

Idaho Gifted and Talented Program



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CONTENT & CURRICULUM | GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

650 W STATE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
BOISE, IDAHO 83702
208 332 6800 OFFICE
WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV

CREATED 12/2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Gifted & Talented Education and Funding history 3

 2017..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 2018..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 2019..... 3

 2020..... 3

 2021..... 3

 2022..... 3

Qualitative/quantitative Data..... 4

Impact 4

Need for endorsed teachers in gifted and talented education 8

Unserved gifted students in Idaho..... 8

Need for future funding..... 9

Conclusions 9

Tables 1-2 - GT Enrollment Summary.....10

GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION AND FUNDING HISTORY

2017

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sherri Ybarra, included a \$1 million-line item in the State Department of Education budget request for gifted education in the areas of professional development and identification, approved by the Legislature through an appropriation in House Bill 620. A Department formula ensures that all schools receive a minimum dollar amount of \$3,000 per year; the remainder of funds based on the number of gifted/talented students identified in ISEE.

2018

The impact of the \$1 million-line item appropriated in House Bill 620 (2017) shows the number of students in the State of Idaho doubles from 8,207 identified Gifted students to 17,804 identified Gifted students. Idaho shows an increase from 2.75% students identified to 5.83%. Another specific indicator of first year impact of funding was through the direct count of attendees at the annual summer conference for gifted and talented educators, Edufest, showing a 40% increase in attendance.

2019

Attendance at Edufest remains steady. The number of teachers endorsed in gifted education increases from 151 in 2017 to 226 in 2019. The data indicates that identification of students decreases slightly to 4.38% of students enrolled in Idaho schools.

2020

Due to budgetary holdbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the \$1 million-line item funding for gifted education was removed from the state budget. Edufest was cancelled with the hopes of returning in 2021. The identification of students as gifted and talented increases to 5.36%.

2021

The \$1 million-line item funding for gifted education is not reinstated into the state budget. Edufest resumes in a hybrid format. The identification of students as gifted and talented decreases to 5.04%.

2022

The \$1 million-line item funding for gifted education is reinstated into the state budget. This is restoration of a loss of funds to gifted education with the intention to restore gifted/talented programs to all schools, many of whom did not have programs at that time. This is not in

compliance with Idaho State Legislature 33-2003. Many districts have reported that the loss of dollars have negatively impacted services, professional development, and identification of gifted/talented students. Districts would appreciate the funding to support gifted programming as the impact of identified students has steadily decreased since 2020.

QUALITATIVE/QUANTITATIVE DATA

- In May 2022, Idaho traditional school enrollment was 310,629 with 14,944 identified as gifted, 4.81% of all Idaho students. This is a decrease from 2021. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that six percent of public-school students are gifted/talented.
- 42% of traditional school districts in Idaho have reported zero (0) gifted students in ISEE in 2022, compared to 38% of traditional school districts in Idaho reporting zero (0) gifted students in ISEE in 2021.
- As of October 2022, ten traditional districts are missing current 3 Year GT Plans.
- 42% of traditional school districts in Idaho reported having no gifted education programs in 2022 even though according to IDAPA Code 171.03, *“Each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program.”* This is not in compliance with requirements and with the number of districts who have submitted 3 Year Plans.
- In May 2022, Idaho has 227 educators endorsed in gifted education. However, only 157 are currently employed.

IMPACT

There is a concern that 42% of Idaho traditional schools reported no gifted education programs and no identified gifted students. This is not in compliance with Idaho State Legislature 33-2003. 92% of traditional districts have submitted a current and mandated District Plan which means there is a system in place for the majority of Idaho districts to be identifying and serving their gifted and talented students through differentiation or other strategies. Before the 1-million-dollar allocation, several districts lacked a coherent 3 Year GT Plan and failed to identify gifted students for their district. However, districts are now communicating directly with the SDE about their plans and the SDE has contracted three regional facilitators to help districts with their gifted and talented programs. The Covid-19 pandemic, which forced many districts and departments to cut budgets, pushed gifted education even farther down the priority list and has made it even more inequitable in Idaho. Wealthier and larger school districts identify more children as gifted than rural and poorer ones. Without the funding for appropriate programming and identification, we have seen a steady decrease in quality programs and a decrease in identification numbers. Districts need the line item funding to support their gifted identification and programming.

