DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 327 EC 192 756

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TITLE Evaluation Report of the Provisions for Gifted and Talented in Calgary Board of Education.
INSTITUTION Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton.
PUB DATE Oct 86
NOTE 122p.; For related documents, see EC 192 753-755.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Formative Evaluation; *Gifted; Itinerant Teachers; Needs Assessment; Parent Attitudes; Principals; *Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; School Districts; Special Schools; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Calgary Board of Education (Canada)

ABSTRACT

One in a series of reports on a gifted program jointly formed by three school systems in Alberta, Canada, this document presents information about the gifted and talented program in the Calgary school system, the largest of the three districts. The program in Calgary consists of education assistance services, which help schools develop programs for their gifted students, and also a self-contained school solely for gifted students. The first section of the report describes those two components in detail, including information on historical development, student identification, curriculum content, delivery systems, and student evaluation. Evaluation data, gathered from interviews with area consultants, program specialists, school principals, itinerant teachers, school staff members, students, and parents, are presented in the next section. Conclusions and recommendations presented in the subsequent sections address the need for development of a statement of expectations regarding achievement in gifted programs; development of guidelines and procedures for effectively identifying the gifted and talented; development of guidelines for identifying and training teachers of the gifted; increasing the availability of inservice programs for teachers of the gifted; providing additional counseling services for gifted children; and improving communication with parents of gifted children. (CB)

Evaluation Report Of The Provisions For Gifted and Talented Calgary Board of Education

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Melvin T. Sillito

Alberta Education

Alberta

EVALUATION REPORT
OF THE PROVISIONS
FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED
IN
CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Prepared Under Contract to Alberta Education

October 1986

ABSTRACT

Evaluation Report of the Provisions for Gifted and Talented in Calgary Board of Education, Wilde, Warren D. and Sillito, Melvin T., March 1986, (96 pp. + app.), and Oakley Centre Evaluation : Summary Report to the Calgary Board of Education and the Kahanoff Foundation, Belsher, Gayle, April 1984, (77 pp. + app.) taken in part from Oakley Centre Evaluation : Report of the External Monitoring Committee, Feb. 1984, Sillito, Melvin T. and Wilde, Warren D., (68 pp. + app.).

The report is one of a triad growing out of formative evaluations in each of three school systems of dissimilar size in Alberta. The three, Camrose School District #1315, Strathcona County #20, and Calgary Board of Education, formed a consortium and jointly with Alberta Education sponsored a project to develop and test promising evaluation procedures of programs for gifted students as well as gather information about evaluating gifted students. The consortium provided the venue for field tryout and other assistance. Alberta Education provided most of the financial support supplemented with expert advice.

The Calgary Public School System is the largest in the province. Its program for gifted students is the largest of the consortium. The program has two, quite distinct, parts. The first part is a service to the entire district called "Education Assistance Services for the Gifted" (EAS-G), with the mission of encouraging and assisting schools to develop their own programs for educating the gifted on their rolls. The service is provided by a staff of 12 itinerant teachers, four consultants, a supervisor, and a curriculum specialist. The number of schools with programs for gifted students is growing steadily since the service was established. The programs exhibit considerable diversity in their provisions for gifted students. The second part of the program is a self contained school, attended full time by 300 identified gifted students for whom the regular and special curricula are integrated. The school which opened its doors in September 1981 was funded by the Calgary Board of Education with a substantial donation (in excess of $1,000,000.00) from a private foundation.

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I INTRODUCTION

This evaluation was begun as a part of a project to determine the similarities and differences which exist in programs for gifted children at varied stages of development among three dissimilarly sized districts in the province of Alberta. The three districts involved in the study are Camrose School District #1315, County of Strathcona #20 and Calgary Board of Education. As a result of this study, suggestions will be forthcoming about program development and evaluation.

Information in this report was gathered from documents in the school district and from interviews conducted in May and June 1985 with several participants. There were many discussions with the Supervisor of Evaluation Services for the District and the Supervisor of Enrichment Assistance Service - Gifted (EAS-G), as well as the consultants and program specialist, in order to gain a thorough understanding of the services provided to gifted children. In cooperation with the two Supervisors, the foundation of the evaluation procedure was developed. There was input as to what might be the most valuable information needed by the school district, which was of vital importance in formulating the evaluation questions. Oakley Centre (a special school for gifted children) was evaluated prior to this project and the report is contained in a separate document.

A history of program development designed to meet the needs of the gifted is provided at the beginning of this report. This section provides information about the Education Assistance Service for Gifted Children (EAS-G) which began as a pilot project in 1976 and also about Oakley Centre, a special school for gifted children, which became operational in 1981.

Schools involved in this study were selected on the basis of variety in organizational pattern and delivery mode with their programs for gifted children. Schools were selected at the elementary, junior high and high school levels. In depth interviews began with program consultants and the

program specialist housed at Christine Miekel School. Interviews were then conducted at each school with the principal, classroom teachers, counselors, itinerant teachers, and students. Parents were interviewed by telephone with approximately two-thirds of the parents being matched with the child interviewed at the school.

A report of the interviews is included in section III, section IV is an analysis and summary of the data collected and section V concludes the report with recommendations deemed appropriate.

The willingness of participants to share information, make suggestions for improvement and assist in any way possible has been of great benefit to the researchers in preparing this report.

II PROVISIONS FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS IN CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The initial planning for the Education Assistance Service for Gifted Children pilot project began in 1974 under the name of Enrichment Assistance Service for Gifted. The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) was made aware of growing concerns from the teaching staff and parents that the needs of students recognized as gifted were not being met within the confines of the regular classroom. A committee was formed for the purpose of evaluating recommendations for potential action.

After considerable discussion, general recommendations were made concerning the need for the acceptance of an operational definition of gifted children and the need for provisions of appropriate educational experiences for students so defined.

From these recommendations, the committee produced a paper "Educating Gifted Children, A Plan for Action", which provided a definition of "gifted" and also a course of action that would provide a means of delivering appropriate educational experiences to such students. This document was submitted to the Board in December 1975 and was approved for implementation in September 1976. The Education Assistance Service for Gifted Children (new name) came into being.

Definition of Gifted

The underlying rationale of EAS-G was based upon the definition of gifted children as stated in the "Plan for Action". This definition limited gifted children to

> "those identified by specialists, as having superior general intelligence and/or creative abilities and talents who require educational opportunities beyond those that can be provided in a regular school program."

This definition included children with demonstrated or potential superiority in general intellect, in one specific academic area, or in the visual and performing arts. Implicit in the definition was recognition that many different kinds of children would manifest their giftedness in a variety of ways and would also have a variety of educational needs. There was no single approach which would meet the needs of all identified gifted children. In addition, within the area chosen for the pilot project, there would be considerable variation in the schools in which the children would be located, in terms of size, grade range, administrative and teaching philosophies and in the socio-economic status of the communities which they served.

Pilot Project

Western Canada High school and its sixteen feeder schools were chosen as the pilot project area. Students were selected by their classroom teachers for testing by the EAS-G psychologist. Selected students, ranging through grades kindergarten to twelve were given the WISC-R intelligence test or, for very young children, the Stanford Binet. It was expected that careful consideration of the variety of programs and strategies developed and implemented during the course of the four year pilot period would lead to some generalizations and ultimately to a practical compendium of validated approaches from which selections could be made for other situations. Thus, the exploratory emphasis of EAS-G in its pilot stage would result in recommendations which would enable more rapid and efficient expansion of the service to other schools in the system.

Justification for the four year project duration had been provided by several evolutionary changes that occurred during this time period. The most obvious was the quantitative growth in terms of numbers of students identified and involved in EAS-G programs; the progress (or lack of adequate progress) in identified gifted children monitored through several grades; materials selected and incorporated into a resource bank; programs and strategies designed and developed; teachers and members of the community involved in programs for gifted students; and contacts with schools and personnel beyond the pilot project.

In September of 1976, the Education Assistance Service staff, (psychologist, resource person and itinerant teacher) met in a bare classroom, with no furnishings, no instructional materials, no secretary, no telephone and of course, no identified gifted students in any of the 17

designated pilot schools. Gradually the areas of deficit diminished, school staffs in the 17 schools were made aware of the existence and purpose of EAS-G and children thought to be gifted were referred to the Service for identification. In the course of the next three years, expansion of the service occurred in all of the previously noted areas, helped considerably in 1979 by the approval by the Trustees of an increased budget for that year. This increased funding permitted the acquisition of an additional itinerant teacher in September 1979, together with substantial improvements to the resource bank of student and professional materials.

Other evolutionary changes which took place were less quantifiable. A major change was in the attitudes of the school staffs involved. (These 17 schools did not volunteer to be in the pilot project, they were selected by the School Board.) Initially the reactions of teachers and administrators in the pilot project schools ranged from polite but relatively uninvolved acceptance of the Service, through wary suspended judgement, to overt resistance. Although there was still considerable variation in the degree of involvement among teachers and schools, there was a generally more positive and approving attitude and a considerably greater degree of awareness on the part of teachers as to the nature and needs of the gifted children in their charge. It had been noted that positive attitudinal changes appear to have been brought about more rapidly by teacher education, so the provision of in-service to teachers on a formal/informal, group/individual basis became and continues to be an ever increasing function of EAS-G.

There has also been a steadily increasing and very supportive involvement on the part of the parents of identified gifted children.

The EAS-G has also responded to growing interest in the education of gifted children outside the pilot project area. In-service has been provided to staffs, collectively or singly and materials have been given and loaned. The development of an annotated bibliography of resources which are available in the EAS-G collection has become a useful means of communication with other schools in the public system.

Expansion

In March of 1980, an extensive evaluation of the pilot project was carried out which resulted in acceptance of

EAS-G as an integral part of the Calgary Board of Education. Gradual expansion was to include the entire system on an area-by-area basis (five areas in total) to be completed by 1986.

In 1981 the first phase of the area-based expansion went into effect, consisting of a two-tiered approach to delivery of services to gifted/talented students in the Calgary Board of Education. Direct Service consisting of working one-on-one with students for sessions of one hour, planning or team teaching with the classroom teacher, and in-service workshops for individual teachers or groups of teachers constituted one approach. This type of service was provided to the South East Area (41 schools) by a team of one consultant and three itinerant teachers and to the East Area (24 schools feeding Crescent Heights High School) by a team of one consultant and two itinerant teachers.

In the remaining areas within the district another method of service delivery was attempted. Resources and consultative assistance to all schools was on a request basis, mostly provided by the supervisor and program specialist, with team members deployed as and when appropriate.

The development, expansion and maintenance of the EAS-G resource centre continued to be a vital element of both aspects of the EAS-G function.

Oakley Centre, a special school for gifted children, opened in 1981. Students from all over the district were encouraged to apply. Some students from the Direct Service Area schools and many students from the pilot project were accepted. The bulk of the student body in the first year came from the schools which had no provisions for gifted students.

Classroom teachers made a concerted effort to locate students for testing and consequently there was a dramatic increase in the number of identified gifted students. One result of this effort was an increased demand for psychological testing. Another result was an awareness on the part of the Board that more and more students were in need of specialized programming. EAS-G received information on these students whether or not they attended Oakley Centre.

In 1983, Special Services initiated a restructuring within its own department, an action which had direct impact on the EAS-G program. The position of Visiting Teacher was eliminated and a revised position, Learning Resource Teacher, was brought into being. Where Visiting Teachers

had travelled from school to school to work with students who were experiencing difficulties (i.e., behavioral, emotional, motivational problems, academic problems, etc.) the Learning Resource Teacher was to become a permanent staff member in each school. This person was to provide assistance to classroom teachers for all students with special need for remedial help, counseling, behavior problems, learning disabilities, giftedness, etc. The Learning Resource Teacher was responsible for providing an extremely wide range of specialized assistance. A few Learning Resource Teachers are still required to visit more than one school due to several schools having small populations.

Many of the Learning Resource Teacher positions (130 at present with a final goal of about 200) were filled by the visiting teachers who were made surplus by the staffing changes and by classroom teachers who had a wide range of teaching experiences.

The Resource Teachers (previously known as Learning Resource Teachers) were to act as a liason between the school staffs and Special Services personnel; in this case the EAS-G itinerant teachers.

The spring of 1984 brought changes to the entire school system which subsequently changed the expansion plans of EAS-G. The five administrative areas of the Board were reduced to four which brought about changes in the area's borders. Several schools were placed under new Superintendents and area administration teams. Where EAS-G had previously provided direct service in two areas, the South East and East areas, the redistribution of schools now had the program working in three of the four areas. The School Board recommended further expansion of EAS-G to provide direct service to all four areas and therefore, to be a system wide service.

A staff of one supervisor, one resource specialist, four area consultants and 12 itinerant teachers were to provide service to 220 schools and over 800 identified gifted students.

2. STUDENT IDENTIFICATION, CURRICULUM CONTENT AND DELIVERY AND STUDENT EVALUATION

To provide insight into how the unique EAS-G program operates, the specific areas of student identification, curriculum content and delivery, and student evaluation will be described.

