ED 344 410   EC 301 139

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TITLE   Community Links as Resources.
PUB DATE   Mar 92
NOTE   11p.; In: Challenges in Gifted Education: Developing
                Potential and Investing in Knowledge for the 21st
                Century; see EC 301 131.
PUB TYPE   Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.)
                (120)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Allied Health Occupations Education; Creativity; Due
                Process; Elementary Secondary Education; Emotional
                Development; *Gifted; *Humanistic Education; Legal
                Responsibility; Mentors; Parent Participation; Parent
                School Relationship; Program Development; School
                Business Relationship; *School Community
                Relationship; *Talent

ABSTRACT
                This chapter examines issues in cultivating community
resources in programs for gifted and talented children. First, ways
to meet the affective needs of gifted children are considered and the
importance of bridging the gap between home and school and resolving
conflicts is stressed. Ten hindrances to the optimum development of
children are identified as well as 10 positive affective strategies
for parents (such as providing consistency in discipline and
expectations). The second section looks at ways to promote community
support for gifted children including marketing, getting others
involved in mentorship programs, and forming school business
partnerships. Finally, ways in which the legal system can be used to
influence education are discussed. These include lobbying for
legislation and use of court cases, due process, and mediation.
Finally, a need is seen to influence the training of health
professionals (physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, social
workers) so that these community professionals become more informed
on behavioral or health correlates of high intelligence or
creativity. (10 references) (DB)

Community Links as Resources

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Introduction

During the last decade, parents and business leaders have expressed strong concern about the quality of education in our country and have sought to become more involved in the planning and implementation of school experiences. Personnel in some school districts have viewed this as an unwarranted and even unwelcome intrusion, while others have been more accepting.

This trend of community involvement has strong potential for improving gifted education. Neglecting such involvement could have serious negative consequences for gifted education. This chapter focuses on some of the most important issues in cultivating community resources.

Meeting Affective Needs of Gifted Children

Bridging the Gap Between Home and School

A most important and enduring problem in meeting affective needs of gifted children is bridging the gap between home and school. Affective needs of gifted children optimally should be met through cooperative efforts. However, tensions and misunderstandings often exist between parents and school personnel, thereby preventing positive actions and also potentially being emotionally harmful to the students. Meaningful home/school partnerships seldom exist, and there is often a sense of alienation and distance — even suspicion and distrust — or, at best, a sense that the other party is irrelevant.

Parents of gifted children commonly complain that school personnel are unsupportive, disinterested in their children's special needs, or even hostile. The frustration of these parents often leads them to feel extremely angry. School personnel, on the other hand, relate that parents of gifted children are demanding of special factors, are overly critical, and do not understand either appropriate educational activities or the limitations under which schools must operate.

Parents of gifted children are often seen as an elitist group of "unguided missiles," and parent advocacy groups are seen as rabble rousers. Simultaneously, the parents often view the schools as being unresponsive, advocating mediocrity, supporting the "mainstreaming" of gifted students, and forcing gifted students into a Procrustean bed with uniform curriculum designed for the average or below average child.

Too often, perhaps even typically, there exists an "us versus them" mentality between school personnel and parents of gifted children. This is unfortunate because during such struggles, the child, who is the object of the whole educational endeavor, tends to become lost in the process.

2

How can the gap between home and school be bridged? How can that, chasm that seems to have widened in the last several decades be narrowed or even eliminated?

Both parents and educators must recognize that our society has an enduring ambivalence with the purpose of education, particularly public education, and even more ambivalence about education of the gifted and talented. Our nation's leaders talk at length about the need for our brightest youngsters to lead us into the 21st Century, but these same leaders provide little support — financial or otherwise — for truly excellent, challenging and individualized education for these high potential youngsters. This ambivalence appears to stem from what Tannenbaum (1990) described as the conflict between equity and excellence in American education.

Because gifted children are by definition exceptional, they require different educational experiences. But differentiated and individualized education often, though not necessarily, is the antithesis of a system. And certainly some systems are more rigid, while others allow for more flexible pacing options (Cox, Daniel, & Boston, 1985).