Idaho identifies and tests children in all five areas of giftedness: Academic, Intellectual, Visual/Performing Arts, Creativity, and Leadership. This makes identification in Idaho measured in relative terms and not absolute terms, allowing for a wider representation of gifted students than very high intelligence or the top 1 percent. The National Association for Gifted Children defines its target group as kids whose “ability is significantly above the norm for their age.” The significance of a disparity in funding for gifted education is that districts lacking a gifted/talented program need support knowing how to test and identify in all five areas of giftedness. Often small districts use the ISAT as the sole measure to identify gifted children, which is an assessment not intended for this purpose. Districts are going back to using a single criterion instead of multiple measures as mandated per IDAPA 08.02.03.171.05, because they don’t have the resources to purchase and use appropriate assessments. If testing is not consistent statewide, students that transfer from a smaller district to a larger district are not automatically accepted into the Gifted and Talented program. A child moving into another district may be retested, according to district guidelines, but even then, a seat in a gifted program may not be available for that child, especially if 42% of the state does not provide programming. Also, once a student is identified, programming, strategies, curriculum, and resources needs to be made available to continue to foster their strengths and provide challenging learning environments. This illustrates a need for line item funding for identification, and for increased professional development into accelerated learning strategies. Above average ability in all content areas should be a focus for not only identified gifted and talented students but for all talented students that consistently score in the top ten percent which will allow opportunities that are context specific, locally focused, and meet the needs of the learner in their specific domains.

Although House Bill 620 made a significant shift to fund the enormous need for Idaho students in gifted education, districts are struggling to comply with Idaho Code without the specific line item funding to provide support for these students. Under Chapter 20 of Idaho Education Laws and Rules, Education of Exceptional Children, a natural tie exists between those with disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. Those students who are twice exceptional, need services for disabilities and for gifts in one or more areas. Several states, including North Carolina, Virginia, and Colorado, are starting to include specific mention of this third area of twice exceptionalities in their state law regarding educational needs. Recognizing a population specifically in code highlights the needs a state should prioritize. Because no federal funding exists for gifted education, as it does for special education with reference to students with disabilities, our state and local districts face a great burden to recognize and meet the needs of these students.

Gifted students in public education suffer a similar high school dropout rate as do students from the general or other “at risk” populations. Traditionally, gifted education has been portrayed as inherently elitist and has been dominated by students from white, Asian American, and upper-income backgrounds. Gifted and talented education has many times been misperceived as a luxury when in reality it is an intervention. If we fail to challenge these students, we may lose some of our brightest students due to disengagement, which would be a significant loss for Idaho.

The overarching use of the 1-million-dollar allocation, as detailed in the required 3-year district plans, was used to identify students not receiving services and to help increase the number of teachers endorsed in gifted education. Most districts used the dollars to send educators to Edufest, Idaho’s week-long professional development for GT educators, as well as other trainings, such as university credits for gifted courses, and state and federal conferences. Several districts were able to hire more gifted teachers and district facilitators. However, many of those positions are no longer available without the allocation. It is important that gifted and talented and twice exceptional professional development is available to all educators.

Below are a few narrative comments from GT Facilitators in their response to my question: “What would the reinstatement of the gifted/talented funding provide for your district?”

Funding would allow for better opportunities to support our students. With the limited money our current GT program has from fundraisers and PD, we have to fight for everything because the funding is not “tied” to the programming or to a building like other teachers. This year I worked to get our teachers reimbursed for mileage they incurred from traveling between schools. That reimbursement wasn’t a “pre-planned” budget item and since there wasn’t GATE funding it had to be found elsewhere in the district budget. Funding for testing/assessment materials is an ongoing cost. Technology is typically for a building, but when it comes to a program, there isn’t enough to go around or made to be accessible/shareable with a building or other teacher. PD funds is too often allocated for other content. Please help us to support or Gifted population so they can be successful!

– Jozlyn W. Thompson, Principal, Jefferson Joint School District #251

Funding would allow our district to expand opportunities for students, including curriculum, training for staff and identification tools. It would provide a more robust Gifted and Talented program in lieu of the bare minimum to meet the requirements of the law. We need the ability to test more than academic strengths. However, what is desperately needed is funding for our

programs. Every GATE facilitator is an added FTE and it is very difficult to get already stretched districts to provide an FTE for them.

- Jeffrey Gee, Superintendent, Ririe School District #252

The reinstatement of the funding for GATE professional development and testing would make a monumental difference in our ability to provide professional development for staff to work with this unique group of learners. Gifted students have the need for specialized instruction on many different levels. Some of our students are twice exceptional, and teachers need training to develop their strengths while shoring up their weaknesses at the same time.

In the past, we have also used this money to screen for students from our underrepresented sub groups (ML, title students, culturally diverse, and 2E students) as they can be harder to mine out from a traditional classroom. Our goal is to have full representation from these groups in our gifted programs, but the cost of district wide screening is very expensive. State funding for screening and testing is much needed and would be greatly appreciated!

- Helga Frankenstein, Gifted Supervisor, Boise School District #1

GATE funding is paramount for small, rural districts in Idaho, such as Lake Pend Oreille School District. Rural districts are already over extended with the increasing needs of students coming into our schools after COVID-19. The reinstatement of gifted and talented funding would allow designated monies to ensure that teachers have access to high quality training/professional development and provide the opportunity for capacity building as leadership stipends for teacher-leaders in serving gifted and talented students.

- Joy Jansen, Director of Services for Exceptional Children, Lake Pend Orielle School District

Another specific indicator of impact of funding is through a direct count of attendees at the yearly gifted summer conference, Edufest. Below are exact numbers of attendees.

