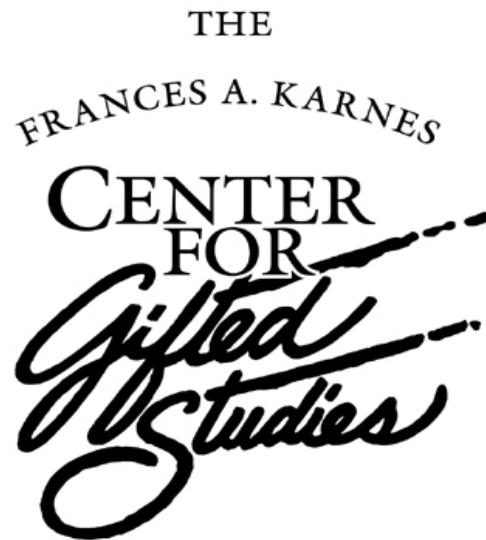


Appropriate Practices for Screening, Identifying and Instruction of Gifted/At-Risk Youth

A Project funded by
The U.S. Department of Education
and
The University of Southern Mississippi



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This document is designed to be an educational tool for gifted education classroom teachers, all teachers of students who are at risk of school failure, and parents in the appropriate practices of recognizing high ability in students who are at risk and enhancing the educational experience for gifted students.

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Overview

There is a paucity of research pertaining to the incidence of gifted/at-risk youth. The dearth of information on these students has led to a misunderstanding of their characteristics and a lack of empirically sound intervention strategies (Anolik, 1979; Brooks, 1980; Peterson, 2002). Ignoring these students represents a missed opportunity for society at large and the gifted individuals (Mahoney, 1980). There is a need to investigate the characteristics of this particular at-risk population in order to develop intervention strategies that will enable these gifted students to become positive contributing members of society.

For purposes of this publication, the term *at risk* will be used to refer to all youth who are in danger of dropping out of high school or not completing high school with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function in adult life (Cross, 2002; Wehlege, 1987). While researchers have used several terms when discussing this population, such as but not limited to juvenile delinquents, antisocial youth, and youthful offenders; *at-risk youth* serves as an umbrella term.

Crafting a simple definition for giftedness is not as easy. First, several definitions of giftedness exist. For years, experts in the field of gifted education have debated what actually constitutes giftedness. Some have advocated for the use of individually administered IQ tests to identify gifted persons (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Terman, 1925). Others countered that giftedness is an abstract concept determined by an individual's exceptional abilities and accomplishments (von Károlyi, Ramos-Ford, &

Gardner, 2003; Sternberg, 2003). Second, research studies conducted on at-risk youth use a variety of criteria to classify an individual as gifted. Some have used minimum scores on an individually administered IQ test (Cornell, 1992; Harvey & Seeley, 1984) while others have relied on group-administered measures of intelligence (King, 1980; Messier & Ward, 1998) and achievement tests (King). Third, researchers point to the fact that some talents, such as artistic, musical, or leadership, cannot be gauged by a test (Mahoney, 1980; Reis & Renzulli, 2001). Rather than debating the virtues of these opinions, this study accepts them all as valid definitions of giftedness.

Therefore, gifted/at risk is defined as any individual who has exhibited exceptional talent on an individually administered IQ test, group IQ test, or achievement test; has demonstrated exceptional creative, artistic, or leadership ability; and possesses at-risk tendencies. Defining the population in this manner enables this study to better serve as a resource guide for screening, identifying, and serving gifted/at-risk youth without getting mired in terminology. Gifted/at-risk youth have unique talents and needs that society has yet to understand. While there are many origins of this misunderstanding, it can no longer be an excuse for failing to provide them with the means to maximize their potential. Educators must help students identify their unique talents, whatever those might be, and then create situations where they can be successful.

In order to achieve economic independence and to maximize their potential, students must obtain at least a high school diploma. In fact, Sum et al. (2003) reported that individuals who do not earn a high school diploma or graduate without necessary skill to succeed in life suffer both socially and economically. In 1989, the nation's governors established numerous educational goals to be achieved by the year 2000. One

of those goals was a 90 percent graduation rate. Unfortunately, not a single state in the nation achieved this goal (Sum et al., 2003).

One aim of the federal government's *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) is to reduce high school dropout rates and to increase high school graduation rates (No Child Left Behind, 2001). While there has been a lot of debate over the merits of NCLB, this is an admirable goal. Over the past twenty years, statistics demonstrate that high school dropout rates have increased while graduation rates have decreased (Sum et al., 2003). According to McNeal (1997), the reasons why youth drop out of high school range from an individual's low self-esteem and displeasure with school climate to the family economic situation and peer pressure.

Research investigating the relationship between IQ and delinquency has yielded interesting results. According to Neihart (2002), many of the studies have demonstrated that low intelligence is a predictor of antisocial behavior. Reasons for this range from poor academic performance and inadequate job skills to susceptibility to peer pressure and the inability to distinguish right from wrong (Cullen, Gendreau, Jarjoura, & Wright, 1997; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; McGloin, Pratt, & Maahs, 2004). However, few of these studies investigate the correlation between high IQ and delinquency. As a result, scant research exists on the circumstances that cause gifted youth to participate in delinquent behavior or the characteristics of gifted/at-risk youth.

Little discussion has focused on at-risk youth with high intelligence. On the average, gifted youth constitute approximately 5 percent of the general population, thus rarely comprising a large enough sample of the at-risk population to warrant further investigation (Mahoney, 1980). According to Neihart (2002), many assume that

characteristics such as good problem-solving skills, insightfulness, and intellectual prowess make gifted students immune to antisocial behavior. Many simply feel that gifted children are either too intelligent to participate in delinquent activities or too smart to get caught. These simplistic portrayals of gifted youth reflect a misunderstanding of their social and emotional needs and place them at greater risk for not maximizing their potential.

Since the early 1980s, two views on the relationship between high IQ and delinquency have emerged (Harvey & Seeley, 1984; Mahoney, 1980). First, the characteristics of giftedness such as insightfulness, ease of learning, and interpersonal sensitivity makes one more susceptible to delinquent behavior. This “vulnerability thesis” (Mahoney, p. 317) indicates that these youth are predisposed to antisocial behavior because they are more susceptible to negative influence and are at greater risk being negatively influenced by home/school or in their personal lives.