Changing school districts to meet the needs of gifted children can be very difficult, particularly in the current educational climate that is so opposed to ability grouping and advocates heterogenous grouping for cooperative learning. To accomplish such change, educators and parents need to work together.

In many communities, a change in posture and attitude is needed by both the parents and by the teachers. Parents must recognize that teachers are professionals and, as such, few teachers actively seek to be malicious or neglectful toward gifted children. Parents must realize that schools historically have reflected the values of communities, rather than leading the way to set standards. Education systems do what society asks them to do and, thereby, keenly reflect the cultural ambivalence society has about education in general and gifted education in particular. Teachers must recognize that caring parents want the best for their children (and should want the best) and that parents often have information about children not possessed by the teacher.

Beyond exhorting these attitude changes, there are also some general behaviors that can help overcome the gap. In some school districts, the problem is getting parents involved, knowledgeable, and responsible. Substantial documentation exists concerning the importance of parental involvement in enhancing a school's quality of education and in increasing parental satisfaction with the effectiveness of the school (Flaxman and Inger, 1991). To get parents involved, often a straightforward invitation to form a parent group will suffice.

In other school districts, the problem is getting schools or communities to rethink their position on gifted education because many view gifted education as elitist and, therefore, undesirable. Where elitism is raised as a concern, the approach most likely to work is to contrast the operations of the school district's gifted education program with its athletic program. A comparison of policies and procedures for implementing these programs helps to bring out society's values and unrecognized attitudes regarding the community's ambivalence toward gifted education.

3

For a particular child, however, such general approaches are usually not helpful in producing cooperative actions to the satisfaction of those involved. In particular, disagreements seem to arise most often in the following areas:

- Whether or not a child is identified as gifted
- Expectations that may accompany a child identified as gifted
- Unrealistic expectations or expectations that are not jointly shared by home and school
- Questions about early entrance, grade advancement, or continuous progress
- Attitudes about elitism
- Handling stress
- Deciding who is responsible for what actions

Resolving such disagreements usually involves mediation, due process, or, as a last resort, legal remedies. As noted later in this chapter, there is an increasing amount of legal and quasi-legal literature concerning appropriate education of gifted children, all of which reflect instances where understanding, communication, and cooperation have broken down.

Affective Strategies Despite the cultural ambivalence and other factors that may generate a
for Parents problematic milieu, there are specific actions parents can take to meet the affective needs of gifted children.

However, several particular hindrances, most of which do no⁺ stem from giftedness per se, must be recognized. All have major negative intellectual, academic, and affective implications, although some authors, e.g., Piirto (1992), might disagree with the negativity. Some of them cannot be changed by parents or schools, while others can be. Ten hindrances are prevalent in our current society:

- Poverty and low socioeconomic status
- Drugs, including alcohol
- Minority group status
- Family disintegration
- Harsh, inconsistent punishment
- Overconformity to societal expectations
- Perfectionism by the parents
- Rewarding indiscriminately the child's behaviors (i.e., "gold and garbage" alike)
- Emotional problems by family members (e.g., insecurity, depression, and low self-esteem)
- Chance

By contrast, 10 particularly key behavioral patterns support or enhance the development of ntellectual potential:

- Closeness, communication, and affection with at least one mentor
- Being in an atmosphere of optimism and high expectancies
- Acceptance of the child's feelings, though not necessarily the behaviors
- Modeling and treating the child with honesty and trust

- Consistency in discipline and expectations
- Seeing parents, teachers, and other role models taking risks
- Allowing the child to take risks through establishing the fewest possible rules, except for the child with attention deficit disorder
- Self-reflection, self-understanding, and appreciation of oneself as an individual
- Development of a sense of humor
- Chance

It is not possible to succinctly describe ways to overcome the hindrances and to adopt the recommended behavior patterns; books have been written on each of these subjects. Indeed, the very presence of these books that focus on behavioral and emotional patterns of gifted children represents a major advance during the last decade regarding gifted children.