Student Identification

Students from kindergarten to Grade 12 may be referred to the School Board Psychologist for I.Q. testing. Students could be referred by classroom teachers, parents or principals, and even peer referral and self-referral are allowed. Most children are given the WISC-R or Stanford Binet test but other assessments may be used at the discretion of the psychologist. An I.Q. score of 130 immediately qualifies a child for inclusion in the program. However, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into acceptance criterion due to the diversity of the student population. Exceptions could be made for children scoring less than 130 on the WISC-R if English were not the child's first language or if there were some other mitigating circumstances.

While each child may demonstrate giftedness in a different way, one or more of the following characteristics may have been noticed about the child.

a) Advanced vocabulary for age or grade.

b) Knowledge about things of which other children are unaware.

c) Grasps concepts quickly without much repetition. Becomes bored with routine.

d) Recognizes relationships and comprehends meanings.

e) Unusual insight into values and relationships. May perceive injustices and oppose them.

f) Asks provocative questions about the causes and reasons for things and refuses to be satisfied with superficial answers.

g) Evaluates facts, arguments and people critically. May be critical and impatient with himself and others, including teachers.

h) Enthusiastically generates ideas and unusual solutions to problems. May dominate others.

i) Has intense interests. May be difficult to get involved in topics he is not interested in and equally difficult to distract from topics he is interested in.

The above is not a finite list of characteristics of gifted students, merely a sample of behaviors observed in many gifted children.

There are also some negative characteristics that may attract a teacher's or parent's attention, such as behavior problems in group situations, withdrawal from social situations, or perhaps suspected underachievement. Parents are usually more accurate in detecting giftedness in their own children than are classroom teachers. Parents see their child in a greater variety of situations and practical experience shows that they have greater than 50% accuracy in identifying giftedness.

The majority of children are referred by classroom teachers and the number of referrals has greatly increased as more and more school staffs are attending in-service workshops on identification and the nature of giftedness. In-service workshops are offered to individual teachers, principals and school staffs, but EAS-G may respond only to specific requests since no aspect of the service is compulsory and their staff complement is limited. This lack of mandatory involvement with EAS-G allows many gifted children to pass through school without detection or specialized programing.

Students who demonstrate achievement or potential in the visual or performing arts are not necessarily given an I.Q. test. The Board's Art Department and/or Music Department or someone else qualified in the area under consideration will review a student's talents and then make a decision as to the degree or level of talent. Unfortunately, children who excel in these areas receive little specialized programing in the regular school system. If a school requests art, drama or music assistance, EAS-G, if possible, will provide mini-courses for these students or find a suitable mentor.

Children who have been identified by professionals outside the Calgary Board of Education and who meet the criteria established by the CBE are sometimes included in the EAS-G program.

Once a child has been identified as gifted, the psychologist is to notify the parents, teachers, principal and EAS-G. A copy of the test protocol is sent to EAS-G and the principal. Parents are to be called by the psychologist and a meeting arranged to discuss the child's test results. Usually an EAS-G area consultant will also meet with the psychologist to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the student. Together they will determine specific goals and objectives for the child.

While this is the unwritten policy, some parents miss the opportunity to meet with the psychologist and only learn of the identification when EAS-G contacts them by letter indicating that the child has been included in the program. Understandably this causes some distress to the parents as they may not know what assistance is available for their children and may not know a great deal about the nature of giftedness.

The decision as to whether a student will or will not be involved in specialized programing is left to the parents and the school. If the principal and parent jointly agree that the child does not need or want differentiated programing, EAS-G cannot insist upon student involvement. If, however, the student wishes to become involved at a later date, EAS-G will provide the necessary assistance.

Curriculum Content and Delivery

In the pilot project days, EAS-G focused on developing programs around the specific interests and strengths of each identified child. Because this program was not mandatory, the child's interest was needed to maintain motivation. Also, there were very few identified children and each child worked directly with the itinerant teacher, usually on a one hour per week pull-out from the regular classroom.

This often meant that these children were working on projects quite unrelated to the curriculum set by Alberta Education. The goals and objectives set out by the psychologist and itinerant teacher did not depend on CBE curriculum. They would deal more with developing thinking skills, encouraging divergent and open-ended thinking, nurturing creative problem solving, pushing children into synthesizing and evaluating information and generally broadening their exposure to new and different ideas. Therefore, following the curriculum guidelines was not critical, the content of the custom designed program based on the child's interests was essential.

With the steady increase in the number of identified students and increased awareness and interest of teachers, EAS-G found that working with groups of children or classes of children was more acceptable to teachers, as they also benefitted from the planning of programs. Children who were not identified as gifted but were highly motivated or needed greater challenge often worked on projects with gifted students and were called running mates.

Teachers immediately realized that all children would benefit from, and enjoy, this type of programing and therefore made requests for more specialized workshops. EAS-G has sponsored several workshops which allow teachers from a number of schools interested in the same topic to share their ideas and materials. Teachers wishing to visit the EAS-G Resource Centre at Christine Meikle School (previously at King Edward Jr. High School) and spend a half day planning with one of the EAS-G team will have a substitute teacher provided for them.

Teachers wanted assistance in planning curriculum based programs which included the higher level thinking skills. Therefore, EAS-G's focus has had to shift to the needs of classroom teachers and the provision of in-service workshops for all teachers and principals on request.

It became obvious to EAS-G that it was impossible to provide and administer individual programs for over 800 identified students in 220 schools with a travelling staff of 20 teachers. Therefore, the testing psychologist with the EAS-G area consultant would determine the intensity of the child's needs and then modify his/her program in one of three ways:

a) Students will be placed on a school-based GAIN plan.

b) Students will be provided with enrichment designed to attain specific objectives set for students.

c) Students will be provided with enrichment which is deemed to be generally appropriate for gifted students.

Giftedness is not a 'blanket' condition as a child may be very strong in one area and average or weak in another. There can be wide gaps between intellectual development and social-emotional development and these variances must be reflected in the programing. This requires that the person responsible for its implementation, usually the classroom teacher, be involved in the planning. EAS-G, therefore, encourages teachers to attend in-service workshops that focus on differentiating curriculum.

Several of the area consultants have drawn up a list of possible options for providing service to schools. The following is an example of an option sheet used in one area. Teachers requiring some other form of assistance can certainly discuss those possibilities with the area consultant.

Unfortunately this presents a "you can lead a horse to water but can't make him drink" situation as there are teachers and principals who do not wish any involvement, and therefore students who might benefit from differentiated curriculum do not have this opportunity.

Possible Approaches for EAS-G Involvement in Direct Service to Schools

a) In-service and P.D. presentations
   - 2 week notification minimum
   - written request to confirm requirements and number attending

b) Resource Assistance
   - teacher should present themes, topics, etc. that are to be covered and a timeline that accompanies them
   - could be provided on a regular weekly basis or intermittent basis
   - if teacher coming to review resources, please make appointment (8:30 - 4:30 p.m.)
   - we would be happy to provide resources or assist in planning of existing programs or help the enrichment teachers locate mentors, guest speakers, etc. as may be required.

c) Program planning session with Individual Teachers
   - substitutes must be booked 10 days in advance
   - teacher comes with themes, ideas, etc. to be worked on for the entire class and pertinent information regarding interests and abilities of specific identified children
   - if teachers wish to photocopy our material, please bring adequate ditto paper.

d) Team teaching (intensive short term with classroom teacher)
   - teacher must be involved voluntarily
   - involvement by EAS-G in planning for the team situation
   - pre-planning time must be allotted
   - the intent of this approach is to help teachers operationalize the principles of differentiated curricula and multi-disciplinary strategies

e) Short term Pull-out; Intensive
   - to be considered for specific units and a specific time
   - allowance for student work to be an "instead of" regular class work, not an additional burden.

f) "B" Option Modules
- EAS-G staff in cooperation with junior high school teachers identify areas of interest and design units which could be implemented in scheduled "B" option period.

g) Mentor Pull-out Program
- in situations requiring specialized expertise that cannot be provided by classroom teacher or EAS-G, we will attempt to link student with an appropriate mentor
- students must be available for pull-out when suitable for mentor
- a "contract" should be formulated with student re: status of work missed before mentorship begins.

h) Computer Borrowing
- preferred booking dates
- will EAS-G staff give lessons or will home school staff be responsible?
- level of expertise needed should be evaluated
- borrowing agreement needs to be signed.

i) Counseling for Gifted
- to be considered in special needs cases only, as assistance is limited
- assessment of needs to be met by such a program
- duration of program
- provision of adequate space.

An interesting trend has been noted by EAS-G regarding in-service workshops. When an entire school staff (with principal) attends a workshop, several requests by teachers for assistance are made in the following two week period. If the principal is the sole attendee of the workshop, no requests for assistance are made. For this program to be successful, teachers must receive full enthusiastic support from their administration, at both the school and area level.

Student Evaluation

The area of student evaluation is a very grey and almost invisible area. In most cases, classroom teachers have the sole responsibility for monitoring and evaluating student performance on a long term basis. There is no formal procedure by which classroom teachers must or do relay information about student performance to EAS-G. The informal route of an EAS-G staff member calling on a teacher is generally how information on students is collected. The

exception would be where EAS-G works directly with a student (i.e. team teaching) and then an evaluation of that short period would be recorded. The Resource Teacher will soon be responsible for the follow up on student progress.

The very nature of the EAS-G makes evaluation difficult. Each program developed will be different, the goals and objectives vary and the delivery of the program depends upon the classroom teacher's methods of teaching. The absence of formal reporting procedures to EAS-G drastically limits accurate evaluation. However, if a teacher feels that the gifted student is not performing as expected, or is experiencing difficulty, EAS-G would probably be contacted for assistance in revising the program. In this way, EAS-G is able to keep track of some students. Of course, if the student excels beyond the goals set, EAS-G would likely be contacted to share in the joy of the success.

3. OAKLEY CENTRE

Historical Development

In the spring of 1980, representatives from the Calgary Board of Education and the Kahanoff Foundation, a Calgary based philanthropic organization, undertook discussions regarding the establishment of an educational centre for gifted students. It was the intent of the Calgary Board of Education to administer the program as part of its continuum of services for gifted students. The Kahanoff Foundation was to provide funding for materials, equipment, staff development and staffing positions extra to the normal allotment given to all "regular" schools by the Board of Education.

Since September 1981, the Oakley Centre has been in operation sharing the physical facilities with Dr. Oakley Junior High School while maintaining an administration team distinct from that of the "host" school. The school has access to the services provided by the Board's central office and through the regional office.

Philosophy

There is however, an added administrative component which is unique. This is a steering committee with representatives from the school, the school system, the donor foundation and one parent at large. The steering committee is significantly involved in planning and directing the

school's growth and development. One of the key functions of this committee is to provide a communications base which ensures that there is a commonality of expectations from the school.

The 13 goals and 50 objectives set out by the school are based on the school's philosophy, which is a statement of the educational needs of gifted students and indicates how the school will function to meet these needs. The philosophy is:

> Oakley Centre will provide a learning environment that will enable gifted students to explore and develop their potential as learners and as responsible members of society. Students will be encouraged to reach their point of challenge in intellectual, physical, social and emotional areas in a manner commensurate with their individual needs and interests.

The goals statement is unique in that all goals are directed commonly toward teachers, students and parents.

There is growing, if not yet complete, consensus among educators of gifted students that giftedness is a combination of exceptional attributes of three kinds: 1) Ability to acquire skills and knowledge; 2) Creativity, and 3) Supporting personal characteristics such as initiative, persistence and high standards of performance. Development of these three attributes is a commitment of Oakley Centre as expressed in the goals and objectives.

Organization

In its first year, 110 students similar in age to students in grades 4, 5 and 6 of a regular school were accepted with a staff of 10.4 teachers.

During the second year, 1982-1983, an additional 100 students were accepted into school ranging from grades 3 to 7, with a staff of 16.3 teachers.

The [illegible]d year of the operation added grade 8 and an addit[illegible]al 50 students attended the school with a staff of 21 te[illegible]ers.

In the present school year, 1984-1985, the school's full quota of 300 students is attending Oakley Centre in grades 3 to 9. Presently 23.5 teachers are on staff.

While the term "grade" is used in the above explanation to provide meaning for a similar group as that in the regular school, in fact, grades as such do not exist at Oakley Centre. The organization is by houses with the lower age levels in Phoenix House, the middle age group is in Catius House and the upper age group is in Pegasus House.

Student Identification

All students at Oakley Centre have been individually selected. A student in one of the elementary or junior high schools of the Calgary Board of Education is nominated for testing by a parent, teacher, or some other interested person, such as a counselor or administrator.

The student is psychologically assessed by means of an individual I.Q. test and the results are discussed with the parents in an interview.