The second view asserts that many of characteristics of giftedness such as insight into ones own actions and good predicting skills makes these youth less likely to participate in delinquent activities. This “protection thesis” (Mahoney, 1980, p. 317) insinuates that gifted youth will refrain from aberrant behavior because they have the intellectual capacity to overcome obstacles. Under this theory, high ability youth will exhibit antisocial behaviors only when environmental conditions are extremely adverse.

Characteristics of Gifted At-Risk Youth

In order to better serve gifted/at-risk youth, educators must be familiar with the characteristics of this population. Mahoney (1980) classifies gifted/at-risk youth into two categories: gifted children who are delinquent or delinquents who happen to be gifted.

Investigating the former group requires researchers to compare gifted/at-risk children with those gifted youth who are not at risk. The goal is to determine which factors influence delinquent behavior and to develop preventive interventions. Conducting research on the latter group warrants researchers to contrast gifted/at-risk youth with their at-risk non-gifted peers with the purpose of learning how the gifted individual differs from at-risk peers. Mahoney states that the bulk of the research has been conducted on delinquents who happen to be gifted.

Donmoyer and Kos (1993) identify the following characteristics of gifted children who are most susceptible: (a) low socioeconomic status, (b) minority group connection, (c) parental education level, (d) single parent family, and (e) feelings of alienation and low self-esteem. Still, this demographic sketch does not completely describe gifted/at-risk youth. Gifted students in urban and rural areas face unique obstacles that prevent them from earning a high school diploma. As a whole, gifted students have to meet the expectations that come with intellectual precociousness (see Appendix A).

This group of at-risk students has enormous intellectual potential. Unfortunately, some do not maximize their potential and eventually drop out of high school. While the causes mentioned above are valid, academic boredom may be another factor that negatively impacts gifted youth. Researchers (Gallagher, Harradine, & Coleman, 1997; Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Plucker & McIntire, 1996) cite boredom as a major cause of gifted students who underachieve and eventually drop out of high school. If boredom is a main source of underachievement for gifted students, greater research into the causes of and interventions for boredom is warranted.

What does it mean to be bored in school? Gifted students defined boredom as a

lack of challenging curriculum (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). In fact, Kanevsky and Keighley report that many of these students take steps such as skipping school, refusing to complete assignments, or causing classroom disruptions in order to make the curriculum more challenging. Generally speaking, teachers do not intentionally create unchallenging curriculums. Yet, Gallagher et al. (1997) assert that this is an unfortunate by-product of designing learning situations to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Messier and Ward (1998) conducted a study to determine the incidence of depression and high ability in delinquent youth. Subjects included 207 incarcerated minors in a Virginia youth correctional facility. Researchers employed the Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices to measure ability (Raven, 1962). This nonverbal measure of intelligence was selected for its ease to administer and simple response format. To assess depression levels, researchers used the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI; Kovacs, 1985). This instrument was selected because of the low readability level (Messier & Ward).

The ages of the 207 subjects ranged from 10 to 17 with a mean of 15.7. The researchers provided the following demographic information: (a) 68 percent African-American, (b) 87 percent male, and (c) 13 percent female. A principal investigator and two assistants administered the instruments to all and they were tested in group settings that lasted approximately 45 minutes. Groups ranged in size from five to 27 juveniles (Messier & Ward, 1998).

While 54.1 percent (n= 112) scored below the median on the Raven's, 12.9 percent (n = 27) scored above the 90th percentile and 5.3 percent (n = 11) of those individuals scored above the 95th percentile. Furthermore, 55.6 percent (n = 15) of the

high-ability youths were found to be clinically depressed. Messier and Ward (1998) ran a Chi-square on the results and found a significant relationship, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.5$, $p, .05$, between ability and depression.

Aside from helping to establish that gifted students are at risk for exhibiting anti-social behavior, the results of this study also reveals that there is a significant relationship between high ability and depression among juvenile delinquents. While it is uncertain whether the onset of depression occurred in pre- or post-incarceration, Messier and Ward (1998) ascribe that its presence is important for treatment of these youths. Moreover, the fact that gifted/at-risk youth may be susceptible to depression is an area that should be investigated further (Messier & Ward).

In an earlier research study, Baldwin (n.d.) administered the Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) (Raven, Raven, & Court, 2000) to 103 youth incarcerated in a juvenile correctional facility. The results revealed that 12.6 percent ($n = 13$) of the sample tested in the gifted range. According to Baldwin, this demonstrates that gifted youth are susceptible to becoming disengaged from the school setting and committing criminal offenses. The researcher surmised that dissatisfaction with home, school, and/or community environments were major factors in contributing to subjects' antisocial behavior (Baldwin, n.d.).

Programs for At-Risk Youth Outside Traditional School Setting

The decision to disengage from high school is based on accrued feelings of frustration, failure, and alienation (Wehlage, 1986). Rather than instilling a sense of pride, accomplishment, and belonging in the lives of gifted/at-risk youth, schools become an unattractive setting. Whether these students are disillusioned because they feel socially

isolated, academically uninspired, or both, they are not engaging the school climate constructively. Furthermore, many of these individuals' home environments do not foster positive feelings toward schools. Whatever the cause, this disengagement adversely affects these youths' potential to become positively participating members of society.

As such, this project investigated three intervention programs designed to provide at-risk youth an opportunity to learn the necessary life, academic, and career skills to be a positively contributing member of society. Each program, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, a Youth Correctional facility, and an Alternative School, has varying criteria for admitting students. These include student choice for a different learning environment, a desire to earn a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), placement by school officials, and sentencing by the juvenile correctional system. All three programs have designed curricula to meet the unique needs of their specific population.

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program

Established in 1993, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program provides youth who have dropped out of high school with an opportunity to acquire employment, life, and educational skills in a quasi-military environment. Youth ChalleNGe Programs (YCP) only accept unemployed applicants who are 16 – 18 years of age and not currently involved in the criminal justice system. Cadets are only admitted if they are drug free and have dropped out of school. In addition, they must secure the agreement of an individual within their community to serve as a mentor after the program is completed. Successful completion of the program entails a five-month residential phase and a 12-month post residential phase.

The residential phase of the program focuses on training cadets in eight core

components of citizenship, such as academic excellence, job skills, health and hygiene, physical fitness, life coping skills, service to community, responsible citizenship, and leadership/followership. In addition to participating in hands-on activities that promote leadership and community involvement, cadets are required to take part in GED preparation courses.

The post-residential phase consists of a mentorship program. To increase the success rates of the post-residential phase, YCP staff conduct mentor screenings and mentor trainings. Many cadets cite the mentorship component as a major reason why they were able to successfully transition from life at the YCP to general society (National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). While the YCP offers cadets with opportunities to pursue a variety of apprenticeships, many graduates opt to enlist in the armed services (Wenger & Hodari, 2004).

