SPARKing High Potential in the Early Grades

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The Challenge

• 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
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Project SPARK: Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids

- Focus on early identification of high potential
- Intervention to promote achievement
- Emphasis on students in grades K-2, particularly those students from groups traditionally underserved in gifted programs.
  - students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - students from low income backgrounds
- Application/scaling up of the Young Scholars Model (Advanced Academic Programs [AAP] Office, 2013; Horn, 2014)

Benefits for Schools and Students

- Increased identification of and services to students of high potential from all populations, and especially to those from underserved groups.
- Intended support for students:
  - access to support and advanced learning experiences
  - affirmation of their potential and effort
  - advocates who will help to ensure their potential is developed (AAP Office, 2013, p. 15)
- Professional development support for school staff
Identifying Potential

- Observe your students
- Give them opportunities for higher levels thinking and open-ended tasks including Response Lessons.
- Take notes of behaviors and keep work samples
- Use the Gifted Behavior Rating Scale as a tool to rate and record exceptional behaviors
GBRS

• Was developed by FCPS using current research on behaviors that demonstrate academic strengths
• Includes indicators that recognize and value cultural differences
• Aligns with National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards

Identifying Potential

• Observe your students
• Give them opportunities for higher level thinking and open-ended tasks including Response Lessons.
• Take notes of behaviors and keep work samples
• Use the Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale as a tool to rate and record exceptional behaviors
Response Lessons

• Used to “draw out” gifted behaviors
• Allows for critical and creative thinking
• Aligns with GBRS

Thinking Strategies

[Diagram of thinking strategies]

Lesson Examples
A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte
Access Lessons:

http://spark.uconn.edu/

Resources > Treatment School Educators
Password: sparkle

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