Until December of 1984, students who were considered likely candidates had their names placed on a conditional waiting list. When the student's name was reached on the list, a combined conference and school visit was arranged for the student accompanied by parents. Since Oakley Centre has become a referral school, the waiting list has been discontinued but the interview process for children referred to the school continues. There have been other modifications in placement procedures also.

The student population has increased in numbers as the upper grade level of admissions has been increased year by year. The de facto admission factors are, 1) an I.Q. of 130 or greater; 2) recommendation by a psychologist and/or by teachers; and 3) the wishes of parents and child. (Only two applicants have so far been rejected on the basis of the principal's decision and only three have left after admission as a consequence of counseling.) Generally, admission follows providing, 1) the parents agree with the philosophy and objectives of the school; 2) the child wants to attend at Oakley Centre; and 3) the principal at Oakley Centre concludes that the child's needs are best served by attending Oakley Centre. While the principal looks for some evidence of creativity in the child, few of the children are screened out on this basis. Some applications for admission are withdrawn by parents after the information meeting at the school.

Grade 3 level was chosen as the earliest admission time as most school administrators believe there is sufficient challenge during the first few school grades. Interviews

with children indicated that they do not always agree with this belief. One of the main reasons for not beginning programs earlier is that it is more difficult to identify the gifted when they are young and it is also difficult to provide differentiated programming until the child can work independently for a prolonged period of time, which requires proficiency in reading.

The majority of students are boys. The ratio of boys to girls has, in the past, been as high as two to one. In 1983-1984 this ratio has been somewhat reduced, presumably as a consequence of information sent to nominating schools that larger numbers of girls than boys were being overlooked in the nomination procedures. The disparity between the numbers of boys and girls suggests that factors other than general cognitive ability may be operative. It has been suggested that a greater compliance with an unsuitable curriculum among girls may have resulted in fewer of them being noticed and nominated.

There is no probationary period following admission to Oakley Centre; neither is there a limit on the length of time a student may attend. Students seem to thrive on programs designed for their special needs and only the few who have special problems adjusting are not challenged.

Student Transfers

To date, students have left Oakley Centre for two reasons: 1) those who found Oakley Centre inappropriate, and 2) those who transferred to other school districts.

Each year, a few students transfer out either because the school does not have the kind of facilities to resolve their problem or because the very high level of personnel resources committed (usually administrative time) cannot be continued for a prolonged period of time with no prospect of reaching a solution. These transfers are not a result of improper selection based on ability. Students with problems are not screened out. In fact, students may have been nominated in the first instance because they had frustrations with their former schools and exhibited problem behavior. Oakley Centre receives many such students and by virtue of the school curriculum, climate and a tolerable amount of counseling, usually resolves the problems; Oakley Centre receives many problems and exports very few.

Curriculum Content and Delivery

Students at Oakley Centre encounter a curriculum whose content consists of the prescriptions of Alberta Education, the Calgary Board of Education, Oakley Centre Administration and teachers and their own choices. The latter contribution to curriculum content is by no means insignificant; it is one of the most frequently and favorably mentioned differences between Oakley and other schools. Another difference, perhaps even more frequently mentioned, is having many peers each with exceptional abilities which, though different in kind, are as superior as their own. This provides another important facet of the delivered curriculum because student interaction is high, encouraged as it is by teacher attitudes, group projects and a variety of other cooperative endeavors in the optional and other special program components.

Teachers deliver a curriculum in which the prescribed portion is compacted, i.e. completed in a shorter time from the normal and is integrated with those special components which they deem to be of most worth to gifted students. Teachers in academic areas are the most actively involved in developing new curricula because the chief basis for student selection is exceptional academic potential. Teachers in language arts, science, mathematics and the humanities, therefore have the greatest challenge to develop the special curriculum components. Even in those curriculum areas such as art, music or industrial arts in which students exhibit a much more average spectrum of abilities, there is a challenge. Though the student's specific aptitudes in these areas may be average, they nonetheless learn more quickly, participate in class activities more readily and complete assignments with much greater dispatch. Teachers in these subjects, therefore, are extending what might be called the "regular" curriculum.

The other curricular areas also have unique qualities. In the school setting at Oakley Centre, drama supplies for students a common, regular and reliable mode of relaxation and a change of pace. Art, music, shop and drama also provide, from time to time, some elements of "audience".

Some Unusual Curriculum Aspects

The school perspective on curriculum has some unusual points of focus. In addition to presenting the "regular" curriculum and ensuring that students can exhibit the skills of acquiring knowledge and literacy, the school goals emphasize the student's self-development and relationship to

others and to the community. There is a unique activity labelled "Flex" implemented by having the students stay in homeroom for 30 minutes per week to discuss concerns emanating from the school setting or elsewhere. This practice is a mechanism which encourages expression of feelings in an atmosphere made safe by the presence of an interested and caring adult along with equally respectful peers. Student needs for gaining self-knowledge, self-confidence, and self-respect are, surprisingly, very much heightened in the cognitively gifted. The need for experience in considering and developing values is another school goal, as of course is the development of a high degree of skills in an extended variety of curriculum areas, commensurate with ability. The school is necessarily concerned with delivering the most desirable curriculum, with significant differences in level and in kind from the regular curriculum.

Curriculum development and revision are carried on by teams of teachers who have release time for this purpose. A detailed description of the curricula can be obtained from CBE and a brief summary of each area is contained in the Oakley Centre evaluation report.

Future of Oakley Centre Graduates

The 1985-1986 school year will be the first time that transfers because of graduation will occur. The first class of students will leave Oakley Centre to enter Calgary High Schools.

The actual problems which will be encountered at that time are unknown, however a few can be anticipated. Problems may be encountered because of differences in Oakley Centre's organization for instruction, in school climates, in student expectations and in student abilities. Because these graduates are totally prepared in the regular curriculum, problems coping with high school courses are not anticipated.

However, Oakley Centre is organized on multi-aged groupings for curriculum delivery purposes and some problems may result when these students enter high school. Student interaction with peers over several years and in the setting provided becomes a significant part of the effective instruction program.

Hopefully, the receiving high school will exercise flexibility in student placement, allow advanced standing and/or credits and/or have extra learning resources to which

students have access on their own choice. It is hoped that in cooperation with EAS-G, the schools will appropriately modify the curriculum when required.

New Developments

Concern has been expressed on the part of parents, and the public generally about provisions for gifted children in Calgary Board of Education which has led to a number of actions. During the 1983-84 school year a major evaluation was conducted on Oakley Centre with the result that some modifications were made to program and staff. In addition there was a call by the Board for a comprehensive plan to develop services for gifted and talented children. This plan was developed during the 1984-85 school year and implementation began during the 1985-86 school year. There are a number of worthwhile recommendations encompassed in the Comprehensive Plan which should be of benefit to the gifted and talented children in the district over the next few years.

III EVALUATION DATA

1. INTERVIEWS with AREA CONSULTANTS and PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Four area consultants and the program specialist working with the schools were interviewed using questions based on the pertinent areas of concern. The consultants and program specialist are housed in the EAS-G offices and area offices and regularly visit schools to assist teachers or conduct workshops based upon needs and requests. Because the area consultants are so closely associated with school programs it seemed that they could provide insight into the current practice and were thus interviewed first.

Question #1. What identification procedures are in use in schools?

The consultants from EAS-G provide in-service seminars each year outlining the recommended procedures of the school district. It is recommended that the school collect as much data as possible so as to make the best assessment. This would include marks and work samples from classroom assignments. Guidelines are provided to help in identifying students who are artistically talented, including the recommendation that a portfolio of their creations be assembled for evaluation. Teachers are counselled to have students gifted in music and drama assessed by subject curriculum specialists. Use of the "Renzulli Compacter" to organize the information, as well as a screening flowchart are recommended aids to assist the school resource team in the identification process. It is also recommended that personnel from EAS-G be consulted when they are in the schools and be part of the final selection team.

The consultants confirmed that the identification procedure is mainly based on teacher and parent nomination which is verified by use of school grades, classroom performance and standardized tests. Students are usually given an individual intelligence test (WISC-R), the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT), and other evaluation

measures as necessary. Artistically talented students normally assemble a portfolio of their work which is evaluated by specialists and often by EAS-G consultants. The school makes the final decision about who will be accommodated in the program based on an accumulation of tests and recommendations and invited comments of subject area specialists and EAS-G consultants.

The area consultants and program specialist all agreed that consistent procedures, which are broad and flexible enough to cover a wide variety of situations within the Calgary Board of Education system, are needed. They also agreed that the procedures now recommended are not consistently used and that there seem to be few schools using duplicate procedures for identification.

Question #2. Will the procedures used or recommended identify all those students targeted in the system definition?

This question was broken into two parts: procedures recommended and the procedures used. Four of the five said that even if the procedures recommended were used faithfully there still would not be total identification since some are always likely to be missed regardless of the procedure. Cultural differences will inhibit identification of some students and then there are those students with performance oriented gifts which are not picked up by conventional measures. All of this group agreed that the current procedures used in the schools would not identify all of the gifted children available.

Question #3. Are the identification procedures recommended educationally sound?

The program specialist and all consultants agreed that the recommended procedures are educationally sound and in agreement with the system definition for gifted. They were also of the opinion that if the procedures were used consistently, most students would be identified.

Comments made by this group of consultants help identify some of the aspects to be considered in determining who are gifted. The school staff must understand the total spectrum of "gifted" or else only the academically gifted will be identified, but of course this has implications for in-service. There is need for a standardized method that is specific and comprehensive enough to address the definition, yet flexible in implementation. The procedure cannot be too

time consuming or it will not be accepted in the schools. The continual shift of personnel and the lack of consistent understanding of giftedness among the teaching force often leads to misunderstandings and inaccuracy in identification. There is also a greater need for more time from psychologists to do the necessary testing or else a method of accurate identification which does not require the services of the psychologist. Strong support from the school administration is absolutely necessary if the identification process is to be successful.

Question #4. The consultants and program specialist were asked to comment about their expectations of teachers as well as the type, amount and adequacy of help provided teachers with respect to: identification; curriculum development and implementation; assessing and reporting student progress and communicating with parents; and in-service education.

This proved to be a very difficult exercise and in some cases it was an inappropriate request. There was a wide variety of responses and sometimes no response. The term "adequate" did not have a common base of reference. Thus an analysis of the remarks did not lead to consensus of opinion.

Identification

The expectations of teachers were quite varied but in the main it was felt that teachers appointed to this program should be familiar with the procedures for identifying gifted children and able to follow the directions outlined. Teachers were also expected to be sympathetic to the special needs of gifted children and recognize that these needs could best be met if the children were properly identified. This might mean that teachers, through experience, would suggest ways in which the identification process could be more effectively accomplished. It was also felt that teachers should seek assistance from EAS-G consultants when they were unsure of how to proceed or if there seemed to be exceptional circumstances.

The consultants and program specialist try to provide an orientation on the nature of giftedness and how to identify it. This is usually done through in-service sessions either at the EAS-G offices or at the school and through one-on-one sessions as needed. The consultants try to fit into the time schedule of the teachers.

The help provided teachers was generally viewed as inadequate. It was the opinion of this group that there were too few of them laboring under a variety of time constraints to be totally effective. But it was interesting to find that most of the consultants believed teachers could do more for themselves in taking advantage of the information provided through in-service sessions and professional reading.

Curriculum Development, Differentiation and Implementation

Teachers are expected to be aware of student needs and do something on their own to meet these needs. This is begun through reading the student profile information, including the psychological assessment, and through discussion with other teachers and support personnel at the school level. Teachers should be able to begin planning to meet some of the needs but concerns about programs should be directed to the EAS-G staff soon so as to avoid difficulty.

The consultants provide information about planning a curriculum, possible resources and often help through demonstration lessons and team teaching. The consultant may accompany the teacher to a School Resource Group planning session to demonstrate the role which each of the participants can play in helping to provide for the special needs of the children.

The consultants generally agreed that the help provided was adequate but also noted that they were only able to devote a certain amount of their own time to any one teacher or school. There is also a limit on the provision of substitute teachers while the regular teacher is gathering information.

Assessing Student Progress

It is expected that teachers will understand individual differences of each student and evaluation is to be based on this principle. Teachers are expected to use a multidimensional approach to assessment of student progress and employ anecdotal records as a method of record keeping.

It was found that very little help is provided to the teacher in this area and the consultants viewed the help given as inadequate.

Reporting Student Progress and Communicating with Parents

It is expected that the teacher inform parents about how the curriculum is differentiated and how the child is progressing in the class. There is virtually nothing being done by the consultants with this aspect of the program.

In-service

Teachers are expected to attend the in-service sessions provided by EAS-G and to also read the professional literature recommended. There are many activities provided by the EAS-G staff for all teachers of the gifted and some activities are custom designed to meet special needs. The sessions provided are deemed to be adequate and worthwhile.

Additional Comments

This group of consultants was of the opinion that teachers of the gifted should be caring human beings with a commitment to this program. If teachers have these attributes, then they are likely to want to learn about gifted children, learn how to meet their needs and give extra effort to working with school staff and students to ensure that achievement is commensurate with ability.