Alternative Education Programs

Researchers (Burnett, 2002; Chalker, 1996; Raywid, 1994) classify alternative school programs into three types: Type I (choice), Type II (assignment), and Type III (remedial). Mississippi gifted/at-risk students who have exhibited behavioral problems in the general classroom setting can be referred to an alternative schools program. These Type II schools are a last-chance opportunity for these students before expulsion (Burnett; Raywid). In this study, researchers only assessed students enrolled in a Type II school.

The state of Mississippi mandates that all Type II alternative schools offer students academic instruction in core academic areas. The alternative school curriculum should be designed to improve academic skills, modify behavior, reinforce functional

skills, and provide career guidance. While, each district has the right to provide supplementary courses beyond core academic areas, it must do so at its own expense.

Youth Correctional Facilities

Youth Correctional Facilities are designed to house juvenile offenders with the hopes of providing them with an appropriate rehabilitative program that permits these youth to re-enter society as a productive citizen (Keeley, 2004). While there is a long history of detaining youthful offenders that dates back to the early 19th century, it was not until the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 that attention was focused on the quality of these institutions. The ultimate aim of the public's attention was to offer youths a last chance to be positively contributing members to society.

As a result the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the state of Mississippi began to provide rehabilitative services for its youthful offenders. In order to provide a more well-rounded program, the Mississippi Department of Human Services provides the numerous services for those placed in the detention centers. These services range from vocational and basic computer training to transition and family support services.

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program

This nationwide program, which is partially funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, seeks to provide intervention for at-risk teens. ChalleNGe targets youths between 16-18 years of age who are drug free and have dropped out, are no longer attending school, or who are in danger of failing high school. Applicants must also be unemployed at the time of application and not currently involved with the criminal justice system. The main goals of the program are to assist the young men and women with attainment of a General Education Diploma (GED) or high school diploma, help them acquire life skills, and provide the education necessary to be responsible citizens and productive members of society.

The 30 sites located in 25 states and the territory of Puerto Rico provide a 22-week residential phase set in a military environment followed by a 12-month post-residential phase set in the community. The residential facilities are usually located on an active or closed National Guard base, training center, or school campus. Several states serve more than 100 youths in their program with separate quarters for men and women.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program began as a pilot program in 1993 when it was authorized by Congress in the Defense Authorization Bill. The goal of the program was to determine whether life skills, education levels, and employment potential of high school dropouts could be significantly improved through quasi-military training.

By combining discipline and help, ChalleNGe programs are part of an emerging national model for intervention with at-risk youth (Center for National Policy, 2001). The ChalleNGe curriculum implemented in the residential phase was designed around an intervention model identified by the Center for Strategic and International Studies

(CSIS). It includes eight core components of academic excellence, job skills, health and hygiene, physical fitness, life-coping skills, service to community, responsible citizenship, and leadership/followership. (Center for National Policy, 2001; National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). Each individual program determines how those eight components are implemented.

The post-residential phase was designed to ensure that graduates maintain the positive life skills and work habits established in ChalleNGe. Before entering Youth ChalleNGe the corpsmember must identify an individual from their own community to serve as a mentor in the post-residential phase. ChalleNGe uses this “friendly match” system of mentorship that allows the youth to choose someone who can genuinely relate to them and provide support while they begin their placement as a college student, in the military or in fulltime employment. By 1994, attention turned to improving the mentoring component of the ChalleNGe program (Dare Mighty Things, n. d.). In the subsequent years, many programs have improved their mentor recruitment strategies, implemented mentor training, and made efforts to ensure that matches are made early by completing their screening process by week 13 (Dare Mighty Things, n. d.). The importance of the mentorship component is highlighted in a 1998 study by Dare Mighty Things, Inc., which found that over 90 percent of youth who were doing well in the post-residential phase of the ChalleNGe program had active and successful mentor relationships (Dare Mighty Things, n. d.).

While the program is administered and managed by the National Guard Bureau, under the auspices of the assistant secretary of defense, Reserve Affairs, the program is conducted in cooperation with state governors and adjutants general, the local senior

member of the of the Army and Air National Guards (National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). As a pilot program, ChalleNGe began in ten selected states. By 1998, Congress permanently authorized the program at 60 percent federal funding, 40 percent state funding (National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is also supported by the National Guard Youth Foundation (NGYF) which is a nonprofit organization formed to broaden public awareness and support the expansion of ChalleNGe programs. NGYF also fundraises in order to create an endowment fund to provide higher education scholarships.

Current demand for expansion of ChalleNGe programs both in new states and in the states where a program exists cannot be met by existing funds. NGYF makes an effort to support legislation that is necessary in order to add funding for additional programs and to change the funding ratio to lessen states' financial burden. Across the nation in 2004, over 18,100 youths applied for the program, but only 7,461 were funded (National Guard Bureau Office of Legislative Analysis, 2005). Sixteen states and territories are on a waiting list for federal funding, and eight of the existing states want to add at least one additional program (National Guard Bureau Office of Legislative Analysis, 2005).

ChalleNGe programs provide training and apprenticeship in several different trades and careers. However, ChalleNGe graduates tend to enlist in the armed forces at relatively high rates (Wenger & Hodari 2004). ChalleNGe recruits also compare favorably to other Tier Two recruits in terms of initial attrition (Wenger & Hodari 2004). Before admission into the armed service, all applicants take the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). This primary measure of aptitude for determining military eligibility summarizes scores from the Arithmetic Reasoning and Math Knowledge

subtests and scores on the Paragraph Comprehension and Word Knowledge subtests of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Wenger & Hodari (2004) found that ChalleNGe recruits with Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores of 50 or better have somewhat lower attrition rates than all other groups of Tier Two recruits. While this may suggest that there are some highly able ChalleNGe graduates who go on to succeed in the military, due to the small sample size, the results can not be generalized.

The Mississippi ChalleNGe program began in 1994 and since then has graduated approximately 4,000 corpsmembers (National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). Corpsmembers in Mississippi voluntarily leave their home environments to attend the paramilitary structure program at Camp Shelby military field training site. Once at Camp Shelby, they are enrolled in high school and college level courses, undergo military training, and participate in community service. The Mississippi ChalleNGe program at Camp Shelby serves seven male battalions and one female battalion with an average of 34 corpsmembers per battalion. The battalions are kept intact for all activities including academic instruction. Each battalion is divided, however, for team teaching of subjects. In essence, single gender education is also an implicit part of this program. The Mississippi program has been recognized for excellent post-residential performance and a high pass rate for the GED of its enrolled corpsmembers. As many as 85-95 percent of its graduates pass the GED (L. Crowson, personal communication, September 15, 2005). In 2004 73 percent of all Mississippi enrolled corpsmembers and 86 percent of graduates passed the GED (National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, 2005). Students who pass the GED or complete the high school diploma are given the opportunity to take up to 15

hours of college credit from William Carey College made feasible by classes held on the campus.