- 2017 164 Attendees (145 from Idaho)
- 2018 205 Attendees (141 from Idaho)
- 2019 181 Attendees (145 from Idaho)
- 2020 Placed on hold because of Covid-19
- 2021 172 Attendees in Hybrid format (91 from Idaho)
- 2022 86 Attendees (49 from Idaho)

NEED FOR ENDORSED TEACHERS IN GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

As of the most recent May 2022 ISSE count, Idaho has 227 educators endorsed in gifted education. However, only 157 are currently employed. The data places the total enrollment of Idaho traditional students at 310,629 and 14,944 have been identified as gifted (4.81%). In order to serve these students, each teacher would need to serve at least 95 of these students, which is not reasonable considering the number of small rural schools in Idaho. Gifted students present as a high needs' population, who often require *smaller* class sizes, especially if the students are twice exceptional, students who are both gifted and have a learning disability (or disabilities) and who would be included in the gifted count and count of students with disabilities. In addition, gifted students often have unique emotional and behavioral needs not met in a larger classroom. As indicated in staffing reports, 70 gifted endorsed educators are not currently working in gifted education. Many districts who want to start a gifted program have trouble finding an endorsed educator to fill the position and must hire staff without an endorsement. Most districts that reported their use of the 2017 dollars specifically mentioned using these resources to assist a teacher with that gifted endorsement and we did see a significant increase in endorsed educators from 2017- 2020. The lack of funding has directly impacted the number of endorsed teachers which has now decreased. Teachers attending the Edufest professional development conference has decreased as well.

UNSERVED GIFTED STUDENTS IN IDAHO

- As many areas of giftedness exist, so do the needs for these students
- Idaho schools in almost every district, small and large, do not identify gifted students in three of the five areas mandated by statute: creative, leadership, visual and performing arts.
- 50 school districts have reported zero (0) gifted students in ISEE even though these districts have a GT 3-year plan on file with the SDE.
- Students who attend small rural schools in Idaho are less likely to be identified as gifted, and if they are, are less likely to receive services.
- Students who are twice-exceptional (meaning they have high abilities and disabilities concurrently) are often excluded from gifted programs due to lack of services, qualified staffing, and understanding on this population of students.
- According to the National Association of Gifted Students, 3 out of every 100 students is considered gifted or potentially gifted. Based on student counts in each district that reported (0) gifted students, Idaho could be missing up to 215 rural gifted students.

NEED FOR FUTURE FUNDING

While funding dedicated to GATE has benefited Idaho in many ways, the impact of no funding has left districts to identify several needs for serving gifted students. These areas include:

- Support to districts to increase the number of endorsed gifted educators;
- Financial support for districts to provide additional funds/stipends for a gifted/talented coordinator;
- District purchase of universal screening materials to find and support underserved populations that may be gifted;
- District purchase of materials and resources to support a new or reinstated gifted program;
- District payment of registration for students who cannot afford after school programs, such as technology, the arts, or enhanced reading experiences;
- District efforts to train staff on differentiation, curriculum compacting, and other research based accelerated practices;
- District efforts to identify students in all five areas of giftedness including Academic, Intellectual, Visual/Performing Arts, Creativity, and Leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

- The 1-million-dollar funding line item increased the number of students identified, the number of teachers endorsed, and solidified accountability of the development and implementation of 3 Year Gifted Plans in school districts. Without it we have an unfunded mandate that districts are struggling to meet compliance, especially rural districts.
- The gifted and talented funding allowed districts to purchase identification and evaluation tools and screeners allowing for multiple assessment strategies per code (08.02.03.171.05).
- GT funding language should require a 3 Year Gifted Plan, which is already in code, (08.02.03.171) but not always followed or implemented by districts.
- The impact of no line item funding has caused a decrease in identification, programing, and endorsement of staff.

Table 1: FY2022 GT Enrollment by District

District	GT Students	District	GT Students
001	3394	272	100
002	2681	273	322
003	88	281	142
021	9	282	6
025	450	291	19
033	46	321	337
052	69	331	42
055	168	340	577
058	21	341	11
060	119	351	55
061	172	363	16
071	2	365	18
072	1	370	24
084	2	371	122
091	474	373	57
093	923	381	18
101	38	391	1
131	489	393	40
132	104	411	251
133	3	412	2
134	202	414	60
135	6	418	26
137	26	421	43
139	276	433	16
148	14	State Total	14944
150	21		
151	76		
181	7		
192	1		
193	13		
201	138		
202	56		
215	73		
221	20		
231	79		
232	76		
251	191		
253	29		
261	109		
271	1461		

Table 2: FY2022 GT Enrollment – Charter Schools

Public charter schools are exempt from submitting a 3 Year GT Plan, however the following public charter schools have submitted May 2022 ISEE data as identified gifted and talented students.

Charter	GT Students
452	123
454	6
455	24
457	64
463	23
464	28
468	11
472	2
473	15
477	11
479	23
480	36
488	4
492	29
493	1
494	2
496	16
498	1
534	12
562	7
768	13
785	14
794	5
796	8
813	14
State Total	492