Question #5. Consultants were asked about expectations of them, who set the expectations, the type of help they received to fulfill their responsibilities, and the adequacy of the help.

The consultants were aware of expectations but had difficulty being specific. Generally they are required to meet the needs of the teachers for help and do some public relations work so that all participants are basically satisfied. They try to be aware of new problems and bring these to the attention of the Director along with recommendations. There is the expectation of being knowledgeable in every aspect of educating the gifted and providing services to the schools on demand. More than one of the consultants said they were expected to be "professional" but then were unable to elaborate specifically what this meant, though they seem to have a general concept. One consultant, who is heavily involved in counseling as a part of her assignment, noted the number of meetings required and the need to be involved with screening students and liaising between EAS-G and Student Services. There was some suggestion that the position carries some

unreasonable demands and expectations when the views of all school district personnel and parents are totalled.

The expectations of the program specialist may be the most far reaching. She is responsible for helping with curriculum within the district but is also called upon to give in-service outside the district on a regular basis. She is often involved in counseling parents and helping staff understand how best to implement ideas within the district.

There seemed to be little help provided to the consultants outside of that provided by the Director on an informal basis. Consultants are competent teachers in their own right and are often expected to use their resourcefulness to adapt the ideas of providing for the gifted and provide leadership to the teachers. The opportunity to discuss ideas with each other and with the Director is probably the saving grace in many instances.

Question #6. Consultants were asked to identify the expectations they had for themselves and the type of help received to meet these expectations.

All consultants expressed the desire to help gifted children be independent learners and develop the special abilities they exhibit. They want to do this by sharing with teachers, and others interested in helping gifted children, their understanding of these children and how to provide a challenging learning environment. They expect to be advocates for the children at the expense and risk of being professionally unpopular. They expect to keep learning through study and daily experience and be creative in this educational endeavor. But each consultant is aware that much of what is required to give able leadership must be acquired by their own initiative since little is readily available within the vicinity.

Question #7. Consultants were asked about the existing structures or procedures for evaluating gifted student outcomes and evaluating school and district provisions for gifted children.

All five consultants agreed that student evaluation is necessary but all indicated that there are no standardized procedures in place. The consultants were of the opinion that student evaluation provides feedback to the teachers, parents and students and should be based on student needs.

While it was felt that teachers should be accountable, it was also stated that the method of evaluation is of concern.

In answer to whether there should be evaluation of students over a lengthy period of time there was unanimous agreement. It was noted that a longitudinal evaluation is underway and should provide some valuable information. But it was also noted that there is very little being done in terms of longitudinal evaluation for all gifted students in the school district.

All consultants said there were no school or district procedures to evaluate provisions for gifted children. One is being given consideration by EAS-G but there is considerable controversy. There is informal input from school principals about progress and an evaluation was completed a few years ago but there does not seem to be a standardized procedure in place.

When asked if the personnel delivering, administering or providing services for the gifted are evaluated, there was a split response. Three consultants said yes and two said no. Everyone in the system is evaluated but this is not specific to programs for the gifted.

Question #8. What factors are facilitating the success of the provisions to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

While several factors were mentioned that contribute to success of the program for gifted and talented, the most common one was the use of substitute teachers to provide release time for the classroom teacher to attend in-service sessions. There seems to be an experienced, committed staff with easy access to a plentiful supply of resource materials so that the needs of the teachers can be addressed.

Question #9. What factors are impeding success of the provision to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

There were more reasons posited as to why the program is not more successful than the identification of factors contributing to success. It is interesting to note that just as substitute teachers were cited as the main reason for success, it is also the lack of personnel resources, including more substitute teacher time, that impedes the rate of success. Principals would like to have more consultants helping in the schools and teachers also seem to need more assistance. It was the feeling that the demands for in-service are greater than the ability of the staff to

provide professional development opportunities, especially when so few teachers are aware of the nature of giftedness.

The remaining answers varied in importance with respect to lack of success. The next most often cited reason fell into the category of support. There was the feeling that the area superintendent's office was not as supportive as it might have been. The fact that the administrative structure is complex was thought to be responsible for miscommunication at times, as well as contributing to uncertainty about responsibility and priorities. There was also the feeling that long-term planning and a systematic framework of program delivery were lacking, so that changes in direction were frequent, thus reducing the momentum. Finally, negative attitudes, having more than one office in which staff are housed and the movement of Alberta Education toward standardized tests, which tends to promote the teaching of convergent thinking rather than divergent thinking, were given as possible impediments to programs for gifted children.

Question #10. Consultants were asked if they had any additional comments or recommendations.

The comments of these experienced consultants were most insightful. They noted that their roles change with time and the experience of all participants in offering programs for the gifted. While the resource specialist was supposed to work with teachers to plan programs, she found herself supervising consultants, working with itinerant teachers, aiding parents and numerous other tasks.

EAS-G has been responsible for expanding the scope of the program but there is need for specific guidelines and long range planning to be provided by the Board and central administration. There is the need to identify teachers who have the desire and ability to work with gifted children and help foster the affective domain as well as challenge the child in the cognitive areas. Provision for gifted and talented children needs to be seen as a part of the whole education program of the school and not just an add-on or transitory element. Without proper central direction there is little chance to control many of the day-to-day demands that interfere with more rapid growth in the program.

2. INTERVIEWS with SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

A sample of schools was selected from within the Calgary Board of Education. There were eleven elementary schools, three junior high schools, two elementary-junior high schools and three senior high schools involved in this part of the study. From the nineteen schools, seventeen principals and one assistant principal were interviewed, but in one school contact with an administrator was not possible.

The programs were quite varied depending on the circumstances such as number of children serviced, socio-economic background of the children, emphasis on French Immersion, etc. so that the reliability of generalization is questionable. Alternative High School and Western Canada High School are sufficiently different in their approaches to warrant special attention in this report (included at the end of this section). The cooperation from the principals was exceptional and many insights were gained through contact with these administrators, even though some questions did not apply universally. Since some questions were not answered, the total number of responses is not identical for all questions.

Question #1. Is a program provided for each student identified?

Ten of the principals said they provided for every student and six said they did not. Of the six who responded negatively, the majority said they try to provide for most of the gifted students and one said he was working toward this goal. One principal noted that while providing for every gifted child would be ideal, there are staff constraints which work against this endeavor but there is the hope that every student will be challenged in some way in the regular classroom. In one school there is a program for grades five and six exclusively and in another school there was only one student identified.

Question #2. Type of program.

The organizational arrangement to offer programs for the gifted varied from school to school and there was even a variety of offerings within the school in some instances. Fourteen schools have enrichment offered within the class, four principals said they have clustering of gifted in a class, twelve schools pull the gifted from several

classrooms to receive special instruction (pull-out), and seven schools have cross grading arrangements of some type. No one reported sending children from one school to another for special classes.

There seems to be no common pattern of personnel involvement. By this is meant that the individuals involved and how each participates is dependent upon the school philosophy, number of students, and the resources available. The most common participants are the principal, classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, itinerant teacher, resource teacher, and teacher of the learning disabled. At times there are steering committees or special committees established to select qualified candidates. These committees are commonly referred to as the "School Resource Group". These committees are usually composed of a few of the following: the principal, a school counselor, one or more parents, a psychologist, resource teacher, a school nurse, a curriculum specialist, and a member of the EAS-G staff.

Question #3. What are the identification procedures used in your school?

There does not seem to be a standard set of identification procedures employed across the district if the answers given by these school principals are an indication. The schools rely upon teacher observation and recommendation for the most part with referrals based on psychological assessment when this is available. It was a common complaint that individual psychological assessments were difficult to obtain because of the numbers of students involved and the lack of qualified personnel.

Some schools follow a detailed procedure of collecting student information while other schools are more informal in their approach. Schools which carry on a formal procedure rely upon school grades and scores on special achievement tests, interest inventories, parents' comments and recommendations, teacher recommendations and the psychological assessment. Other schools, especially those which offer enrichment in the regular classroom, are often not interested in a detailed plan with principals providing justifications such as, "we don't want to label the children", "we know we have a large number", and "all of our teachers are doing good things in the class and doing something extra so that the kids' needs are being met". The junior and senior high schools often rely upon identifications made at the elementary school level. The high schools have so many students that identification

procedures seem impossible. Little, if anything, is done to identify children gifted in the visual and performing arts except for a self-selection into options. A common request from the principals was for a set of procedures that they could follow and they often freely admitted that insufficient knowledge and understanding of the nature of giftedness is a major problem.

Question #4. Do you believe the procedures used are complete enough to identify all the gifted and talented students?

Four principals believe the procedures are adequate to identify all students but the rest said no. There is the feeling on the part of some principals that teachers are sufficiently sensitive to be able to identify gifted children while others think that the procedures are fine if there were more in-service sessions provided. Several principals noted that bias can interfere with the accuracy of observation and that time constraints also interfere with accurate identification. Some principals are convinced, in retrospect, that some gifted children were missed even though a thorough identification process was employed.

Question #5. Are there students who were falsely included as being gifted or talented?

In answer to this question, three said yes, eleven said no and the rest were unsure. An instance was cited where a boy was included at the parents' request but a retest using the WISC-R showed the score to be less than the required 130. The child, who did not seem comfortable in the program, eventually withdrew. Some principals believe many high achievers are included with the gifted.

Question #6. Principals were asked if they knew the system definition of gifted and if the procedures used would identify all of the gifted and talented in the system.

The School Board has recently approved a new working definition of gifted but the interviewers were interested in knowing whether the principals knew either the newly accepted definition or the one previously used. Fourteen principals knew at least one of the definitions, one admitted not knowing either and one was unsure.

Only two principals thought the procedures would identify all of the intended candidates. Most believed that the

procedures would miss some academically gifted as well as most of those gifted in visual and performing arts, leadership and motor development.

Question #7. Are the identification procedures educationally sound, effective and efficient?

All but one of the principals thought the procedures were educationally sound. There was uncertainty as to whether an I.Q. of 130 is an appropriate cut off point to determine giftedness. While this score is used it does not seem to appear in the system documents except at Oakley Centre. Principals generally agreed that involving competent teachers in the identification process was a solid foundation but noted that there was need for training and constant re-evaluation of the procedures.

All principals said the procedures are effective. While they admitted that effectiveness is dependent upon the competence of the personnel involved there were no suggestions for improvement.

The opinions were equally divided on the efficiency issue in terms of time spent in identification. Those who answered no to the question believe that there is great waste of time and expense in extensive testing to confirm what teachers already know when the tests also have deficiencies. It was also felt that the meeting with parents was often time consuming without yielding much additional information.

Question #8. Principals were asked to comment on what they are expected to provide for the gifted and talented, what assistance is given to meet these expectations, additional assistance needed and where it might be obtained.

The principals found it difficult to respond to this item. They acknowledged that the Calgary Board of Education was expected to provide for the special needs of all children and while this is difficult it nevertheless is necessary.

The school system generally, i.e. the central administration, principals and teachers, as well as parents, expect gifted children to be properly identified and to have special provisions. The underlying assumption of this expectation is that staff will become sufficiently knowledgeable about gifted and talented children to accurately make the identification and then be able to adequately provide a challenging program for the children, including an evaluation of student progress which will be

communicated to parents. This means that the principal is expected to keep the program fresh in the minds of staff and provide an opportunity for them to gain information. It is also expected that the school will provide the necessary materials and support for a specialized program to meet the needs of gifted children in the school whether this be enrichment or through some other organizational pattern. The implication of this expectation is another expectation of maintaining a flexible schedule and timetable so as to assist teachers and children with special endeavors. There seems to be an expectation for each principal (some of this coming from the individual and some being attributed to the central administration) to have enough knowledge about any program, including programs for the gifted, to provide leadership and know where to find resource help. In many instances this means attending in-service sessions put on in the district, attending conferences and seminars or enrolling in courses. Principals believe that parents, especially those affiliated with ABC, expect the principal to be able to explain what the school is able to do, and is doing, to provide a program for the needs of each child.

The district provides each school a number of resources to assist with programs for the gifted. For the purpose of identification each school has access to a psychologist to administer individual tests, especially the WISC-R. There is in-service from qualified staff at EAS-G when needed, along with access to resource materials, including identification instruments, in the library. There is limited help from the school resource group. There is release time available for teachers to attend in-service sessions and there is also an opportunity for teachers to have a member of the EAS-G staff come to the school and help implement ideas using a team teaching approach. Program specialists are available to give assistance in core curriculum areas such as math and language arts. At times the EAS-G staff intercede with parents to explain the programs available and give special advice. There are limited funds accessible from the area superintendent for professional development. While there are sources of help provided by the district, some principals noted that they had taken initiatives within their schools by applying for EOF grants to obtain more teacher help and by organizing team teaching and in-service among the staff. The principals often commented on the excellent help provided by EAS-G in curriculum development where special units were developed and in some cases specific units for one child.