The Mississippi program uses Dr. William Glasser's Choice theory to apply the ChalleNGe core components. Building better human relationships is the essence of Choice theory as it applies to education and counseling. Choice theory is applied to the educational goals of ChalleNGe when corpsmembers are taught to enhance their communication, interdependence, or altruistic choices as these behaviors relate to family, friends, colleagues, and others (Wubbolding, 2005). Corpsmembers may learn that all behaviors, including their own, are purposeful (Blance, 2004). The cadre (staff of teachers at ChalleNGe) help the corpsmembers make a workable "life plan" to get what he or she wants. The plan must be implemented in the post-residential phase; it should concentrate on the things that the corpsmember is in control to do and that his or her mentor can help monitor.

Alternative Schools

Alternative education is more of a perspective than it is a particular prescribed program. It is based upon the premise that not all children learn alike given the standard school organization and environment. Alternative education is “specialized educational programs taking place outside of the mainstream school system” (Cox, 1999, p.324). Alternative programs can be classified into three types: Type I (programs of choice), Type II (assignment programs), and Type III (remedial focus programs) (Burnett, 2002; Chalker, 1996; Raywid, 1994). There are also several different settings for alternative programs as well as different delivery models. Alternative education may be set in a school-within-a-school plan, a separate school, or in a self-contained classroom. Any individual or combination of delivery models may be implemented. Some of these models include the behavior intervention model, academic intervention model, therapeutic model, punitive model, school transitional model, vocational intervention model, school continuation model, dropout-prevention model, and school community partnership model (Chalker, 1996).

In 2000, 1.3 percent of all public school students in the United States were enrolled in some type of public alternative school (Thomas, 2003, p.8). Mississippi alternative programs to which students are assigned (Type II) are often referred to as “last chance schools” (Burnett, 2002; Raywid, 1994) because the placement is considered a final chance before a student is expelled (Chalker, 1999). Typically these schools focus on behavior modification (Raywid, 1994). Alternative school programs, as described in Section 37-13-92 of the Mississippi Code (2003), provide additional opportunity to remain in school for those children who have been suspended or expelled from school,

who have been referred to the program due to disciplinary problems by the parent, legal guardian or custodian of the child, or who have been referred to the program by order of a chancellor or youth court judge. Students can also be assigned to an alternative school if the school superintendent or principal views their presence in the classroom as a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the students and teacher in the classroom. Alternative school programs are not for students expelled for possession of a weapon or committing any felony.

Section 37-13-92 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 specifies that school districts must establish, maintain, and operate an alternative school program and provide the continuing education of a student who has been placed in the alternative school setting (Titles 35-37, Section 37-13-92, Mississippi Code, 1972, Annotated, p. 383). The law governing the Alternative School Program is relatively new, having only required alternative education since 1993. The Mississippi State Legislature mandated that all school districts begin an Alternative School Program to address the unique needs of students who would otherwise be removed from the classroom (Price, 2004). Primarily, this program was to be aimed at students who committed serious behavioral violations of the school code in regular educational settings and who would benefit from an intensive/alternative program that would keep them off the streets and enhance their potential for fulfilling their educational goals.

Senate Bill 2510 of the 1995 Regular Session amended Section 37-13-92 of the Mississippi Code to its present form. The 1995 amendment provides procedures, standards for supervision, and removal of a student from regular school to the alternative school. Eight areas (a) clearly stated and focused school mission, (b) a safe and orderly

climate, (c) program goals and expectations, (d) alternative educational opportunities, (e) a quality instructional program, (f) a program monitoring and evaluation system, (g) support services, and (h) parental/community involvement) indicated in the state's guidelines to operate an effective alternative school were used to evaluate each alternative school's approach to manage this program. It also provides for a priority written notice to be sent to the parents of students who are placed in the alternative school.

Alternative school programs are funded through grants that were established by Mississippi code 37-19-22. The formula for funding each program is three-quarters of one percent (.0075 %) of the school district's average daily attendance or 12 pupils, whichever is greater, multiplied by the state average per pupil expenditure (Burnett, 2002; Price, 2004).

The Mississippi Legislature also enacted Senate Bill 2855 in 1997 authorizing school districts in Mississippi to provide a program of GED preparatory instruction as a part of the Alternative Education Program. The legislation mandates that students who are enrolled in an approved GED program shall not be classified as dropouts and that the school district will continue to receive Minimum Program funding for the students while they are enrolled in the GED Program.

Referral to an Alternative School

School districts must have clear guidelines and procedures for placement of students in an alternative educational program. These guidelines must at a minimum describe due process procedures and general education development placement. The state of Mississippi requires each school district to have an alternative education policy for

placement at an alternative school. Yet each district has the flexibility to design that policy and process as long as it meets minimum due process guidelines established by the law case *Goss vs. Lopez*. In this case, the Supreme Court decided that students who are suspended for 10 days or fewer are entitled to certain rights before their suspension. These rights include (1) oral or written notice of the charges, (2) an explanation (if students deny the charges) of the evidence against them, and (3) an opportunity for students to present their side of the story.

While alternative school placements may be necessary to ensure a more appropriate environment for the student, as well as to ensure the safety of all students, all students have the right to remain in the least restrictive environment. To prevent students from requiring an alternative placement, classroom interventions should be implemented within the general school environment. This includes prevention programs, including violence prevention, conflict resolution, leadership skills, and enrichment opportunities being implemented as early as early childhood education and continuing through the secondary level. Also, an appropriate climate should be promoted within the general education environment that will encourage students to want to remain within this environment. That is, the regular education environment should be conducive to learning for students with diverse backgrounds and interests. Positive discipline practices that address the behaviors of all students also need to be implemented.

Placement in an alternative school should not be used as a substitute for an appropriate referral for special education evaluation. According to the Mississippi state board of education an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be developed for any student who is referred to an alternative program. If the student's behaviors are so

disruptive that an alternative placement is considered, and the student is not already receiving special education services, the student should be referred to the Local Education Agency (LEA) to see if the student is eligible for special educational services. Only when preventive measures and all interventions have been attempted, should an alternative placement be considered. Procedures should be developed to monitor the effectiveness of the alternative educational program for each student. The alternative placement should be developmentally as well as educationally appropriate.

