the themes within the interview transcriptions. The researchers found that parents had lifelong concern for their children and identified the precocious abilities of the student at least 2 years before they recognized any disabilities. The parents placed their children in public schools believing that the schools would have their students' best interests at heart, but they soon lost confidence in the schools' focus and ability to meet the dual needs of the child so the parents realized they needed professional knowledge in order to advocate on behalf of their children. The parents stated that school officials did not seem to want to diagnose the children with a disability, and parents felt the school personnel lacked expertise, even in regard to following state procedures. In order to become stronger advocates, parents needed to learn the professional vocabulary and certain school district policies. The researchers concluded with the limitations of the study—sampling and one perspective—along with a call for more research on this topic.

Duquette, C., Orders, S., Fullarton, S., & Robertson-Grewal, K. (2011). Fighting for their rights: Advocacy experiences of parents of children identified with intellectual giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 34*, 488–512.

In this qualitative study, the researchers examined 16 mothers' attitudes toward advocacy for their gifted children using a 93-item questionnaire and semistructured interviews. The questionnaire and interview questions were based on four dimensions of advocacy: awareness, seeking information, presenting the case, and monitoring. The data were organized based on these four categories and a fifth category about successful school experiences. The researchers found that most of the parents had an awareness that their child was gifted either before or during his or her elementary school experience. When they sought information, the parents used at least three different sources. Most were also members of a gifted advocacy group called ABC. Although most parents were interested in information related to having their child tested, they also searched for a variety of other types of information. The parents all went to initial meetings with school personnel after the child was tested, but many had difficulties reaching an agreement about the placement of their child in the program, especially those parents whose child had a dual diagnosis (i.e., twice-exceptional). Because parents felt that these meetings with school personnel were intimidating, half of them wanted to have an expert at the meetings to achieve the results they wanted. Monitoring of the program varied among parents, but parents appeared to monitor "out of a sense of duty, interest in their children, a desire to be aware of problems, and to ensure that the accommodations written in the IEP were being implemented" (p. 502). The researchers found that each dimension had a "trigger" that led to the next step in the advocacy process. Parents reported that a successful school experience required supportive school personnel along with a challenging curriculum and extracurricular activities. The authors concluded that the steps of advocacy are not linear and may be performed simultaneously by the parents.

Gallagher, J. J. (2013). Educational disarmament, and how to stop it. *Roeper Review, 35*, 197–204. doi: 10.1080/02783193.2013.799412

Gallagher presented an argument for a change in the infrastructure of gifted education in order to prevent the disarmament through lack of support. In order to make a stronger, smarter, and better nation to compete in the international arena, students' environments must be considered. Gallagher compared the infrastructure of health and defense—those with considerable funding with large numbers of behind-the-scenes staff—to the educational world without either of these supports. The United States should create an infrastructure for the gifted students similar to the one for students with disabilities. In order to do this, it would require an investment in proper evaluation tools, educational leadership, technical assistance, demonstration centers, technology utilization, data systems, and long-distance planning. To achieve this would require large social support and the proper mechanisms to make sure these investments worked. The author noted that issues in education such as funding and excellence are due to focusing on other matters, namely defense and equity, without much attention paid to the students who are high achievers. For policy change to occur, it would require multidisciplinary support, which may be possible through the combinatorial use of fear and national ambition as reflected in the history of previous initiatives for gifted education.

Hargrove, K. (2010). Advocating in tough economic times. *Gifted Child Today, 34*(3), 40–41.

Hargrove alerted the readers to multiple instances in which funding cuts meant gifted programs were reduced or eliminated in the past few years. To combat this, she listed specific advocacy ideas, such as recruiting teachers as helpers, communicating the successes of the gifted program, and constructively using social media. She also suggested websites for more information to bring about change.

Hargrove, K. (2012). Advocating acceleration. *Gifted Child Today, 35*(1), 72–73. doi:10.1177/1076217511428309

In this column, Hargrove began by explaining that funding for gifted

education has decreased since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB) a decade prior. She stated that all advocates should read the reports from *A Nation Deceived* to overcome the barriers in the current school climate such as meeting Adequate Yearly Progress, restricting progress to specific grade levels, and combatting negative perceptions of acceleration. Hargrove also stated that parents may resist these gifted accommodations, so more creative avenues must be sought by advocates in order to defeat the myths surrounding gifted education.