The principals acknowledged that progress had been made in providing resources to meet the needs of the gifted but in the same breath were requesting more. There seemed to be a

need in some cases to have specialists carry out the identification procedure but a common expressed need was for more staff and resources to facilitate identification. Especially desirable would be more help from psychologists. There was also a plea for more qualified staff and more in-service in identification and curriculum differentiation. One principal expressed the need to have more input into who would be hired for the program. While most principals thought highly of the service rendered by EAS-G in curriculum development there were some who thought their services were less than adequate. There was a strong voice for more resource teacher help. One of the greatest acknowledged weaknesses was in the evaluation of progress of the gifted child and they were at a loss as to how to make improvements in this area.

Question #9. Principals were asked to identify the expectations they had for themselves as well as the type and adequacy of help received to meet these expectations.

All principals expect to provide programs to meet the special needs of the students in their schools, including the gifted. Specifically stated this means they want to have proper identification procedures and then help teachers provide challenging programs. Some were concerned about building an awareness of giftedness. The principals expect to provide leadership to bring teachers and resources together for the benefit of the students.

When asked to comment on the help received to meet these expectations it was evident that little is done unless the principal takes the initiative. There are some conferences and there are helps within the district but most principals said it was left to them to seek assistance or organize their own.

Question #10. Principals were asked to comment on evaluation of gifted students and evaluation of provisions for gifted students in their schools.

Principals were asked if they evaluated the progress of gifted students. Eleven said yes and five said no. While some do not evaluate progress at the elementary level there is evaluation of projects and feedback to the student at the junior and senior high school levels. The evaluations tend to be similar to that done for all students except that there may be more verbal interaction with the student and oral communication with parents.

All principals believe that evaluation of gifted students is necessary and all but one said it should be different from the traditional approaches. It was agreed that there is a place for traditional evaluation to take place but that there should be additional evaluation which takes into account the special abilities of these students. It was the consensus of opinion that evaluation should be subjective and specific to the task and there should be encouragement of self-evaluation.

Only two principals affirmed that evaluation of their program for the gifted is assessed. Crescent Heights High School has an ongoing evaluation carried out through the curriculum planning group. Most principals said they informally inquire about the program and one said his evaluation was rather subjective with no specific instruments involved. Several principals inquired as to how the evaluation process might be accomplished and said they would like more information.

Question #11. Principals were asked if a definition of gifted was in use and if so how it related to the previous system definition and the new one?

Twelve principals said they have a written definition of gifted and the rest use "a definition" though it is more or less understood. Ten of the principals believe their definition is identical or similar to the old system definition and five align with the new one. One principal said their school definition was very broad to account for students gifted in a wide variety of areas but whose high achievement might not be demonstrated in the grading procedures. Some programs are actively promoting leadership, music, art, drama, and physical education. Unfortunately while schools may have a definition, the degree of use seems questionable and knowledge of the new system definition is limited.

Question #12. To what degree does your school provide to students the opportunities suggested in the definition in use (whether your own definition or the one advocated by the school district)?

It was decided by the interviewer to display the current system definition and ask the principals to tell how the opportunities in their school matched with the encompassed expectations. The answers ranged from "a great extent" to "minimal". In analyzing the responses it was found that

there is no way to generalize an answer to do justice to the question.

Question #13. What factors are facilitating success of the provisions to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

Many factors were enumerated which contribute to the success of the program. The most common response referred to the dedicated staff and the materials at EAS-G. It seems that committed and enthusiastic people, whether resource teachers, administrators, parents, or teachers have been responsible for the program being carried forward. It seems to take someone prepared to take a leadership role or the program will falter. There was reference made to financial resources which have provided for release time in-service, resource teachers and special materials as contributing to the success also.

Question #14. What factors are impeding success of the provision to meet the needs of gifted and talented?

Once again there were numerous factors cited as responsible for impeding the progress. The most common category of response referred to was "personnel". Some wanted more psychologists, while others mentioned the need for more teachers with knowledge of the gifted and talented, and some were specific in needing teachers with bilingual backgrounds interested in working with the gifted. In some cases lack of finances was cited as the problem but this was only to purchase the services of qualified personnel, materials, etc. A lack of support from the Board was given as a reason because the philosophy and allocation of resources does not always match the perceived needs and expertise of the school staff and the parents. Minor problems such as scheduling and lack of information about students and special programs were also reasons given for the lack of progress in providing for the gifted and talented.

Question #15. Principals were asked if they had other comments, or recommendations.

This open-ended invitation produced a wide variety of comments. The responses from all schools have been summarized below except for the comments from two high schools which are highlighted at the end.

There were several opposing views expressed by the school principals. There are some who feel that needs of gifted

children are best met in the regular classroom, while others prefer a pull-out approach or some other organizational pattern that segregates the children for special treatment. One principal felt that all gifted children should attend designated schools such as Oakley Centre. Some support curricula that cater to the special needs of gifted children and attend to special abilities and acquired knowledge, while others say their staff do not want the children to miss anything in their classroom and that if something is provided it should be extra. Some are of the opinion that EAS-G does not provide anything different than what is needed in every classroom, while many feel that this support service is nearly ideal. A few are of the opinion that there is too much emphasis on the gifted and talented, while a few others believe there is not enough. One principal posited that the whole curriculum is in need of revision because it is out of step with the child's developmental stages.

Generally the principals were supportive of efforts to help meet the special needs of the gifted and talented children but believe more should be done. They expressed hope that more will be done to help those children gifted in the visual and performing arts, such as providing the services of composers, professional artists, scientists, etc. as consultants to schools or as mentors for students and even suggested providing a special school such as Oakley Centre. There was also the call for more resources and leadership from the Board and central administration and even the hope that Alberta Education would be more supportive in terms of specific resource allocations. There is strong support for long-range planning by the Board stating specific expectations in order to foster improvement in programs for the gifted rather than maintenance of the status quo. There is the feeling, from some, that not enough is being done for the gifted and that the system is merely giving token effort rather than genuine support.

The principal of Western Canada High School expressed his views about the provisions for the gifted and talented. He noted that elitism is an issue and that it not only affects students but has implications for the school staff. This school uses a broad definition of gifted and offers many activities in music, drama, athletics, and academics including the I.B. program to meet student needs. While he believes in meeting the needs of all students, he expressed some doubts about the ability to do so given the resource base and also the fact that there is in operation the unwritten law of diminishing returns.

Comments made by the principal of Alternative High School also seemed to need emphasis. The students in this school don't fit into the normal program for many different reasons but only a limited number would be considered gifted. There is a modified curriculum and class attendance is flexible which allows students to explore more of their interests at their own pace. This school, which uses the community as a resource, tries to be extra supportive of the students through informality, treatment of students as equals, casting every teacher in the role of counselor, and by allowing the students to have a voice in the school operation. There is a waiting list of students desiring this type of school environment in order to stimulate learning. One student with an I.Q. above 150 seemed to summarize the student support when she said, "I love being here and I'm learning and growing by leaps and bounds, which never happened in the regular schools".

3. INTERVIEWS WITH ITINERANT TEACHERS

Eight itinerant teachers (two from each area office of EAS-G) were interviewed. There was a wide variety of expertise and experience. Some interviewees were in their first year as itinerant teachers while others had been serving longer. One teacher was also the psychologist and counselor for gifted children. The following information is organized by the responses to questions.

Question #1. What identification procedures are in use in the schools?

The itinerant teachers said that as far as they knew there were no written standardized procedures for identification of gifted children distributed to all schools. At orientation time recommendations are made that "collector sheets" be used to compile the information; that as many sources of information as possible be used; that checklists on the nature of gifted and talented be used as a guide; and that group test scores, individual psychological assessment (WISC-R) scores, student interest inventories, art portfolios, samples of student's work, and teacher's observations and comments all be part of the data upon which a decision is made by the school resource group. It was recognized that these procedures should be used consistently by all schools but apparently this is not the case.

In answering the above question it was evident that many of the recommended procedures were being used but not uniformly across the district. It appears that parent input is prevalent and that classroom teachers often collaborate with resource teachers before making a recommendation.

Question #2. Will the procedures used or recommended identify all those targeted in the system?

The teachers were split on the answers to this question. Three said that the procedures used would identify all the students for the program while five disagreed. When asked if the recommended procedures would identify all the targeted students once more three said yes and five said no.

Comments by the itinerant teachers shed some light on the answers. There was the belief that the politics of the school would prevent any set of procedures from being fool-proof. In addition it was believed that some students are always likely to be missed, such as those in the

performing and visual arts or some who are learning disabled, because teachers involved in the identification process are not sufficiently knowledgeable to catch everyone who should qualify.

Question #3. Are the recommended identification procedures educationally sound?

Of the eight itinerant teachers, six agreed that the procedures were educationally sound while one disagreed and the other was unsure.

The responses by the majority of these teachers relate mostly to deficiencies in those performing the screening. There is the belief that not enough psychologists are available to schools to perform the necessary specialized testing. It was also recognized that error in identification results when some school staff members are not supportive of the program, that some teachers are not as observant as they might be, and that there are teachers who do not comprehend the procedures but will not ask for clarification because it reflects on their competence. It was acknowledged that tests are not perfect and will miss some students who should be included. It was generally agreed that intensive in-service must be planned as part of the implementation procedure.

Question #4. Itinerant teachers were asked about expectations made of them, who set the expectations, the type of help they received to fulfill their responsibilities, and the adequacy of the help.

What are the expectations? Itinerant teachers believe they are expected to:

- act as consultants to parents,
- provide for student needs,
- help teachers prepare for gifted and talented students,
- assist the resource teachers set up programs,
- produce units for the resource center,
- work with regular students,

- do public relations work with schools and be a positive influence with principals and parents,
- solve any problem in the school connected with gifted and talented,
- act as a negotiator and advocate for both parents and teachers,
- help individual students,
- team teach,
- be a participant on committees,
- help develop awareness on the part of teachers through in-service workshops,
- develop new curriculum units for schools,
- generally be on call to provide assistance when and where needed.

Expectations of the itinerant teachers are varied and come from EAS-G, school principals, resource teachers, classroom teachers and parents. These teachers are expected to provide the services of EAS-G but the role is not well defined and, when this is complicated by other demands, it leaves them floundering, especially at the beginning of the year. As the school year progresses these teachers seem to carve out a place for themselves with which they are comfortable and add responsibilities that are manageable. It was noted by one individual that achieving credibility in the eyes of the school is a real problem. And as one teacher stated, "The system expects more work than I can reasonably handle and so we just go around putting out fires".

While not every expectation is felt by each itinerant teacher, there are more diverse requests than can be reasonably met. Unfortunately, the itinerant teachers feel that they do not receive enough specific help to meet the expectations and that they are, too often, left to their own resourcefulness to meet the demands. What seemed to be even more regrettable is the admission by these special teachers that they often feel inadequate and become discouraged.

Question #6. Itinerant teachers were asked to identify the expectations they had for themselves and the type of help received to meet these expectations.

In almost every instance these teachers expressed the expectation of helping the teachers by achieving a realistic view of the gifted child in relation to the total educational pattern. They want to be a positive influence on the teachers by gaining understanding of the best methods of teaching gifted and sharing this with teachers, students and parents. They want to keep growing professionally, act responsibly in their positions, and provide a vision of educating the gifted which will help teachers go beyond the day-to-day routine. Itinerant teachers want to make a difference in the lives of the gifted students by influencing the actions of classroom teachers.

Expressing how they obtain help to meet expectations received little elaboration. It seems that most of this group feel they are left to their own devices. However gratitude was expressed, on several occasions, for the help of dedicated staff members and the supervisor.

Question #7. Itinerant teachers were asked about the existing structure or procedures for evaluating gifted student outcomes and evaluating school and district provisions for gifted children.

Seven of the eight teachers interviewed believe there are no existing structures for evaluating gifted student outcomes. While one teacher was not sure, she reasoned that there must be something.

Some specific questions were asked about evaluation. All teachers believe that student evaluation is necessary but they are unsure of what form would be best. While all teachers favor long term evaluation of students to determine the lasting benefits, once again it was the unanimous opinion that no device is in place for this. As to whether school and system evaluation procedures for gifted children exist, most teachers said "no" and the remainder were uncertain. When asked if the personnel delivering, administering or providing services for the gifted were evaluated, the response was divided. It was the opinion of this group that all staff are evaluated in some way but this may not be specific to the programs for gifted children, yet it appears that EAS-G staff, itinerant teachers, consultants, and staff at Oakley Centre are evaluated annually.

Question #8. What factors are facilitating the success of the provisions to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

Many contributors were cited as being beneficial to the success thus far experienced. There have been grants from Alberta Education to initiate certain aspects of the program. There are numerous resources available, especially the library facilities at EAS-G. Resource teachers and release time for classroom teachers by providing substitute teachers were mentioned several times. The quality and balance in expertise of the EAS-G staff was viewed as a strength. There is sufficient latitude in the job descriptions of the consultants to provide flexibility in meeting student needs. The in-service sessions have been of benefit even though much more could be done. In some ways the organization into areas has been of benefit because it has involved more people but this was also seen as a detriment by others. Some felt that support from student services was a contributing factor but the reverse opinion was also expressed. The counseling work done by Janet MacKenzie was viewed as a benefit which led to the request for more of this type of service.