To ensure that these placement decisions are made judiciously and with caution, a team approach should be utilized. No placement decision should be made without obtaining and carefully considering input from all staff members who know the student.

Evaluation of the student progress must be reviewed regularly to ensure that the student is returned to the regular school environment as soon as it is deemed appropriate. A placement in an alternative setting should not continue any longer than it is deemed to be the least restrictive placement.

Studies

Price (2004) reported that of the 158 school districts in Mississippi, only 10 alternative schools were recognized for their compliance with the Alternative Education Standards. Of the ten schools identified, Price visited five Mississippi alternative schools to examine their operation of the program. Price (2004) examined five alternative schools that were identified by the State Department of Education as operating an exemplary alternative school.

“IQ is one of the most widely examined individual characteristics associated with persistence of delinquent behavior among adjudicated youth” (Fendrich, 1991 p.110).

Fendrich (1991) conducted a study to determine the parole behavior of delinquent youths who were assigned to both alternative schools and training schools. The subjects were 298 youths between the ages of 10 and 18 who were committed to and supervised by a Texas juvenile corrections agency. The agency administered either the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children- Revised WISC-R (Weschler, 1974) or the Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale WAIS (Wechsler, 1981). Data gathered by the researcher conveyed a range of intelligence scores (62-123) (Fendrich, 1991). This study indicates the presence of highly intelligent youth in alternative programs (90th percentile or above). Fendrich also found that youths with higher intelligence tended to score lower on a parole maladjustment scale. As an indicator of recidivism, parole maladjustment is associated with lack of involvement in work or school (Fendrich, 1991).

Youth Correctional Facilities

Youth correctional facilities provide a secure residential setting for juveniles aged 18 and under who have violated the law. The juvenile justice system is based on the premise that juveniles are different from adults and juveniles who commit criminal acts should generally be treated differently from adults (Keeley, 2004). Unlike the adult justice system that concentrates on punishment of offenders, the juvenile system emphasizes treatment and rehabilitation (Keeley, 2004). Juvenile courts may refer children to foster care, group homes, or youth correctional facilities for both criminal and status offenses. Some examples of status offenses are skipping school, running away from home, underage liquor violations, curfew violations, or repeatedly disobeying their parents or guardian. A juvenile alleged to have committed any of these offenses can be referred to juvenile court by request of police, parents or another agency (Mississippi Department of Human Services, n.d.).

Beginning with the establishment of Houses of Refuge in major cities such as New York and Boston in the 19th century, young offenders have been separated from adult populations. Houses of Refuge were established in the 1850s by social reformers who believed that the cycle of poverty could be broken by educating and teaching a trade to young delinquents as well as the children of recent European immigrants (Dressler, 2002; Keeley, 2004). As state support for compulsory education grew, reformatories and industrial schools also emerged as a way to isolate delinquents from the general population, train them in a trade, and teach them to be productive citizens (Keeley, 2004). In such institutions, juveniles spent much of the day engaged in work activities, such as sewing, shoemaking, farming, gardening, or construction. Education in school subjects,

such as reading, writing, spelling, geography, and arithmetic, also became a small part of the intervention for institutionalized youth. This model stayed in place through the first half of the 20th century (Keeley, 2004).

Not until 1975, with the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, did attention turn to the quality of education in juvenile correctional institutions. Once the law required special education programming for disabled children, including incarcerated youth, the federal government was prompted to take a closer look at educational programs in the juvenile justice system. Education to meet the individual needs of delinquent youth gained support through the Carl D. Perkins Vocation and Applied Technology Education Amendments of 1991, as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (Keeley, 2004). Youth correctional facilities today are likely to include a variety of educational services, such as reading remediation programs, classrooms with capacity for telecommunications, library and media services, and GED preparation and testing.

Several terms are used to describe a variety of institutional offerings. Youth correctional facility, juvenile detention center, training school, and boot camp, may be used interchangeably (Dressler, 2002; Keeley, 2004; Mississippi Department of Human Services, n.d.; National Institute of Justice, 1996). Many juvenile correctional institutions incorporate military type training that may include such elements as physical exercises, drills and ceremonies, staff with military backgrounds, military style uniforms for youth and instructors, and use of military jargon, customs, and courtesies (Mississippi Department of Human Services, n.d.; National Institute of Justice, 1996). Settings also provide vocational education; health and educational assessment; individual and group

counseling; and citizenship and life-skills training (Mississippi Department of Human Services, n.d).

Most incarcerated youth have experienced school retention and/or school failure (Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). Yet school failure is not an accurate indicator of intelligence. Some estimate that approximately 18 percent of all high school dropouts in America are gifted (Solorzano, 1983; the United States Office of Education, 1971). While there is evidence that a large number of youth in correctional facilities are eligible for special educational (33.4 percent average prevalence rate) (Quinn et al 2005), the incidence of youth who are gifted and at risk is not reported. Some research has sought to determine the incidence of high ability in delinquent youth.

Anolik (1979) studied the personality characteristics of 60 institutionalized male juvenile delinquents of bright and average intelligence. Subjects in the bright group scored between 115 and 133 on intelligence tests.

Cornell (1992) used minimum scores on individually administered IQ tests to determine high intelligence in criminal youth. In a sample of 157 youth incarcerated for violent crimes, Cornell found four students with IQ scores greater than 120, two of which were higher than 130.

Messier and Ward (1998) also studied high ability in incarcerated minors in a Virginia youth correctional facility. Among 207 juveniles, 12.9 percent ($N=27$) scored above the 90th percentile and 5.3 percent ($N=11$) scored above the 95th percentile (Messier and Ward, 1998). Aside from helping to establish that gifted students are at risk for exhibiting anti-social behavior, the results of this study also reveal that there is a significant relationship between high ability and depression among juvenile delinquents.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth services (MDHS/DYS) provides separate institutions for boys and girls committed to their custody. The average cost per day per child was \$94.44 in fiscal year 2004 (Mississippi Department of Human Services, n.d.). Chain-link fence topped with coils of wire encompass each campus. Visitors enter by automobile, going through a security check at a gate house. Several buildings across each campus provide classrooms, recreational facilities, health services, dormitories, as well as secure isolation units used for dangerous offenders or those who have broken infractions.