Johnsen, S. K. (2013). Addressing the challenge of administrator support of gifted education programming. *Gifted Child Today, 36*, 221–222. doi:10.1177/1076217513498219

This article focused on the challenge of administrative support in providing gifted education. In order to gain attention from school administrators regarding gifted students, advocates need to address popular misconceptions about gifted education, such as the notion that gifted students will succeed without a specialized education. Secondly, advocates need to explain how strategies, such as those that promote creative thinking and problem solving, help all students, not just those labeled as gifted. Teachers familiar with the appropriate strategies can model these methods for others. Finally, advocates need to describe how current curriculum and systems can be adapted for gifted students without additional funds and resources. For example, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) can be modified to reach gifted students. Johnsen concluded with a list of resources to help advocates communicate with administrators.

Kaplan, S. N. (2006). Advocacy by discussion: Dialogues about differentiation. *Gifted Child Today, 29*(1), 35–37.

Kaplan provided questions and templates for discussions on the issues regarding gifted curriculum differentiation. The first issue includes meeting the dual goals of providing "scholarship" and "scholarliness" within the curriculum. Secondly, differentiated curriculum must include teaching to all types of gifted students, especially regarding the differences within the gifted population; not all gifted students learn in the same manner. The final issue for differentiated curriculum discussions is the evidence proving that the curriculum is truly responsive to the needs of the students. By discussing all of these issues, advocates can inform and engage others in supporting quality differentiation within the classroom.

Kaplan, S. N. (2009). Following the national trend for advocacy. *Gifted Child Today, 32*(4), 64–65.

Kaplan explained that advocates need to use the term *stimulus package* in order to be politically relevant for gifted education support. Stimulus Package I emphasizes the idea of the "spill-over effect," the idea that gifted education would help general education. Differentiation helps all students and even helps identify students not currently in the gifted education program. Stimulus Package II emphasizes the ways general education classes may hurt gifted students' education through things like convergent thinking and benchmarks. Using the language of current political change will help gifted education.

Kaplan, S. N. (2012). Becoming politically savvy—Being gifted in the current educational climate. *Gifted Child Today*, *35*, 150–151. http://doi.org/10.1177/1076217511436088

Kaplan suggested that teachers instruct gifted students on becoming "politically savvy" in order to advocate for their own education. Differentiated curriculum relies on independent and analytic students, and empowering them to get involved in their education also speaks to their interests and values. By doing this, students can maintain motivation and relate advocacy to multiple educational moments in history.

Loveless, T., Parkas, S., & Duffett, A. (2008). *High-achieving students in the era of NCLB.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation & Institute.

In Part I, "An Analysis of NAEP Data," Loveless discussed changes in national National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) scores of high- and low-achieving students since the initiation of NCLB and accountability mechanisms pre- and post-NCLB are compared. Data support that the achievement gap between low and high achievers narrowed during the NCLB era, largely due to an increased rate of improvement of the low achievers in comparison to their high-achieving counterparts. Loveless suggested that a lack of increased rate of improvement for the high achievers represents a missed opportunity to promote achievement equally to all students. Loveless also defined the characteristics of the high-achieving population as scoring in the 90th percentile or above on the NAEP, a majority of which are White with socioeconomic, academic, and "teacher experience" advantages. The author proposed that the government implement incentives for progress of all students, including high achievers.

In Part II, "Results from a National Teacher Survey," Parkas and Duffett provided results from a nationwide survey of with 900 grade 3–12 teacher participants and qualitative data from five focus groups intended to measure attitudes toward high-achieving students in the classroom. Results showed that most teachers expressed

that academically advanced students are not a priority in their schools and are often underchallenged, stating that they wished that all students received equal levels of attention but agree that pressure to raise mandated test scores forces priorities to shift toward the lower achieving population. Teachers in general acknowledged a need for increased professional development or training with how to differentiate in their classrooms and work with academically talented students.