Similarly, there has been an increased focus on affective needs by state and national associations concerned with gifted children. For example, the National Association for Gifted Children formed a Parent and Community Division and a Guidance and Counseling Division. Recurring themes in the meetings of these divisions are the joint inclusion of parents and teachers, and a focus on affective needs. Similar efforts have been undertaken by the Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted (SENG) program at Wright State University, the Gifted Child Society of New Jersey, and the College of Education at the University of Northern Colorado. Such efforts did not exist until the last decade.

Most importantly, however, parents need to have the opportunity to meet and share parenting experiences with each other. Through such interchange, parents feel less alone and more empowered to meet their children's affective needs. In such a forum, parents are able to "swap parenting recipes" and to decide more specifically which actions are appropriate (or inappropriate) for their children and their family. Discussion and support groups are as important for parents of gifted children as for any other group of exceptionality.

Promoting Community Support for Gifted Children

Obtaining Support Through Marketing

As emphasized in the preceding section, community awareness and support are extremely important. The strong community support for varsity sports or school bands has not been simply accidental. The support occurred because efforts marshaled community acceptance. The implication seems clear: support through marketing is needed for gifted education.

One difficulty in marketing gifted education is the name of product — gifted education. Parents, teachers, administrators, and the students themselves regularly report a strong sense of discomfort with the term.

Another problem arises from educators' own discomfort with the product. Educators themselves often have not resolved their own cultural ambivalence. Further, they may not be fully convinced of the worth of our product. They must, nevertheless, persuade others to get involved if they are to achieve community support and involvement.

5

Too often, educators and parents of gifted children talk only to each other and not to persons in decision-making positions or to those who shape community attitudes. State, local, and national conferences on gifted children need broader inclusion; otherwise it is the "converted" preaching to the "saved." Fortunately, the National Association for Gifted Children and The Association for the Gifted have demonstrated leadership in this area. However, more efforts are needed. The key leaders in communities need to be continually reminded that no society has ever been held in the highest esteem because of that society's high level of mediocrity.

Getting Others Involved (Mentorships)

After years of study, the Richardson Foundation (Cox, Daniel, & Boston, 1985) identified five programming options that held the most promise for providing appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented students. Internships and mentoring programs were among the most promising practices for flexible advancement and pacing.

In practice, however, mentoring programs have been severely underutilized. Gifted students have been enjoined to participate in field trips, artist-in-residence programs, and job-shadowing, but they have seldom participated in true mentorship experiences, despite obvious benefits. Mentoring relationships affect and benefit the mentors, the students, the faculty, and the schools in many ways.

Mentorships provide excellent opportunities for businesses to become involved in education in meaningful ways and to increase the resources for gifted students. Students hone thinking skills and develop creativity. Situations demand that students be real-life problem solvers because they consistently confront questions and seek answers. Mentorships have been shown to result in increased self-esteem for students who experience successful solving of real-life problems (Reilly, 1992). And both mentor and mentee find new ways to respond to problems within mutual fields of interest.

Mentorships provide unique opportunities for students to develop skills in diverse areas and provide the connections between work and school that are necessary to hold the interest of gifted students. Schools, in more traditional offerings, cannot provide such a variety of in-depth experiences that have real-life emphasis and that often involve the use of sophisticated equipment. The impact of real-life actions connect with work in the classroom. For example, while observing veterinarians reconstructing a tail for a peregrine falcon, a student sees the usefulness of advanced algebra and trigonometry. While writing copy for an advertizing agency, a student sees the need to proofread and edit written material.

For many students, mentorships help to develop a clearer definition of career options, a particular problem for many gifted youngsters who have multipotentiality or whose interests are unusual and arcane. Although gifted students are usually encouraged to believe that they "can do anything" as a career, they simultaneously may feel pressure resulting from high expectations of others. Mentors are often best equipped to provide guidance.

