Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids

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WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?
FINDING STRAND RESOURCES

Strand Goals

• To share the background, structure, and purpose of Project SPARK and its foundation in the Young Scholars Model
• To discuss key elements of the Young Scholars Model and its implementation in various settings
• To explore questions and dilemmas related to early identification and response to advanced potential
• To practice strategies for recognizing and responding to advanced potential in diverse populations
Potential Take-Aways

• Guidelines for implementing the approach (or aspects of the approach) in your district
• Key points of consideration for advocacy for high-potential learners from diverse groups
• Classroom resources for promoting critical and creative thinking and the demonstration of high potential

Thinking about Gifted Services in Your Experience...

• What are some of the key levers or resources that facilitate access to gifted programming for students?
• To what degree does affirmation of potential and effort influence student success?
• Who are some of the groups or individuals who serve as advocates for gifted learners?
What are some of the barriers to gifted programming for children from underserved populations?

KEY POINT OF TENSION
Barriers to Participation

- Conception of giftedness that emphasizes only already-developed ability
- Misconceptions about learners
- Pedagogy and curriculum that fail to support talent development
- School identification policies
- Gifted program policies that hinder participation and performance
- Lack of access to supplemental programs
- Gifted label

The Challenge

- Lower rates of identification for gifted programs among students from traditionally underserved populations
- Need for approaches that support finding high potential across demographic groups
- Need for approaches that provide students with supports to prepare for the challenges of advanced programs
- Recommendations around early intervention, yet limited programming
Underrepresentation of Economically Disadvantaged and Culturally Diverse Students

Issues and Recommendations

- Biased assessment measures
  - Multidimensional assessments
  - Portfolios, case studies, anecdotal records

- Low expectations (self and others)
  - Raise expectations through more rigorous and challenging curriculum

- Few parent/guardian referrals
  - Increase communication
  - Teacher referrals
  - Parent advocacy training
Who are the **Young Scholars**?

Students with gifted potential who may need:

- Advocates
- Affirmation
- Access

*Short Term*

To *identify* students who may not be considered for advanced academic programs using traditional methods of identification, and who, without that opportunity, are less likely to pursue advanced levels of learning on their own.
To nurture high academic potential at an early age so that students who have historically been underserved in advanced academic programs will be prepared to engage in challenging subject matter and rigorous courses in upper elementary school, middle school, and high school.
Javits 2014

Absolute Priority: Javits Demonstration Programs:

• Under this priority, grantees must “scale up” and evaluate models designed to increase the number of gifted and talented students from underrepresented groups who, through gifted and talented education programs, perform at high levels of academic achievement.

...“‘scaling up’ means selecting a model designed to increase the number of gifted and talented students from underrepresented groups who, through gifted and talented education programs, perform at high levels of academic achievement that has demonstrated effectiveness on a small scale and expanding the model for use with gifted and talented students in broader settings (such as in multiple schools, grade levels, or districts, or in other educational settings) or with different populations of gifted and talented students...”
Project SPARK: Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids

- Focus on **early awareness/identification/intervention** to support high **potential**
- Emphasis at **grades K-2** in schools with high populations from **underserved** groups
- Application/scaling up of the Young Scholars Model in 4 Connecticut school districts
  - **Access** to advanced learning opportunities
  - **Affirmation** of high academic potential
  - **Advocates** for students

Emerging from...

- Prior Javits work (Shaklee, 1993)
- Initial Young Scholars study (Horn, 2005) and follow-up work (Horn & Fisher, 2007; Horn, 2015)
- Emergent Talent report recommendations (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012)
Major Elements of SPARK

• Working with teachers to recognize advanced potential in diverse populations
  – Goal to support recognition and increased response
• Conducting assessments to follow students referred by their teachers to the project
• Providing summer program access in treatment schools
• Comparing treatment and comparison schools on achievement data and later identification for gifted programs

Let’s talk about what high potential looks like...

GIFTED BEHAVIORS
Indicators of Advanced Potential

• With a group, make a list of some of the key behaviors that are indicators of advanced potential.