Matthews, M. S., Georgiades, S. D., & Smith, L. F. (2011). How we formed a parent advocacy group and what we've learned in the process. *Gifted Child Today, 34*(4), 28–34. doi:10.1177/1076217511415384

The authors presented a process for forming local, district-level advocacy groups given that most gifted programs are the first programs to get cut. Proactive advocacy efforts help achieve the final program goals better than reactive arguments. Educating and collaborating with the community members provides the best outcome for the gifted student population. The authors worked with one of the largest school districts in the country, an urban district in Florida, which served approximately 14,000 gifted students. Having a district coordinator with information on parents who wanted to form a group helped begin the process. Because of the expertise of members of the group, the initial meetings produced a mission statement with a variety of goals and ideas, a name, a timeline, and an organizational structure (including writing bylaws). To aid recruitment, the group brought in speakers and provided refreshments. They also filed for incorporation, recommending consulting with a tax attorney or an experienced group member. In order to communicate with members, they purchased a domain name with a .org ending and used Constant Contact to send e-mails and receive feedback from website visitors. Finding an appropriate Webmaster is one of the most important ways to promote the advocacy group's efforts. Challenges of advocacy groups include high turnover rates and disseminating information to parents and teachers of gifted students. The authors concluded with more tips about online and in-person communication, membership fees, outside resources (e.g., local universities), and more.

Plucker, J. A. (2012). Positively influencing gifted education policy. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 56*, 221–223. doi:10.1177/0016986212456071

Plucker discussed the approach of outcomes-based giftedness by Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Worrell (2011) in regards to policy of gifted education. This perspective contrasts the traditional idea of giftedness, but Plucker noted this concept is more logical and appropriate for policy on giftedness. Instead of referring to gifted students as those with special needs, advocates should argue for the social justice implications and/or economic development impact of gifted education. In order to make this policy change a reality, Plucker called for more research on intervention outcomes even if one truly subscribes to the traditional, whole-child approach. He also stated that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and everyone can win from having both approaches at the table when it comes to education policy.

Plucker, J. A., Burroughs, N., & Song, R. (2010). *Mind the (other) gap! The growing excellence gap in K–12 education.* Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

The authors aimed to examine the excellence gap (differences between the highest achievers) since the implementation of NCLB. Using NAEP data from assessments for grades 4 and 8, the authors showed increasing differences between race, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and gender. Comparing states individually on NAEP data showed mixed progress. When the few excellence gaps decrease, it is often due to the high achievers' decline in scores. With state assessment data, most states increased the number of advanced scores but also widened their excellency gaps. Due to the fact that states vary on the "advanced" criterion, caution must be used with interpretation. Because NCLB focuses on minimum competency, Plucker et al. suggested this method does not work to decrease the excellence gap. Policies regarding fixing this issue have been rare at the federal level and inconsistent at both state and local levels. In order to close this gap, this issue must become both a national and state priority alongside (not instead of) the achievement gap. Realistic goals and finding a mixture of national, state, and local policies such as ability grouping and AP courses will help when the lack of funding hits one or more levels. Plucker et al. also recommended creating standards with advanced students in mind, addressing the current policies that hinder gifted students, and conducting more research on high achievement.

Plucker, J. A., Giancola, J., Healey, G., Arndt, D., & Wang, C. (2015). *Equal talents, unequal opportunities: A report card on state support for academically talented low-income students.* Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

This report highlighted the impact of state demographics and state-level policies on academic achievement of high-ability students and offered a guide to states on how they can better support learning for all students. An expert advisory panel selected 18 indicators that impact student outcome and data collected from online and documentary sources, or from state education agency staff, suggested

a correlation between state demographics and student outcome, with large excellence gaps manifesting in all states. The authors included a list of recommendations for state policy change to aid in high-ability student service and success, including requiring local education agencies (LEAs) to be held accountable for student achievement and requiring these LEAs to identify and collect data on high-ability students, to allow academic acceleration options, and to provide services for gifted and talented students.