Mississippi Department of Human Services provides several additional services, including a home extension service that focuses on health and nutrition for female students who are pregnant; and vocational training programs, such as welding, carpentry, auto body and small engine repair, brick masonry, and basic business computer. A transitional living center on the campus of the boys training facility also provides support for students who will make the transition back into the school environment.

Method

Participants

Cadets in one Youth ChalleNGe Program (YCP) located in the southeastern United States participated in this study. Of the 179 cadets who enrolled in the five-month program, 88 percent ($n = 158$) completed the SPM and 86 percent ($n = 154$) completed the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, 2nd edition (PHCSC-2). A majority of the subjects were males.

Thirty-six students placed in an alternative school in the southeastern United States participated in this study. Of the total sample, 69 percent ($n = 25$) of the subjects

were male. Of the total sample 75 percent (N=27) completed the SPM and 91 percent (N=33) completed the PHCSC-2.

Twenty-eight students placed in a youth correctional facility for girls in the southeastern United States participated in this study. Of the total sample, 89 percent (N=25) completed the PHCSC-2, and 78 percent (N=22) completed the SPM.

One hundred and seventeen students placed in a youth correctional facility for boys in the southeastern United States participated in this study. Of the total sample, 99 percent (N=116) completed the SPM and 97 percent (N=114) completed the PHCSC-2.

Table 1 shows that the majority of the students tested in the sample were either African-American or Caucasian. The majority of the Caucasian students in the sample were cadets at the Youth ChalleNGe program, and the majority of African-American students in the sample were tested at the Youth Correctional Facility for boys. Students as young as 12 years old were tested at the alternative school and as old as 19 years old at the Youth ChalleNGe program. The average age of students in the total sample was 16. Many of the students in the sample had either dropped out of school or been placed in another setting before completing the 12th grade. On average, the last grade that students had completed was the eighth grade (see Table 1).

Table 1

Ethnicity by site

Count		Site				Total
		Girls Youth Corr. Facility	Alternative School	Boys Youth Corr. Facility	Youth ChalleNGe	
Ethnicity	Hispanic-Am.	0	0	2	1	3
	Caucasian	6	1	18	105	130
	African-Am.	16	30	84	37	167
	Native Am.	0	0	1	0	1
	Other	0	0	1	7	8
Total		22	31	106	150	309

Materials

The SPM is a 60-item, untimed, nonverbal measure of intelligence “constructed to measure the educative component of *g* as defined in Spearman’s Theory of cognitive ability” (Raven, Raven, & Court, 2000, p. 1). The SPM is divided into five sets of 12 items. Within each set, each successive item becomes progressively complicated.

The Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale, second edition, is a 60-item questionnaire. Subjects are asked to respond either yes or no to statements that are about an individual’s self-concept. On the average, this instrument requires 10 to 15 minutes for completion. Self-concept scores are measured by a total (TOT) score, and six domain scales: Behavioral Adjustment (BEH), Intellectual and School Status (INT), Physical Appearance and Attributes (PHY), Freedom from Anxiety (FRE), Popularity (POP), and Happiness and Satisfaction (HAP) (Piers & Herzberg, 2002).

Procedure

Researchers administered the SPM to all cadets in the Youth ChalleNGe program during a one-week period. The following week, researchers administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scales (PHCSC-2) to all cadets still enrolled in the program. At both the alternative school and the girl's correctional facility, the SPM was administered over a two-day period, followed by a two-day period to administer the PHCSC-2. At the youth correctional facility for boys, the PHCSC-2 was administered immediately after completion of the SPM. Administration lasted three days at the youth correctional facility for boys. After administration, researchers scored both instruments. Eight cases from the Youth ChalleNGe program were removed due to exceeding response bias limits as set by the PHCSC-2 manual (Piers & Herzberg, 2003). Thus the results from 145 YCP cadets were included in the data analysis. A total of 19 cases were dropped from the male youth correctional facility resulting in $N=95$. Four cases were dropped from the alternative school $N=24$. One case was dropped from the female youth correctional facility $N=24$. Researchers correlated the results to determine if there was a relationship between the two instruments. Additionally, researchers determine if there was a significant difference in PHCSC-2 scores between genders.

Results

When compared to a standardized sample, subjects' general self-esteem was within normal limits. Means of the total scores and on all of the subscales fell in the average range (40T-59T) as defined by the PHCSC-2 manual (Piers & Herzberg, 2003). These scores reflect that subjects acknowledged both the positive and negative aspects of the self in a balanced manner.

Table 2

Piers Harris total and subscale T-scores

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student Test Age	293	12.00	19.03	16.1053	1.39135
Last Grade Completed - Self-Reported	291	5.00	12.00	8.7869	1.50721
T-Score - Piers Harris*	293	26.00	72.00	48.6860	9.61397
Behavioral Adjustment T-Score*	293	22.00	62.00	43.4573	8.96544
Intellectual and School Status T-Score*	293	13.00	65.00	47.9727	8.87002
Physical Appearance and Attributes T-Score*	293	23.00	65.00	52.0546	9.67363
Freedom from Anxiety T-Score*	293	22.00	66.00	51.3515	9.94622
Popularity T-Score*	293	24.00	68.00	52.5358	9.31909
Happiness and Satisfaction T-Score*	292	22.00	59.00	47.8836	8.55225
Valid N (listwise)	290				

*Scale of 0-60

Table 3 presents SPM scores percentile scores by ethnicity. Regardless of ethnicity or gender, the majority of subjects' scores fell below the 50th percentile on the Ravens SPM. Five students scored at or above the 80th percentile on the SPM. Of those five, one student scored at the 94th percentile (see Table 3).

Table 3

Ravens SPM percentile

		Hispanic- Am.	Caucasian	African- Am.	Native Am.	Other	Total
Intervals	.00	2	9	45	0	1	57
of	10.00	1	27	28	0	3	59
Percentile	20.00	0	14	9	0	1	24
Scores	30.00	0	23	16	0	0	39
	40.00	0	8	17	1	1	26
	50.00	0	11	15	0	0	26
	60.00	0	6	1	0	1	8
	70.00	0	9	3	0	0	12
	80.00	0	4	0	0	0	4
	90.00	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		3	111	135	1	6	256

Table 4 presents SPM percentile scores by gender. Of those who scored above the 80th percentile, a majority were male. However, one female scored above the 90th percentile (see Table 4).