Question #9. What factors are impeding success of the provision to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

While many elements seem to be operating against the program, the most detrimental one appears to be the amount of support, both psychologically and physically. Some principals and other administrators appear disinterested, while those more enthusiastic impose their desires for the program on disinterested or philosophically uncommitted teachers. There is definitely the feeling that more money is needed to provide personnel and material resources, including more itinerant teachers or specialists to provide assistance. There was some question as to the effectiveness of the EAS-G staff but whether this is due to time, resources or expertise is uncertain. There is the general belief that the goals of this program are not well communicated to the schools, resulting in a lack of understanding as to what is expected. There are also many who are more sympathetic to the needs of learning disabled youngsters than to those who have ample ability, whether readily apparent or not, and the feeling that the demands for curriculum differentiation exceed teacher understanding in most cases.

Question #10. Teachers were asked if they had additional comments or recommendations.

This opportunity to expand on what had already been said stimulated numerous additional comments about the program, including the observations and opinions of these teachers. It appears that the organizational pattern is viewed as rather complex which interferes with communication. The itinerant teachers are not welcome in the school unless invited, causing some discomfort when there is a perceived need that cannot be addressed. This feeling of not being in control is further complicated when a project is begun but not completed and there is no feedback as to the success. Often times communication between the itinerant teacher and the classroom teacher is thwarted because the message must be filtered through a principal and consultant. The itinerant teachers seem to believe that classroom teachers need more help but either do not ask for it or cannot get the request through the system and this results in a feeling of helplessness. This is complicated even more by the seeming lack of direction due to the dearth of policy statements, role definition and goal setting at all levels.

Itinerant teachers are generally supportive of the intent of the program and the efforts of the EAS-G administrators and have even observed the effect of their efforts carry over to other classes, but expressed some concerns. The program generally seems to be meeting only the cognitive needs of students and neglects many of the affective needs. Children gifted in the visual and performing arts are not adequately accommodated and it was suggested that there be some special provision made for these children, such as a pull-out to a central location on a limited basis. It was suggested that the program could be more effective if a combination of approaches were used, such as mentors, pull-out and enrichment applied to those situations where the circumstances warrant. Occasionally classroom teachers request that the EAS-G provide core curriculum teaching, which is not their mandate, or even initiate and implement the entire program. Often there is the expectation of far more assistance than can, or even should, be provided. One teacher suggested that the teachers from an area, or even the whole city, be brought together more often for sharing sessions to explore teaching ideas and work out a system to deal with common concerns. There is definitely a need for more in-service guidance of teachers and administrators and the feeling that more opportunities need to exist for specialized university training.

Overall the itinerant teachers were quite happy with their work but several expressed the thought that they had

received insufficient preparation for their present position. Explicit expectations and program goals were not provided in the beginning nor was there an explanation of how to address many of the common situations. While some teams seem to working cooperatively, there was noticeable dissension in some areas which reduced effectiveness. One teacher said she would like to have more feedback about her performance and this seemed to be the opinion of others though it was not specifically stated.

4. INTERVIEWS with SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

There were twenty-eight staff members interviewed from nineteen schools, all of whom were involved in teaching the gifted on a regular basis. The group consisted of regular classroom teachers, resource teachers, librarians, counselors, curriculum specialists, bilingual teachers, and one I.B. Coordinator. Some interviews were incomplete because the individual did not have adequate knowledge of the information required or there was not enough time to adequately answer the question because of other commitments. This means that the number of people answering each question does not always total twenty-eight.

Question #1. Is a school program provided for each student identified?

Of the twenty-five responses received, twenty-three said that a program is provided for each student identified. The quality of program becomes the main issue in this case and it was evident from the explanations that this is open to debate. A number of teachers are not providing anything different than what is normally given to all students, while in other schools there are definite programs organized and monitored to help these students. It was also interesting to note the variety of identification procedures outlined by the staff members, leaving open the question of whether the provisions meet the needs of those identified. One who responded negatively to this question cited lack of administrative support as the reason and the other said the school was providing ample choice of subjects to meet the needs of every student.

Question #2. What type of program is provided?

The type of program varies with the number of students in a school and also with the circumstances, i.e. some schools offer only one and others have more than one organizational pattern. Twenty said they offered in-class instruction for the gifted. Four organize students into clusters. Eighteen said they had some type of pull-out approach. Nine have some cross-grading arrangement. The instructional staff carry out many different teaching functions under these various organizational arrangements as they endeavor to meet the needs of the students identified as gifted.

Question #3. What are the identification procedures used in your school and who implements them?

The information received in these interviews was similar to that provided by the principals. Teacher observation and recommendation is responsible for the majority of referrals to programs for the gifted. This results in a number of inconsistencies in the identification procedure due to teacher understanding and competence. Of worthy note is the fact that the WISC-R score used for selection varies from 120 to 130 depending on the school. Some schools use rigorous identification procedures while others are more lax. The interviewers were informed that EAS-G had put on in-service sessions but there were several comments about poor organization and little benefit being derived. Once more there was evidence of assorted identification procedures and inconsistency of application.

Question #4. Do you believe the procedures used are complete enough to identify all of the gifted and talented students?

Seven teachers thought the procedures used in identification are complete enough to identify all gifted and talented students but the remaining teachers answered negatively.

Those who believe the procedures are inadequate provided many reasons. They think there are many underachievers missed in the identification process and students who do not "fit the mold", such as those from another culture. There are few procedures appropriate to identify those gifted in the visual and performing arts. There is the feeling that the screening instruments used are inadequate and that the staff are not sufficiently knowledgeable to make accurate judgements which results in considerable variance.

Those who believe the procedures are adequate do not deny some of the problems outlined by others. Yet they believe that no method is entirely fool-proof and that teacher judgement is more accurate than anything else. They also are of the opinion that a high percentage are identified and that no more could be accommodated anyway.

Question #5. Are there students who are falsely included as being gifted and talented?

Only three teachers said there were students falsely included. There seems to have been at least one student who was retested with the results showing he had been included

in the program in error. It was noted that there are several "running mates" in the program, referring to students who are not gifted but who are included in the program.

Question #6. School staff were asked if they know the system definition of gifted and if the procedures used would identify all of the gifted in the system?

Twenty-five of the school staff members interviewed said they know the system definition of gifted and the remaining three said they did not. Only five of this group thought the procedures used would actually identify all of the targeted students. The main reason given for the procedures not being effective is the lack of adequate means to select those gifted in visual and performing arts.

Question #7. Are the identification procedures educationally sound, effective and efficient?

It must be noted that because there are no identical procedures followed by everyone it is difficult to generalize the answer to this question. Nearly all of the school staff believe the identification procedures are educationally sound, whereas eighteen said they were effective and eleven opined that they are economic in terms of time, with the same number saying the procedures are not efficient. The WISC-R is the test most common to all identification settings and while a single administration does not take too much time, the procedure is lengthy when several students are involved. When the time to administer the individual intelligence test is combined with the few eligible people employed for that purpose, one can perceive why school personnel become frustrated with the amount of waiting time consumed in this process. It was also mentioned by this group of teachers that the results could only be as accurate as the competence of those involved in using the outlined procedures and this seems to be questioned. There was strong support for the development of a more efficient set of procedures which everyone would follow.

Question #8. School staff members were asked to comment on what they are expected to provide for the gifted and talented, what assistance is given to meet these expectations, additional assistance needed and where it might be obtained.

Identification

The expectations of what the school staff members should be doing were many and varied, depending upon their situation. Some of the most frequently expressed expectations are:

- make classroom observations and recommend students for the program,
- be available for cooperative teaching of all students,
- coordinate the identification process in conjunction with classroom teachers and resource teacher,
- be knowledgeable about gifted and talented,
- facilitate and coordinate the identification process,
- follow the procedures outlined,
- identify all students,
- coordinate the identification process, write referrals for assessment, and participate in the final selection,
- be positive and supportive, and
- be aware of the nature of gifted and talented.

The above expectations come from a limited number of sources according to the respondents. They are either given explicit directions from the principal about what is expected or they sense the expectation and attribute it to the system or parents. At times the expectations originate with the staff member.

In most cases little help was provided directly to the staff member. They often said no help was provided and it was up to them to find ways to perform their duties. The help of EAS-G was often cited but several times it was followed by the comment that this source of help was inadequate. This was especially true for exceptional settings such as bilingual programs. Unfortunately there were many complaints about insufficient help but few positive specific suggestions about what more could be done.

Developing, Differentiating, and Implementing Curricula

Almost all the expectations in this area deal with meeting the needs of the students. The teachers are expected to develop curricula that will challenge students, which means meeting the various needs of gifted and talented students. In some cases this means adapting the existing curriculum and at other times it means developing a new one. These teachers are often asked to be a resource person for other teachers, which implies an expectation of special knowledge about the gifted and talented and their needs at various developmental stages. There is also the expectation, though seldom explicitly stated, that these staff members should be familiar with a variety of resource materials or be able to develop them. These expectations are often attributed to parents and come by way of the principal.

It seems that the school staff are often left on their own initiative to differentiate and implement the curriculum. Once again they give credit to the EAS-G staff and the resource library for assistance and it seems that the help received is usually evaluated as adequate. There were some complaints that EAS-G staff are unable to give proper assistance but this was usually in specialized programs.

Assessing Student Progress

The school staff believe that little more is expected for gifted children than is expected for all students in the school, i.e. the progress of these students must be evaluated and reported. Nearly half of this group said there are no expectations with regard to assessing student progress. The teachers try to evaluate the progress of gifted students in the special instruction settings but little, if any, help is provided to carry out this function. Some teachers make anecdotal records, some try to make comments about progress as feedback to students and parents, some provide a report card mark, and some do little more than make oral comments to the student. Consistently the interviewers received the answer that no help is provided in this area.

Reporting Student Progress and Communicating with Parents

It was evident that few teachers feel that any special expectations are required of them in this aspect of the instructional process. In some cases the administration has requested that interviews be held with parents or that a

special reporting system be implemented for parents of the gifted, such as the one at Crescent Heights High School where student progress must be reported three times a year. Some teachers spend considerable time in informal discussions with parents of the gifted, especially at the beginning of the program. Some teachers, on their own, have decided to make special provisions such as writing a newsletter to all parents explaining what is being done but this is the exception rather than the rule.

In-service Education

Eleven of the teachers said there are no expectations of them to attend in-service sessions but the rest felt differently. It seems that there are a number of in-service sessions offered within the district such as those at EAS-G, library services, resource teacher network, and other groups within the Calgary Board of Education system. Teachers do feel an expectation to attend these sessions to become more knowledgeable in their area but some attend because the expectation is more formalized. Most teachers are released from class through substitute teacher arrangements in order to attend in-service. Reactions as to the adequacy of the in-service is diverse ranging from "a waste of time" to "excellent".

Other Expectations

Expectations come from different sources. Some students expect more challenging work than they receive in the regular class, while others want less structure which would allow more opportunity to be with classmates having similar abilities and interests, and some just want extracurricular activity. Some classroom teachers expect overall performance to be improved, especially with those labelled as "underachievers". Parents want the needs of their child to be met academically as well as socially and emotionally. Overall it seems that students and parents want something different in classrooms for the gifted than would normally occur in regular classrooms.

Question #9. School staff members were asked to identify the expectations they had for themselves as well as the type and adequacy of help received to meet these expectations.

Almost all of this group expressed a desire to help the gifted students by becoming more knowledgeable about them individually and as a classified group. They want to make

school interesting and challenging for each child by using relevant materials and teaching methods. These teachers want to let the students know that someone cares about their success and overall development. There is an intense desire to make sure that all gifted students are identified and given appropriate opportunities. The expectations might well be summed up by one teacher who said, "I want to be open-minded, trustworthy, patient and consistent in working with these students who have exceptional ability ".

Help to meet the expectations of the school staff comes from a number of sources. The principal's support was often cited as beneficial either by providing encouragement or giving financial aid for release time in-service or for purchase of materials. The work of the EAS-G staff was given credit for much help with program development ideas. While the teachers gave appreciation for the help received, they often expressed a desire for something more but there is uncertainty on their part as to what it is they need.

Question #10. School staff members were asked to comment on the evaluation of gifted students and evaluation of provisions for gifted students in the schools.

Fifteen teachers said they evaluate the progress of the gifted students and eight said they did not, but all teachers said evaluation of these students is necessary. Evaluations vary from informal observations by the teacher in both the cognitive and affective domains to self-evaluation on the part of the students. This area is not well defined allowing some teachers to evaluate the students against what the teacher believes the student should achieve, while other teachers compare one student's achievement with that of the others in the program.