Plucker, J. A., Hardesty, J., & Burroughs, N. (2013). *Talent on the sidelines: Excellence gaps and America's persistent talent underclass.* Storrs: University of Connecticut, Center for Education Policy Analysis.

This report aimed to update the public on the excellence gap in America since the 2010 publication of *Mind the (Other) Gap! The Growing Excellence Gap in K–12 Education*. With the NCLB goal of increasing minimum competency among students, one would think the highest levels of achievement would also increase, but achievement gaps and excellence gaps do not appear to be related. Using 2013 NAEP data in reading and math, the researchers found that race, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and gender excellency gaps have gotten worse since NCLB. State data varies but generally appear to mirror national data with excellence gaps, but state assessments typically also have more advanced scorers. The authors concluded that "The data we explored for the current study should crush anyone's optimism about the country's success in developing academic talent" (p. 22) and international comparisons also continue to widen. Recommendations for reducing the identified talent deficit include consideration of special populations, notice of test result data when it is released, inclusion of advanced assessment scores in accountability systems, acknowledgment of poverty, examination of current policies, increased funding of and research on educational excellence, and development of federal government support.

Roberts, J. L. (2010). Lessons learned: Advocating for a specialized school of mathematics and science. *Roeper Review, 32*(1), 42–47. doi:10.1080/02783190903386876

Roberts included 11 lessons from a decade-long case study involving the inception of a gifted program: establish the point of coordination for the advocacy plan, identify your goals and plan your message, establish relationships with key decision makers, educate individuals about the need, solicit position statements from key stakeholders and policymakers and make them known, find new friends and supporters, use expertise to build support, link with groups that may influence decisions, use advisory groups for ideas and contacts, stay up to date with research and recommendations, and keep public relations plans ongoing.

Roberts, J. L., & Siegle, D. (2012). Teachers as advocates: If not you—Who? *Gifted Child Today, 35*(1), 58–61. doi:10.1177/1076217511427432

Roberts and Siegle stated that teachers must be advocates in order to help meet the needs of students that have been ignored under NCLB. This includes working with parents, community members, and other teachers to gain support and services at both the state and national levels. To properly advocate, one must have the three Ps of advocacy: purpose, preparation, and persistence (Burney & Sheldon, 2010). Preparation requires the advocate to stay informed, develop relationships with other advocates and change makers, and create a plan. To advocate for gifted children, teachers can inform their colleagues about the rationale behind gifted education, debunk the myths surrounding gifted students, or provide them with pertinent strategies for the students in their classes. To advocate at the state level, Roberts and Siegle recommended becoming a member of the state gifted organization. Nationally, teachers can advocate through getting involved with national gifted groups such as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) or The Association for the Gifted (TAG), sending their messages to public and policy makers, and relating the issues of gifted students to the issues of the current conversations surrounding education.

Robins, J. H., & Jolly, J. L. (2013). Historical perspectives. *Gifted Child Today, 36*, 139–141. doi:10.1177/1076217512475292

This article discusses the history of gifted advocacy and two organizations that are the leading advocates for gifted children, the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). Each of these organizations have attempted to help teachers, parents, and others understand gifted and talented children, specialized curriculum, the significance of professional development, and the importance of research to further the understanding of gifted students and their needs. Moreover, they have both been interested in helping gifted individuals understand their potentialities and how they can use them for the general good.

Robinson, A. (2012). Psychological science, talent development, and educational advocacy: Lost in translation? *Gifted Child Quarterly, 56*, 202–205. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016986212456077

Robinson outlined a brief history of the conception of domain-specific education in the field of giftedness. She explained that advocacy is a cor-

nerstone for the field and promoting the concept of talent development can help advocates by providing research from a variety of fields to back arguments, access to help gifted students at multiple times in their educational careers, and connections with a multitude of fields to garner additional resources. Robinson also described the disadvantages to this advocacy endeavor. For example, promoting a new idea takes time and can result in unintended outcomes such as losing local and state resources. Practically, advocates must remain cautious when dealing with the language of gifted research and theory.