Additionally, students benefit from the inspiration generated by a role model. Mentors offer their mentees encouragement, advice, and counsel; help with career moves; and provide inspiration. The visibility and excitement of being exposed to powerful people adds another dimension.

Mentoring programs allow students to gain a more mature sense of responsibility and direction. Mentees choose topics and focus, select a mentor, work with others, and complete projects for which they have

substantial responsibility. Participating in a mentoring program involves moderate risk, another motivating factor for gifted students. Research has indicated that moderate risk taking increases performance, persistence, sense of competence, pride, satisfaction, and self-knowledge. The tolerance for errors and the pleasure of succeeding where success is not guaranteed are important as well.

Mentoring programs also influence staff (Reilly, 1992). The opportunity to work one-on-one with an enthusiastic student, along with the additional classroom resources and professional development, results in increased satisfaction with work roles. Observing and guiding students who create meaningful products adds to a teacher's sense of satisfaction, not only because the student demonstrates greater knowledge and skills, but also because the student manifests more appropriate interpersonal behaviors, such as communicating, coping, and being responsible.

Student interaction with both their mentors and their teachers can lead to positive implications for the education of those students who did not participate in a mentoring program. Mentors may volunteer, or teachers may invite them, to speak in the classroom.

Mentors commonly report benefits to themselves: rejuvenated spirit and enthusiasm, clarified goals, renewed hope for the future; and fresh new ideas from the student. Many mentors feel that they have accomplished some of their goals through their mentee's efforts, particularly since mentees often undertake projects that mentors cannot accomplish because of other priorities. Some mentors even report a change in their sense of self, new friendships, and increased opportunities.

Mentoring also affords the mentor an opportunity to assist new talent to enter the profession, often repaying past favors when they themselves were similarly mentored. Most people readily recall those who supported their entry into a field and recognize the value of that assistance.

Establishing a mentoring program may provide a challenge, particularly in meshing the organizational structure and philosophies of business with those of education. Employers must allow their employees to engage in the mentoring process, which often is initially inefficient from a business viewpoint. Because they do not follow a traditional classroom format, mentoring programs can challenge educators as well. For a mentoring program to work, both the educational and business perspectives must be involved, with recognition of the vast differences between the two. As Roseneau (1982) noted, the structure and organization of public school systems is as different from large profit-making corporations as rural roadside apple vendors differ from fabricators of nuclear submarines.

Despite their differences, theorists confirm that education and business can successfully collaborate. Businesses must become involved very early in planning school/business partnerships, and the partnership coordinator must be politically aware and sensitive to differences between the public and private sector.

Although businesses may offer to become partners in education, educators may be wary of their intentions and, therefore, reluctant to accept business participation in school endeavors. Educators sometimes believe that the business community's involvement stems from self-interest, rather than from a desire to help students.

It is important to realize that goals of schools and businesses are not contradictory. Business may achieve some overall corporate goals through

7
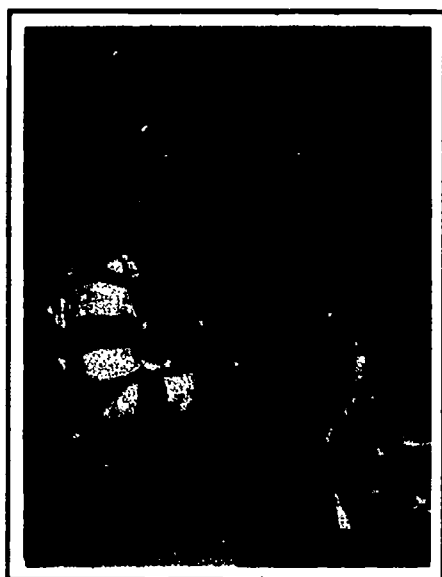
investing time and resources in a mentoring program. Besides increased well-being and satisfaction of employees who chose to mentor, businesses may help to promote educational change, improve the quality of future employees and citizens, and make a contribution to their communities. Companies can promote good public relations as well as generate marketing benefits.