All but two of the teachers said that evaluation of the gifted should be different from the traditional evaluation procedures. It was expressed that we should be less concerned with the content and more with the process, methods and skills of the learner. There was the feeling that evaluation for these students should be broader and in more depth than for the regular student. This evaluation should be ongoing and involve the studen n the process. It is not enough to give a mark but t. e needs to be greater feedback as to adequacy of the achievement. There needs to be an emphasis on allowing the student to perform for an audience rather than just provide a grade. It was generally agreed that the reporting procedure for the regular student does not do justice to the gifted and talented.

Only two teachers said that programs for the gifted were evaluated. Crescent Heights High School has forms for students, teachers, and parents to evaluate the program. In the other instance, the program is evaluated informally by the School Resource Group. Some teachers noted that there is informal discussion about the program and its strengths and weaknesses.

Question #11. Does your school have or make use of a written definition of gifted?

In answer to this question, twenty-two said they used a definition and nineteen of this number said it was similar to the old system definition. The remainder answered no or were uncertain. Western Canada High School uses a broad definition based on Renzulli's proposals since it seems to allow for the I.B. program and other activities in the school which would benefit the gifted. Crescent Heights High School has modified the system definition so that they can ensure a certain academic ability for some classes. One school uses the Alberta Education Task Force definition and another school is in the process of developing their own definition in line with their school philosophy.

Question #12. To what degree does your school provide to students the opportunities suggested in the definition in use (whether your own or the one advocated by the school district)?

Crescent Heights believe they maximize the opportunities suggested by the definition of gifted, while the remainder of the schools seem to vary from "minimal" to "a high degree". The variance depends on the situation as some schools do very well in one subject area like Science but poorly otherwise, while other schools provide great latitude for student choice which they feel provides a myriad of opportunities.

Question #13. What factors are facilitating success of the provisions to meet the needs of the gifted and talented?

There are numerous factors which seem to aid the success of provisions for the gifted. EAS-G was once again frequently given accolades for their in-service work, especially when it involved allowing for a substitute teacher so the teacher of the gifted could go to the EAS-G offices to receive instruction and peruse materials. The EAS-G staff were also praised for their willingness to provide information over

the telephone when teachers need help. A school administration and cooperative teachers open to novel ideas, both giving support to flexibility in timetabling for different experiences, seems to be a must for success. Positive teacher attitude and commitment are also important, as is support from parents. Curriculum planning teams that want to try new ideas and are open to student input are also beneficial. The need for ample materials and support from resource teachers and librarians seems to give a boost to the program also. While the statements have been grouped into these broad categories, it should be acknowledged that there were many specific comments.

Question #14. What factors are impeding success of the provision to meet the needs of gifted and talented?

The school staff members interviewed gave many reasons why programs for the gifted and talented are not progressing more rapidly. Most frequently cited was the time required to carry out all of the duties and responsibilities of being a teacher in the regular classroom which detracted from the time to think, plan and implement quality programs for the gifted. There are many children needing special attention and parental pressure is great so that the needs of the gifted sometimes dwindle in importance. The lack of space designated for the the gifted along with special materials and other resources has a dampening effect upon enthusiasm. An attitude in the school that the core curriculum must be delivered first and that anything else is extra reduces the emphasis on programs for gifted students. The sheer size of classes, both regular classes and classes for the gifted, reduces the effectiveness of teachers and when this is coupled with a lack of teacher aides the task of providing for the gifted seems impossible. Negative attitude and support from the administration is detrimental to programs for the gifted but sometimes this can be traced to the community also. Finally there was some suggestion that the staff at EAS-G had more to do than they could handle which had an affect upon the professional development of teachers in the schools.

Question #15. School staff were asked if they had other comments or recommendations.

This unfortunately became an opportunity to express all the negative feelings that seemed to be bottled up so that there were few positive suggestions. There is the feeling that EAS-G could do much more but are not in touch with what is happening in the classroom. One recommendation that seems

worthwhile considering is that there be someone with expertise in bilingual programs added to the EAS-G staff and that more appropriate materials applicable to schools with bilingual programs be purchased.

There is a feeling that the school board and administration as well as Alberta Education are not behind programs for the gifted. Many are of the opinion that the emphasis in special education is on those with learning disabilities, not on those with exceptional ability at the other end of the scale. This comes out in expressions that the resources are limited to provide adequate professional development and extra teachers and materials for the gifted. There is definitely the feeling of need for more counselling time to help these students adjust to their special gifts and the need for more psychologists' time to carry on the identification procedure. There is a strong belief that gifted students need attention whether it is done in regular classrooms or in a special school and that the resources of time, personnel and whatever else is necessary should be allotted to address the problem.

5. INTERVIEWS with STUDENTS

From the nineteen schools in the sample, forty-six students were selected to be interviewed. The following table shows the distribution by grade.

GRADE	NUMBER
1	0
2	1
3	6
4	2
5	6
6	8
7	3
8	6
9	8
10	0
11	3
12	3

Students were interviewed in order to determine their insights into the programs being offered and also to see how they would respond to some of the questions asked of teachers, administrators and consultants. It was hoped that by sampling student opinion more information might be obtained that would help to evaluate the adequacy of provisions for the gifted and talented students within the Calgary Board of Education system. Program descriptions are a combination of teacher, principal and student information.

Question #1. Students were asked to rate themselves on creativity, ability to think, performance in school, visual and performing arts, and performance in their best academic subject.

The following tables show the self-rating of students. Table #2 shows how students rated themselves when given forced choice situations. Tables #3 and #4 are a summary of the "free response" answers given when students were asked to list their talents and best liked subjects respectively.

Table 2

Student Self-Rating

	Creativity	Ability to think	Performance in school	Visual or performing arts	Performance in best subject
Excellent	6	15	24	8	38
Very Good	26	24	11	16	5
Good	10	3	7	9	3
Average	3	4	4	6	0
Not Sure	1	0	0	7*	0

* Students said they didn't have ability in this area.

Table 3

Breakdown of Kinds of Arts

15 - piano	2 - organ
6 - drawing or art	2 - public speaking
4 - singing	1 - flute
4 - recorder	1 - bassoon
4 - dancing	1 - trumpet
3 - drama	1 - writing
2 - guitar	

Table 4

Best Subject

26 - math	2 - all of subjects
5 - language arts	1 - drama
5 - English	1 - art
3 - science	1 - physics
2 - French	1 - reading
2 - social studies	1 - computer

Question #2. Students were asked to describe what they do in school.

The responses are categorized by type of school, i.e. elementary, junior high, and senior high and are intended to provide only a sample of the type of activities available.

Elementary School

In five of the eleven elementary schools the students did not think there was anything different being done and this was confirmed by the teacher interviews. In one of the schools the teacher said she tried to take the ability of

the children into account by letting them delve more deeply into the subject matter. One student said he found it hard to concentrate in class because it was boring and then when he was asked a question he didn't know the answer because he had been thinking of something else. Similar answers were given by other students in the elementary schools.

In one school only two grade five students were identified. One student is a Chinese boy in a bilingual program who is teaching an English-speaking boy Chinese while his companion in turn tutors him in English. One boy spends most of his math time on the computer or in independent math study, has done a unit on creative writing, has taught students in grades three and five how to write more descriptively, and has also studied grammar. Some other activities include independent study of math, critical thinking activities and developing computer techniques.

In another school there are many different activities. One student went on a field trip to see an author and went to the art gallery with the resource teacher. One student was on a creative writing project in which the story was written with illustrations and then dramatized for an audience. A third student was taught about writing and required to complete two independent research projects which had to include an outline, written report, bibliography, and an oral report. Another student was engaged in a research project on organ transplants and as part of the data gathering visited the U. of C. medical school to interview various doctors and technicians. Another student, involved in a three-month pull-out, attended a young writer's conference to present a workshop on a research model he had developed which provided a step-by-step method of researching a topic and writing a report.

Another school had an "artist in residence" who came to the school twice a week for ten sessions. The student on the program developed a mural for the school. This same girl participated in the Science Fair with an experiment on gerbils which won a First Place award.

One elementary school had fifteen students meeting twice a week discussing topics of a philosophical nature designed to develop intellectual insights. While the students completed many worksheets the final product was the development of a "trivial pursuit" game.

In another school students are involved mostly in independent studies. Students have studied famous people like Mozart and one student produced a filmstrip on Marie

Curie. In addition, the students have been involved in projects designed to develop critical thinking.

In another elementary school the children worked on a unit designed by EAS-G staff. The unit was about space so the students went to the planetarium to learn about astrophysics, space, and the solar system. One student wrote a report on space communities and made a model of a space community. There have also been projects on many other topics in which the students write and illustrate reports and even make three dimensional models of various types.

Junior High School

In the junior high schools, students are involved in several types of projects. In one school there was a ten week course on thinking ability. In another school the students worked on individual projects, engaging in such activities as: a report (including original examples) of origami; visiting a magazine publisher and developing a magazine complete with advertising, lay-out, and printing; developing computer programs; visiting a ranch; visiting a city council meeting and then, in class, acting out the roles based on a current issue; completion of a speed-reading course; learning about and reporting on a project in New York City called "Children for Children", which involved raising funds for starving children in Ethiopia; and many other projects of this nature. In one school, some students were working on logic units, some were involved in science olympics and attended an inventors conference, but many were not doing anything different from the rest of the students.

In the elementary-junior high school, there was mostly enrichment being offered. There was an option called "Lifetime Activities" to provide extra stimulus to selected students in such areas as sports, chess, choir, science fair, etc. One student developed a grammar game to teach other students. There was encouragement to read in greater depth on topics and write reports that were supposedly more sophisticated than would ordinarily be expected. A mathematics teacher devised some special enrichment questions and students were given a certain percentage toward their grade for completing them. One student in the elementary school had developed a whole newspaper while the class was engaged in writing one article and in the junior high one student had read books and made a comparison of the authors.

High School

Crescent Heights High School uses a pull-out system for their gifted students. Each student completed a major project and a minor project and there were some other activities such as discussions, a public speaking course (presented by EAS-G), video-taping, etc. One student interviewed had completed a review of John Molson and given an oral report. Another student had studied the left-right brain writing process and presented a day-long course to junior high students. Another student had completed a study of the use of lasers in medicine. One student had done a "Lord of the Rings" archeological study and made predictions of what might be found in that society based on the writings of the [illegible]. Yet another student was in the process of writi[illegible]l for a contest for teen-agers in New York. There [illegible]ently many very interesting activities which the s[illegible]found stimulating as participants and as audien[illegible]

Weste[illegible]ada Hig[illegible] School challenges the gifted through the I.B. progr[illegible]m. Most students take I.B. courses in the core academic subjects of math, biology, chemistry, English, French, history, physics, and social studies. The students interviewed seemed to find the course work full of detail, more depth and taxing due to the amount of homework required.

Question #3. Benefits of the program.

Students were asked what they gained from the various programs in the cognitive area or what they learned. Many students gave more than one response and often the responses were similar to others. The responses are as follows (as close to quotes as possible):

- learned more
- learned new things
- could get out of regular class
- improved thinking skills
- makes you think more
- got to choose own topics
- like to make final product
- can be more creative
- learned to do better research
- missed boring classes
- got to meet new people
- made new friends
- get to do more interesting things
- learned debate skills

- learned about computers
- expanded both knowledge and interests
- lot more challenging
- improved in oral expression
- I.B. program a definite advantage for university
- opportunity to share and exchange ideas with others
- good learning atmosphere
- more useful; application of knowledge to other situations
- learn more autonomously
- stimulating
- parents get to see the work
- better prepared for final exams
- helped in attitude toward school in general
- fun
- work in creative thinking.

Students were also asked to tell the benefits which seemed to accrue in the affective area or how it made them feel as a person. The responses are as follows (as close to quotes as possible):

- improved confidence in myself (over half of the students gave this response in some way)
- get away form boring subjects
- make better use of time
- more of an individual now, not following the crowd
- learned to understand myself better
- I enjoy school more
- met interesting people who are exciting to be around
- desire to do more in school
- get along better with others
- teachers acknowledge our real accomplishments
- less of a loner now, positive support helped
- realize strengths and weaknesses in myself and others
- more freedom in school; I can do what I like to do
- others like me more.

The students interviewed seemed to have a positive self-concept. Some expressed directly that they were more contented and had more pride in themselves while others seemed to give this impression in numerous ways. One student said, "I like myself and what I am capable of doing". Other students through various expressions said they were much happier.

Question #4. What are the disadvantages of the program?

The comments in this area were given after much thought on the part of the students. As part of this same question, students were asked their expectations of this program and then were asked what they would like to do. Many responses were the same or similar and of course many students gave more than one response. Representative comments received were (as close to quotes as possible):

- none (over half the students gave this type of response)
- teasing
- have to catch-up on regular class work that is missed
- miss classes that I like
- get behind in regular work
- can't read as much as I would like to
- a lot of pressure
- time consuming
- program is not well organized; sometimes a lot of work and at other times no work
- there are others who don't understand why they are in the class in the first place
- get put down by students who have better marks but aren't in the PEP class
- regular class kids expect you to help them
- treated differently
- don't get to work with regular classmates but that's not always bad
- sometimes when I miss regular classes, I miss things that I should know.