Table 4

Ravens SPM percentile scores by gender

		Female	Male	Total
Intervals of	.00	11	50	61
Percentile	10.00	11	51	62
Scores	20.00	7	22	29
	30.00	6	36	42
	40.00	3	26	29
	50.00	7	19	26
	60.00	1	8	9
	70.00	2	10	12
	80.00	1	3	4
	90.00	1	0	1
Total		50	225	275

There was no significant relationship between the SPM and the PHCSC-2. A Pierson correlation technique was used to determine the relationship. Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation matrix from all the subscales on the PHCSC-2. Although the data indicated a negative correlation between the SPM and four of the PHCSC-2 subscales, they were not significant. Based on these results, the SPM and PHCSC-2 measure do not measure the same constructs. (see Table 5.)

Table 5

	Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices	
	r	N
Total T-Score	-0.024	264
Behavioral Adjustment T- Score	-0.033	264
Intellectual and School Status T-Score	.037	264
Physical Appearance and Attributes T-Score	.102	264
Freedom from Anxiety T-Score	.006	264
Popularity T-Score	-.032	264
Happiness and Satisfaction T-Score	-.008	263

There were significant differences on the PHCSC-2 by gender. An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate if there were significant scores by gender on the PHCSC-2. The test was significant for the total T-score, $t(144) = -2.22, p = .028$.

However, these were only significant for three of the following six subscales: (a) Physical Appearance and Attributes T-score, $t(144) = -3.48$ $p = .001$; (b) Freedom from Anxiety T-score, $t(144) = -4.51$, $p < .001$; and (c) Happiness and Satisfaction T-score, $t(144) = -2.49$, $p = .014$. Means and standard deviations by PHCSC-2 scores for each gender are presented in Table 6. (see Table 6).

Table 6

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
T-Score*	Female	54	44.25	8.84
	Male	237	50.36	9.49
Behavioral adjustment T- Score	Female	54	42.29	8.46
	Male	237	43.62	9.08
Intellectual and School Status T-Score	Female	54	46.85	8.41
	Male	237	48.85	8.91
Physical Appearance and Attributes T-Score*	Female	54	48.98	9.82
	Male	237	53.82	8.97
Freedom from Anxiety T-Score*	Female	54	43.25	8.51
	Male	237	53.56	9.21
Popularity T-Score	Female	54	47.12	9.52
	Male	237	54.22	8.94
Happiness and Satisfaction T-Score*	Female	23	45.53	9.19
	Male	236	49.10	8.17

* *significant* $p < .05$

Based on the results of this study, female students in the sample had a lower overall self-concept and opinion of their physical appearance than males. Furthermore, the females expressed higher levels of anxiety and were not as happy as their male peers.

Discussion

While there was no correlation between the SPM and PHCSC-2, previous research has demonstrated that the SPM is a good instrument to use when screening for high ability in the at-risk population (Messier & Ward, 1998). As such, a qualitative interpretation of each is provided below.

Behavioral adjustment is designed to measure an individual's "admission or denial of problematic behavior" (PHCSC-2, 2002, p. 24). The results from this population indicate that these students recognize that they have difficulty self-monitoring their behavior. Since there is not a significant difference between the genders, both groups equally admitted to behavioral difficulties.

Intellectual and school status measure a youth's perception of his/her own intellectual abilities. Students in this population admit to struggling with school-related tasks but do not see themselves as below average intellectually. In view of the fact that the scores are not significantly different, the results would suggest that both males and females have equal opinions of their intellectual abilities.

Physical appearance and attributes gauges subjects' perception of their physical appearance and specific personality attributes. Students in the sample reported both positive and negative appraisals of their appearance and personality with the positive attributes outweighing the negative. Female students in the sample had a lower overall opinion of their physical appearance and personality traits than males. It should be noted that all of the females in the sample were participating in quasi-military programs at the time of the measurement. Because cosmetics and some other grooming items are not permitted in these environments, and a unisex military uniform is required in most of the

settings, this may have impacted the female students' appraisal of their physical attributes.

Freedom from anxiety reflects a variety of specific emotions, including worry, nervousness, shyness, sadness, fear, and a general feeling of being left out of things. Students in this sample reported mostly positive emotional states. However, the females expressed higher levels of anxiety. The quasi-military drills and conventions may also have had some impact on the emotional state for girls.

The popularity subscale measures students' perceived popularity. In view of the fact that the scores are not significantly different, the results suggest that both males and females have equal opinions about his or her own social functioning.

Overall, students in this population expressed balanced feelings about their general life circumstances. Female students in the sample were not as happy as their male peers, perhaps admitting to more feelings of dissatisfaction with the environment and general situation in which they have found themselves.

Interventions

Serving the at-risk gifted child requires both a broad view of what constitutes an intervention as well as an open-minded perspective of what a gifted individual looks like. Practices such as providing options for acceleration in the curriculum, encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities, establishing a mentoring program, “scouting” for talent, problem-based learning, and career counseling are all appropriate for gifted students who may be at risk. For many gifted children, school is seen as teacher-defined, textbook-focused, and addressing content that students already know. When gifted dropouts are interviewed, they mention several areas that they feel are lacking from current learning environments, and they may even see dropping out as a means of regaining control over their learning (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Robertson, 1991). Kanevsky and Keighley (2003) report that the learning gifted children seek has five interdependent features, abbreviated as the five c's: control, choice, challenge, complexity, and caring.

Disenfranchised students feel the need for more control over their situations. Control also means having the power to implement choices in the curriculum and decisions about their lives. Gifted students feel resentful about the two choices most often offered to them (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). Classroom teachers most often offer them more of the same work or the opportunity to help other classmates who may be having difficulties. Bright students are justified in questioning the educational value of these limited “choices.” They want and feel they deserve to choose topics and course materials, determine their own pace, and make decisions about their learning environment, such as when, where, and with whom. The most frequently cited cause of boredom among gifted

youth is lack of challenge in the curriculum (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). Challenge in the curriculum for gifted students means accelerated academic work as well as creative problem solving (Saunders, 2003). Gifted students want to work on real-life activities and produce sophisticated artifacts that involve the resources and processes of professionals. Most importantly, caring teachers are essential to the success of the gifted at-risk child. Finding a teacher or other adults who understand their needs to talk, question, challenge others and be challenged has made a difference in the lives of many gifted individuals (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Milam, 2001).

Mentorships

Milam (2001) declares that mentorships are programs that provide rich learning experiences and resources beyond those that the school alone is able to provide. At-risk students lack the social network and support services that promote successful talent development. Olszewski-Kubiliuis, Grant, and Seibert (1994) promote the idea that mentorships supplement students' lack of support services and build social networks that encourage talent development.