Recognizing the severity of the nation's educational problems and their impact on business, the business community has recently exerted efforts to influence school operations. Large corporations such as Exxon and Polaroid have implemented programs that attempt to deal with educational problems that impact directly or indirectly upon business.

Interestingly, small and medium-sized companies often have different motivations because they believe they lack the financial resources to engage in substantial educational endeavors. Such companies may be reluctant to extend leadership for school/business partnerships. They express concern about becoming involved in educational conflict. More often, they will support education for such altruistic reasons as civic pride, boosterism, social conscience, and corporate guilt.

Regardless of the size of the business or the motivation factors, historically the least exercised option for businesses that are dissatisfied with education is to form a partnership. But the existence of a mentoring program depends on a collaborative effort between schools and businesses, and businesses are increasingly interested in becoming directly involved in the quality of education in their communities. By June 1988, approximately 73,215 partnerships between schools and businesses had been established (Baas, 1991), essentially tripling the number from the previous five years. Almost three-fourths of these school/business partnerships involved small or medium-sized businesses. In June 1989, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that "business has become one of the radical elements in school reform."

Working together may help not only to generate mentoring programs but also to promote cooperative community commitment to other flexible educational options for gifted children. As such, mentoring programs serve as clear models for students, faculty, schools, and businesses working together — models that likely will be increasingly used in the future.

Using the Legal System to Influence Education

Lobbying for Legislation   During the last decade, advocacy efforts for gifted children most often have involved lobbying by organized groups, usually state associations, to enact or change state laws or regulations. These efforts have focused on passing laws that mandate certification of teachers, minimal standards for programs for gifted children, identification of these gifted students, and funding for gifted programs. Other advocacy efforts have included persuading state departments of education to issue rules and basic standards for establishing appropriate educational programs for gifted students.

The laws that have been passed have been necessary, but not sufficient, in providing for appropriate gifted education. The same could be said about many of the administrative rules, regulations, standards, and allocation of money by state departments of education. As a result, there has been recent increased emphasis on seeking remedies through case law (as contrasted to legislative law), and this increase will likely continue into the foreseeable future due to economic cutbacks and other obstacles.

Court Cases, Due Process, and Mediation

Increasingly, parents have used case law as an advocacy approach on behalf of gifted children, particularly in states (such as Pennsylvania) that have already enacted enabling legislation. Karnes and Marquardt (1991a, 1991b) pointed out that the legal process will be used in the future to bring greater protection for gifted children. They reported a surprising amount of case law, ranging from disagreements about early admission, to divorce and liability lawsuits where giftedness was an issue, to allegations of fraud against a school about falsely advertising the presence of a specialized program for gifted children.

Court cases will likely increase in number in the future and will continue to focus on the general areas of eligibility criteria, teacher certification, delivery of services, due process, and tort liability (Karnes & Marquardt, 1991a, 1991b). Even so, parents generally would be better advised to seek remedies through mediation and/or due process procedures. Lawsuits are expensive and time-consuming, often to the point of rendering issues moot because of the time delays.

But few parents understand the concepts and procedures involved in mediation and due process in the education arena. Educational law and procedures are complex, and few attorneys consider themselves experts in such areas.

If more community advocacy is to occur, then, it must go beyond achieving enactment of state laws. Heightened emphasis must be given to helping parents understand the concepts and procedures of mediation and due process as primary vehicles to implement such laws in order to achieve optimal education for gifted children.

Influencing the Training of Health Professionals

Professionals outside of schools provide diverse services for persons having emotional or interpersonal concerns. These services range from guidance and advice — given by pediatricians, family practitioners, nurses, and nurse practitioners — to active interventions administered by such mental health professionals as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. Unfortunately, these professionals have not received, and continue not to receive, training in affective needs of gifted children and their families.

With rare exception, the training of community professionals fails to mention gifted, talented, or creative children. The only exception is in the field of psychology, where the Terman studies are often briefly cited as an example of longitudinal research regarding the educational and affective needs of gifted children. More recent research or clinical findings and implications regarding gifted children are not mentioned in textbooks and materials used to train education and health professionals.