Siegle, D. (2008). The time is now to stand up for gifted education: 2007 NAGC presidential address. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 52*, 111–113. doi:10.1177/0016985208315848

As the 28th president of the National Association for Gifted Children, Siegle detailed three recommendations for the field of gifted and talented education: (a) developing a better definition for *gifted*, (b) discussing with children their giftedness and their responsibility in talent development, and (c) being thorough in the process of identifying gifts and aiding their growth.

Speirs Neumeister, K., Yssel, N., & Burney, V. H. (2013). The influence of primary caregivers in fostering success in twice-exceptional children. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *57*, 263–274. http://doi.org/10.1177/0016986213500068

The researchers examined the role of parents of twice-exceptional children's success using a constant comparative approach based in grounded theory. The authors conducted semistructured interviews with 10 primary caregivers (mothers) of students with multiple exceptionalities who had been deemed successful. Six themes emerged, all revolving around responsibility: recognition of the child's intelligence, recognition of a problem despite assurance from school personnel, providing/seeking support despite inconvenience, normalizing the child's disability, maintaining high expectations for their student, and handing off responsibility to the student in advocating for themselves. The authors also included suggestions for state and national groups to help parents with the different advocacy responsibilities. They concluded with limitations, future research, and an appendix with interview questions.

Walker, S. A., & Pearsall, L. D. (2012). Barriers to advanced placement for Latino students at the high-school level. *Roeper Review, 34*, 12–25. doi:10.1080/02783193.2012.627549

This focus group investigated the underrepresentation of Latino students in AP courses. Four randomly selected high school Latino students and seven of their parents or guardians participated in structured focus group interviews. The researchers found that access to AP courses was not a barrier to course enrollment; rather, barriers included costs in the program, extracurricular activities, and outside support from parents, friends, teachers, colleges, and role models. Parents stated that if the school increased communication and collaboration while promoting classwork as the student's "job," the parents would be more likely to support achievement in these harder classes. The authors also noted that teacher professional development regarding multicultural issues would help the advancement and communication between multicultural students. In order to advocate for students, Walker and Pearsall recommended communication and community intervention, English courses for both parents and students, early information at the elementary and middle school levels regarding advanced classes, culturally sensitive training for teachers, decreased costs financial barriers, changes in student dress codes and labeling, and persistent willingness to help Latino students.

Wiskow, K., Fowler, V. D., & Christopher, M. M. (2011). Active advocacy: Working together for appropriate services for gifted learners. *Gifted Child Today, 34*(2), 20–25.

With a decrease in funding for gifted education, Wiskow, Fowler, and Christopher (2011) stated the need for active advocacy in order to change policy, curriculum, and support for gifted students. Even though it may be difficult due to variations across the nation and individual states, advocates need to know the current policies to help those considered both "gifted alone" and "gifted plus" (i.e., twice exceptional—those with legal protection). The authors recommended using advocacy methods from the models of both Gallagher (1983) and Dettmer (1991) in campaigns for gifted students. Active advocacy includes multiple players within the school environment: teachers, who can inform parents, students, and other school members; parents, who can influence the administration and lawmakers to act; gifted coordinators, who can serve as liaisons between the administration or media and the advocates; school board members, who may encourage school personnel to implement changes and make sure the school remains in compliance with state mandates; and students, who inform the advocates about the impact of a quality gifted education program through their products and performances and who may self-advocate for increased services. In conclusion, advocacy is about the students, and all involved members must work together and persist in order to make quality gifted education a reality.

Wyner, J. S., Bridgeland, J. M., & DiIulio, J. J. (2007). *Achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from low-*

er-income families. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

This report by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation highlights the need for a nationwide change to support high-achieving students from low-income families, detailing a growing disparity between low-income high achievers and their higher income peers beginning during elementary school and increasing in high school, college, and graduate school. The low-income high achievers that are discussed in the report are a population of approximately 3.4 million K–12 children defined by academic rank in the top 25% of students their own age and familial incomes below the national median. The authors describe an "achievement trap" that contributes to the fallout of low-income high achievers when the students are not advocated for, recognized, or encouraged, and multiple case studies are provided as examples. Steps to close the achievement gap are discussed and the authors emphasized the need for educational systems and policy to support all students, including those that are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

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