Using mentorships in the educational setting has been a pedagogical strategy for centuries (Milam, 2001). While mentorships can have a variety of goals, they are mostly student centered and provide authentic learning situations. Moreover, this strategy puts at-risk youth in relationships with people who really care about the social, emotional, and academic progress of young people.

Mentorships can greatly improve the services schools offer gifted/at-risk youth. By placing them in real-world situations, gifted/at-risk youth are free to explore the endless possibilities of their talents. Furthermore, schools that sponsor mentorships

benefit because it demonstrates their commitment to an individual's development. Finally, aside from providing avenues to expand curriculum and resources, mentors benefit on a personal level (Milam, 2001).

SMART. According to Casey (2000), mentors are valuable in assisting gifted/at-risk youth to think productively about their future career interests. Although these programs can be designed for any age level, Olszewski-Kubilius et al. (1994) describe the SMART (Science and Mathematics Advocacy and Recruitment for Teaching) program which is geared for secondary students. This program, mutually sponsored by Northwestern's Center for Talent Development and the Chicago Urban League, is intended to boost the social support systems of minority students who are economically disadvantaged and interested in science or math teaching careers.

The SMART program identifies gifted economically disadvantaged students who lack the necessary social support systems needed in order to become science or math teachers. These systems include (a) weekly after-school clubs, (b) a tutoring and academic support, (c) an intensive summer program, and (d) a professional person who serves as a mentor (Olszewski-Kubilius, et al., 1994). Aside from helping with personal problems, the mentors assist students with accessing information about a career or college. Olszewski-Kubilius, et al. assert that mentors support program staff in implementing an individual support plan. Organizers have witnessed high school graduation, college matriculation, and appointment to a teacher education program.

Jefferson Parish Public School System. Milam (2001) illustrates the effectiveness of the Jefferson Parish Public School System's Mentorship Connection. This is a two-semester program for gifted/at-risk students. The first semester of the program is called

Mentorship I. During this phase, students are required to deliberate about future career goals and delve into activities that mandate self-introspection. Milam asserts that this phase has three purposes. First, participants are forced to identify their interests. Since gifted/at-risk students have a variety of interests, this step requires students to develop focused mentorship goals. Next, the first semester allows teachers and counselors to help students determine what fields of study would peak their interests. Finally, it allows students to determine if their career choices are based on sensible expectations (Milan, 2001). Assessing the students' interest allows program planners to cater the mentorship around individual's needs.

During the second phase (Mentorship II), students participate in authentic experiences under the guidance of a mentor. In order to reach this phase, Milam (2001) reports that students must meet the following criteria (a) 3.0 GPA, (b) three letters of recommendation, (c) parental permission, and (d) successful completion of Mentorship I. Upon successful completion of this phase, students have a better understanding of real world expectations. Moreover, Milam asserts that they have an enhanced self-concept and greater self-confidence.

Incorporating the Talent Identification and Development Education Model

Extensive training is not necessary in order to have the attitude and orientation of a "talent scout." A teacher must simply be aware of the signs indicating talent in intellectual, academic, artistic, musical, vocational, technical, interpersonal, and social areas. Educators may build a case further by creating an academic portfolio that displays student's strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Asking a student to share views about school, peers, home life, and/or future aspirations will assist in the process of career

counseling. The next step is to share information about a child's strengths with parents and be prepared to back up the report with evidence from the classroom or possible achievement scores. Keep in mind that a gifted at-risk student may show a discrepancy between achievement test scores and academic performance. Finally students need help to set goals in their areas of strength (Feldhusen, 1996).

School counselors may assist in the process of developing a growth plan for the student. A growth plan is a process by which students recognize and acknowledge their own talents and achievements and make a commitment to the development of those talents (Feldhusen, 2003). The student writes his or her accomplishments, abilities, and interests in the first section of the growth plan. The school counselor may provide the test scores and assist with the interpretation of those scores. Next, the student will establish both long-term and short-term goals. Selecting courses, extracurricular activities, and academic experiences appropriate to those goals would follow. Extracurricular activities of a noncompetitive nature may offer the opportunity to take part in activities that are meaningful to gifted children and teens. After-school activities also provide the ground for gifted at-risk youth to test developing social skills, become involved with a coach or mentor, and be among peers with a similar interest (Robertson, 1991). It is important that the growth plan be shared with parents as their support may be needed in order to pay for and attend extra school activities.

Given the nature of at-risk students' experiences, it is important for educators to develop programs that provide early interventions. Most of the interventions described, such as career counseling and curriculum modifications, can be conducted by the classroom teacher. However, students may present a need for social/emotional or

psychological counseling. Teachers must pay attention to possible changes in each student's social group or changes in mood and behavior, which may indicate the need for professional counseling (Saunders, 2003). Ultimately, sensitivity to the needs of gifted youth may help keep them on their own self-defined roads to success.

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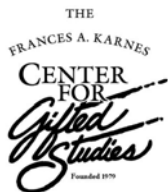
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Appendix A
Gifted/At-Risk Youth

CHARACTERISTICS	SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES	INTERVENTION STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Possesses strong intellectual abilities ❖ Has a keen level of intellectual curiosity ❖ Exhibits poor academic achievement ❖ Has poor school attendance ❖ Finds school curriculum unchallenging ❖ Is disengaged from school activities ❖ Has a strong desire to be successful ❖ Usually lives in a single-parent family ❖ Is highly observant and articulate ❖ Feels alienated from social peers ❖ Displays low self-esteem ❖ May be highly creative ❖ Feels that educators are uncaring ❖ Usually lives in an unstable home environment ❖ Usually comes from low socioeconomic status ❖ Has heightened sensitivity to attitudes and criticisms of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Incorporate the <i>Talent Identification and Development Education Model</i>. ❖ Look for a discrepancy between achievement test scores and academic performance. ❖ Create an academic portfolio that displays student's strengths, weaknesses, and interests. ❖ Interview parents, peers, and community members. ❖ Pay attention to change in student's social group. ❖ Take notice of artistic expression (written, visual, or musical). ❖ Ask student to share views about school, peers, home life, and/or future aspirations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide social/emotional counseling sessions. ❖ Provide career counseling. ❖ Establish a mentoring program. ❖ Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities. ❖ Institute a creative problem-solving curriculum. ❖ Create authentic learning environments. ❖ Allow flexible programming options. ❖ Promote parental involvement. ❖ Permit students to re-enter school. ❖ Provide opportunity for artistic self-expression. ❖ Instill a sense of pride and self-worth.



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