

Who Is Missing? Finding High Potential Students from Underserved Groups Discussion Guide

The purpose of this video (Part 2 of a 3-part series) is to raise awareness of excellence gaps in our schools (Part 1 focuses on that), and, even more importantly, to suggest ways to diminish the Excellence Gap. Traditional identification measures seldom find learners from underrepresented populations. Therefore, schools and district must take a nontraditional approach to find these high potential students. Through a series of interviews, including Kentucky Commissioner of Education Dr. Stephen Pruitt, Dr. Jonathan Plucker of Johns Hopkins University, Purdue's Dr. Marcia Gentry, and Jefferson County Public Schools teacher Mrs. Donna Smith, three main actions are discussed.

This guide is designed to facilitate discussion prompted by the video. Its use is up to the facilitator and should differ based on the audience. Whether answered in writing during the viewing, prompting oral discussion after viewing, or a mixture of the two, the questions should aid in understanding and also encourage continued thinking and action concerning the Excellence Gap. Suggested ideas follow each question.

1. What is the Excellence Gap?

The Excellence Gap mirrors the achievement gap at the advanced level of student achievement. Jonathan Plucker and his colleagues at several different universities have analyzed the state-by-state results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This research revealed that lower socio-economic demographic groups, as well as English language learners, Hispanic and African American students were underrepresented at the highest levels of academic achievement. Their results were far below their counterparts.

2. Think about the Excellence Gap in your school or district. What do you predict you will find in the data? Why?

3. List and define the three main actions that can find high potential students from underserved groups.

-Response Lessons: Designed by Javits Project SPARK and the Young Scholars Program, response lessons are open-ended lessons that encourage creative and critical thinking of all students-Universal Screening: All students take assessments for the identification process, not simply students who are recommended. All students are included in informal or formal assessments prior to teacher recommendations, ability testing, achievement testing, response lessons, etc.

-Local Norms: Students are compared with other students from their local educational setting, ideally using assessments that are universally administered to an entire grade.

Local norms are used in order to compare students with others who have had similar demographics rather than using national norms.

- 4. Describe the Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale (GBRS) and how you could use it in your school or district. What data would you include to complete the GBRS? How would that change the population of learners you are identifying?**

The Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale, developed through Project SPARK, has four categories: Exceptional Ability to Learn, Exceptional Application of Knowledge, Exceptional Creative/Productive Thinking, and Exceptional Motivation to Succeed. The rating scale quantifies data such as observation and response lessons. Data from the GBRS are used alongside standardized test data (including nonverbal assessments), anecdotal records, work samples, and other relevant materials to determine which students might benefit from additional challenge.

- 5. Consider using Response Lessons in your school or district. What do you need to know prior to initiating response lessons? What steps need to happen to ensure they are implemented and assessed correctly?**
- 6. What would universal screening look like in your school or district? What measures would you use? When would you screen?**
- 7. Describe a possible plan for establishing and using local norms in your school or district.**
- 8. How has your school or district used Special Considerations (as described in the Kentucky Gifted Regulations) in the identification process? What else do you need to know in order to implement the use of Special Considerations? Who needs to know that the Kentucky Gifted Regulations includes Special Considerations? How can the use of Special Considerations be initiated or improved in your school or district?**

Special Considerations may allow students who do not qualify using formal assessment measures to be identified as GT. These students typically exhibit GT behaviors/characteristics but fail to score at or above the 96th percentile on a state recognized GT assessment due to environmental, cultural, and disabling conditions, which may mask their true abilities. This provision in the Regulations allows districts/schools an opportunity to view the whole child using external characteristics, (classroom observations, recommendations, and additional data such as the measures mentioned earlier in this video) in place of the 96th percentile score.

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