This gap in training is ironic because, of all the mental health professions, psychology has played the biggest role in developing conceptualizations and measures of such key concepts as intelligence, creativity, talent, and related concepts. Even so, it is still not uncommon for graduate students in psychology to be told that when a person's IQ is above 130, intelligence testing is largely insignificant. Similarly, modern tests of intelligence continue to emphasize the lower end of the intellectual spectrum, in many ways even more so than was true 10 or 20 years ago. For example, the new revisions of the Wechsler Scales (WISC-R, WPPSI-R, WAIS-R) and the Binet, Fourth Edition, all have lower ceilings than the earlier Stanford-Binet.

In fact, despite having developed many of the concepts and measures used in the identification and assessment of gifted children, psychology seems to

have generally abdicated the area. Certainly, there are some notable exceptions, such as Robert Sternberg, who have posited interesting and challenging notions. But, otherwise, psychologists have left such matters to educators, most of whom are not explicitly trained in assessment or in specific counseling and therapy techniques to the extent that psychologists are. Even the school psychologists employed by educational systems have received very little training about gifted children; their emphasis most often is on serving children with disabilities as specified in P.L. 94-142.

Thus, although parents often turn to health and mental health professionals for understanding, guidance, and assistance with gifted children, the community professionals are typically ill-informed and reluctant to consider that high intelligence or creativity might have behavioral or health correlates. Most seem to assume the position that if these issues were important, they would have been taught in professional schools or would be written about in journals.

Although some articles have been written, few have specifically been labeled as being about gifted children. Such areas as anorexia, alcoholism, existential depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and allergic reactions have at various times been shown to be related to measured intelligence. Similarly, intelligence has been shown to be significantly related to the success of certain kinds of psychotherapy. Other studies have shown that gifted children generally reach certain developmental milestones earlier than other children.

Currently, there appear to be only a few efforts to educate health and mental health practitioners. In 1985, the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) convened a Health Professions Task Force, which resulted in the publication of *Reaching Out to the Gifted Child: Roles for the Health Professions* (Hayden, 1985). In 1989, partly as a result of the AAGC Task Force Report, the Michigan Office of Gifted and Talented convened representatives from nursing, psychiatry, psychology, social work, and other related professions to stimulate awareness and to promote more inservice education for these professionals. This project is continuing. The School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, has developed specific course curricula for its doctoral psychology students, and its SENG program has organized symposia at American Psychological Association conventions and other meetings.

But these efforts are minuscule and need major expansion. State and local associations of these professional groups should be contacted directly and encouraged to include sessions on the characteristics and needs of gifted children and their families. These same associations should be encouraged to publish similar articles in their professional journals. And state associations for gifted children should invite key leaders from these other professional groups to attend and participate in their conferences on gifted children. Examples of topics are legion: attention deficit disorder and gifted children, learning disabilities in gifted children, counseling for gifted adolescents.

For parents who are seeking advice or who are faced with a mental health or counseling dilemma that is compounded by a child being gifted, the advice is more complex. The parents should expect that only the rarest health or mental health professional will understand or appreciate the characteristics of gifted children and the implications of these characteristics. Thus, the parents should look for an otherwise competent professional who demonstrates an openness to learn about gifted and talented children.

Often, the parents must then provide the professional with books, references, or other authoritative information; this is an unusual approach for parents to have to take when dealing with professionals.

Summary It has often been said that gifted children are not gifted for only four hours per week (i.e., when they are in a specialized program). This true statement accurately implies that gifted children have the same intellect and other characteristics outside the school setting when they are in the community at large.

Community links regarding gifted children and their families are critical resources that have not been developed to the extent warranted. In the current climate of hard economic times, opposition to ability grouping, and the cultural quandary about excellence versus equity, community links become even more critical. Gifted education cannot function in isolation; to attempt to do so would have tragic consequences.

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