The students were asked to tell what they expected to be doing in such a program. Some were not doing anything differently than the rest of the students in the classes even though they were identified as being gifted and these students were asked what they would like to be doing differently. The responses of the students are as follows (as close to quotes as possible):

- like more math
- like special projects
- more thinking exercises
- more computer time
- like exactly what we are doing
- like to have a regular written report
- like to work on research projects
- expected it would be fun and there would be more language arts
- expected to be able to draw; have more philosophy or more discussions

- wish we had extra activities
- expected to work on clay models
- expected it to be a serious program, and it isn't
- expected lots of work
- expected to work and to learn more
- expected to be allowed to work at my own speed and not be held back
- hoped for more difficult opportunities in science and math
- school system, CBE, and Alberta Ed. are way behind in this area
- expected lots of essays and reports
- would like to play badminton
- would like to choose what I do
- expected it to be harder than regular classes
- am doing more than I expected.

As part of this question, students were also asked to tell their needs or what they wanted to have in a special school program to help them. The responses of the students are as follows (as close to quotes as possible):

- need to be challenged a lot more
- need time to do work
- teachers who can help
- quiet class to work in
- need more friends
- to know that I can do good things
- teachers who are nice and respect me
- more challenge in French
- creative needs are not being met
- it's the same work every year, just advances a bit
- need enough to keep busy
- need to get good marks
- just need the regular program
- need interesting classes
- to be allowed to express or discuss ideas more openly
- need to put brain to work more
- more math and computing science
- need teachers who encourage me to ask and answer questions
- to be with kids of my own ability that I can relate to
- improve in spelling
- better reading opportunities
- need more supportive family
- not articulate enough, need to express myself more
- to express myself creatively
- teachers shouldn't go overboard in their expectations of students

- teachers I can relate to
- less review
- need to learn new things
- need music to listen to.

Question #5. How do you like the program?

Students were allowed a forced three choice response to this question, "a lot", "average", or "so so". Twenty-nine said they liked the program a lot, two said it was between average and a lot, twelve said average and the three remaining were not sure.

Students were asked to tell what they liked about the program and what they disliked. The responses are listed below.

Likes
- special projects
- getting compliments from others
- to challenge myself to find out new things
- to show people what I have done
- everything
- discussions
- meet a lot of kids
- working with others
- computers
- units on logic
- nice teachers who give us breaks
- being with my friends
- intellectual challenge
- teachers who will help
- like program because it is more interesting and fun
- freedom to do different things
- enrichment teacher to challenge me
- openness
- liked inventors and inventions conference and helping to organize it
- it's fun to learn
- playground
- free time to play on games board
- report cards
- to do extra things
- learn things that will help future education
- not being bored
- art gallery
- student council
- being involved as Chinese tutor

Dislikes
- none
- teacher lectures a lot
- writing reports
- worried that I won't get finished a particular project
- worried that I won't do a good enough job
- homework
- have to go when I don't want to
- unit on logic
- debates
- French
- too much pressure, too demanding, takes too much time
- should be a lot more in the program
- tests that categorize us
- not being accepted by other students
- subjects for mini project
- all the puddles in the playground
- don't like it when teachers get mad when students don't understand what the teacher is saying
- pressure of doing things I don't want to do
- regular teachers expect more of us
- having to catch up on work missed
- miss math which I really like
- some prejudice because I am Vietnamese
- some students and teachers
- some teachers because work is too easy

Question #6. Students were asked if they knew of other students who should be in the program but weren't and also if there were students who shouldn't be in the program.

In answer to this question, twenty-two said they thought there were other students who should be included, seven were unsure and the remaining students said they could not think of anyone who should be included. There were eight students who thought some students shouldn't be in the program, seventeen said all the students they knew should be included and one student was not sure. One student observed that some are indeed gifted but they often use this as an excuse not to do anything in class.

Question #7. Students were asked how their progress is graded in enrichment classes and to comment on how they thought grading might be improved.

Nearly a quarter of those interviewed said there were no grades given and the rest had a variety of answers. Some receive the regular grading and report card while a few

receive the regular report card and also have a special sheet or comments about the projects. A number of students have the regular report card and verbal feedback on their enrichment projects. One said he was graded according to achievement as decided by himself and the teacher. Some students said they are judged on capability and effort. One student said she received bonus points for doing additional questions. Some are evaluated by other students but not all of the time. The I.B. program students are given a special report card and there are a few students who said they were not sure how the grading was done.

In responding about how the grading should be done, there were numerous comments which are grouped into the following reactions. Generally students favor some kind of evaluation of progress but there are some who think self evaluation in terms of their own enjoyment and learning standards would be appropriate. Some are content with the grading practices of regular classrooms but would like to have a conference with the teacher in addition to the regular report. Some are of the opinion that grading should be on a longer term basis than one year. One student resented being given a lower mark just to motivate him to do better. Grading didn't seem to be a major problem to the students though they did acknowledge a need for feedback.

Question #8. Students were asked to comment on how the enrichment activities could be improved and also how the total school program could be improved.

The following responses are the most common about improving the enrichment program:

- more often, more challenging
- longer classes
- teachers should give more suggestions of topics and then let the students choose
- more research projects
- need a goal to work towards
- let students have some input as to what they want to do
- everything is fine
- smaller classes
- make it available to more students
- more time to learn a given amount
- relate material more to practical things than to the theoretical
- more special projects and more subjects
- better organized, make better use of time
- harder math and more books to read

- more computer time
- more time for the program
- student shouldn't stop a project if they don't like it, should explore it first
- more student input
- students who don't take it seriously are the ones who talk the most
- spend more time on certain projects
- some worksheets need better instructions.

The following comments were made about how to improve the total school program:

- make classes for students at their own levels
- let everybody learn something new instead of reviewing over and over
- longer recesses
- do more interesting and challenging things in all of the classes
- make it less boring
- want everybody to like me
- have different kinds of programs in the schools
- no French but longer phys. ed.
- should have more students in our school
- more computers and access to them
- need for more supplies, such as books
- should change program to accommodate different learning styles and rates of learning
- smaller classes
- turn down heat
- time of school should be from 7:00 to 12:00 instead of 9:00 to 3:00. I learn better in the morning
- have longer class periods
- better English classes
- school should be harder and have more advanced work
- more time for options
- get rid of all the "heads"
- start later
- shorter gym periods
- school shouldn't be so long
- should test every student to see if they are above their level
- get rid of all textbooks and worksheets and do more creative things
- should reduce rivalry between students over marks
- teach students to be less concerned with looks and clothes and more concerned about what kind of person they are or should be
- no finals if student has 85% to 90% average
- more math and science

- get rid of poor student behavior
- have classes of differing levels of difficulty
- forget about lunch room passes
- leave more interesting things to the end of the day when you are starting to feel rotten and don't have much energy
- each student should have a minimum of three choices in each subject area, e.g. in math they should be able to learn about decimals or combinations or permutations.

Question #9. What things are stopping the enrichment program from being better?

The comments of students to this question seemed to have greater impact when left as they were given. The comments which follow are extracted from the continuous prose given in the interview:

- the teacher doesn't give as much one-on-one help as the student needs
- not enough time, yet we can't miss too much of our regular classes
- too many people for two teachers to handle
- attitude of some students poor and causing problems
- nothing is wrong
- pressure; if we miss enrichment class we get kicked out
- principal won't allow certain projects which we would like to do
- should be more students in the gifted program; lower standards
- classes are too large
- some parents are against the enrichment activities
- not enough teachers; too many students per teacher
- activities disorganized
- some kids think they can't handle the peer pressure or they don't have time for it
- bad facilities, materials and resources
- some students don't want to try new things
- some students use PEP program as an excuse to get out of regular classes but aren't really interested in participating in PEP
- some of the kids (gr. 8 PEP) should be back in regular classes; not attending regularly
- not enough space or money for more students
- sometimes we miss materials in regular class
- other activities in the school interfere with the program.

Question #10. Students were asked if they had any more comments which they hadn't provided.

The following representative comments were extracted from the lengthy answers provided. Many students provided similar comments.

- really fun
- like the teacher
- good idea to have enrichment
- not sure how gifted or talented I am
- teachers very friendly
- pretty good program; like some things, don't like others
- should have it for every school and every grade, especially in elementary
- sometimes it's boring but sometimes it's real hard
- musical interests not being met; can't participate in music because of I.B. program; no time for options
- should have more programs in elementary and jr. high; have something different in higher grades
- class segregation in jr. high was stopped; but perhaps all gifted and talented could be put into one class
- success of the program has to do with the attitude and motivation of the people involved in it, both students and teachers
- I enjoy it but homework is very demanding but I will stick with it
- waste of time
- hope high school will be tougher than jr. high
- definitely worthwhile
- some student union money was used for a party in Stretch program; felt it could have been used for better purpose
- important that Stretch program be offered as a regular course and that we be offered credit for it from Alberta Education instead of it just being a special project
- should be expanded to other schools; need more special programs
- it is O.K. as long as there are good teachers
- great teachers and good principal support
- would like to be in Oakley
- would like to do more challenging things and work at my own level
- very good; should continue
- something should be available for all gifted and talented students.

6. INTERVIEWS with PARENTS

It was decided to interview some parents, but not necessarily all of the parents of the children interviewed, so that a broader sample of participants would have expressed their opinions. There were thirty-two parents in the original sample but only twenty-eight, of which twenty-three were women, completed the interviews. Of the four chosen but not participating, two could not speak English adequately to understand the questions, one was not available and one parent was inappropriately selected because the child was not considered gifted in the sense of being eligible for the program.

In the beginning of the interview, parents were asked to provide the special talents or gifts which seemed to be evident in their child. The following table (Table #5) lists the responses and frequency. In most cases parents listed more than one characteristic but in some cases only one response was provided.

Table #5

Parents's Assessment of Their Child's Special Gifts and Talents

11	Academically gifted
11	Mathematics
8	Language arts
6	Reading
5	Science
4	Athletics
3	Music
3	Verbal skills
2	Organization
2	Creativity
2	Highly motivated
2	Art
2	Drama
1	Reasoning ability
1	Patience
1	P. R. work
1	High retention
1	Curiosity
1	Empathy
1	Maturity

Question #1. Parents were asked if they were involved in the process which identified the child as being gifted and whether they nominated the child for a special program.

Only five parents indicated involvement in the identification process of which four said they had requested the child be tested. Of the four parents who initiated the testing, two said the school did not test, giving reasons such as, they did not think it necessary, they could not obtain the services of a psychologist, and it is too time consuming. In one case the parent said the school was not meeting the child's needs and so a request was made to have the child tested. In the other cases the parents in consultation with the principal made the decision to have the child tested. One parent said they were about to ask that their child be tested when the school called to suggest that it be done. It was found, from the parents' point of view, that in most cases, identification (testing) and nomination for a special program had begun with the school and that no permission had been requested and further that the parents had not received a report of the testing results. Some parents were uncertain as to whether testing had actually been done.

Question #2. Parents were asked what services they expected to be provided for their child, what services were being provided and if the services were considered to be adequate.

While the responses about the expected service varied somewhat in phraseology, the message was similar. Most parents expect to have their children's special needs met by the school so that there is both challenge and growth in learning. Parents wanted the school to recognize special talents and abilities and make provisions for them. Some specific comments referred to: enrichment program with new skills, good basic education for university entrance, allow child to progress at his own pace, opportunities to use abilities, French enrichment, etc.

The comments about provisions showed an awareness of the school programs. Some parents said nothing was being provided differently for the child and some said they were not sure what, if anything, was being provided. Others gave comments such as: optional assignments in math, extra computer work, making a newspaper, field trips, I.B., Stretch program, extra assignments, field trip to young writer's conference, extra attention but nothing else, etc.

As to the adequacy of the program, ten answered that they were satisfied, fifteen said the service was inadequate and

three were unsure. One parent said her child had to work hard for marks. Parents who were not satisfied thought there should be more time given to special activities to meet the special needs and some noted that children felt "let down" when they went back to the regular class.

Question #3. Parents were asked if they received information about the enrichment activities.

Nine parents said they had received information about the enrichment activities in the school and nineteen said they had not. Several said there are no enrichment activities. Parents of children in the I.B. program said there is a special report card but one parent said they also had parent-teacher interviews. One parent said she received written comments plus phone calls from the teacher but other parents receive only the standard report card. One parent said she received a report card at the end of each module which was about every ten weeks. Most parents not receiving special information expressed the desire to have it and one said she had written to the school requesting information but had not been answered.

Question #4. Parents were asked if they thought evaluation of enrichment activities was necessary.

All but two of the parents answered in the affirmative to this question. The reasons given for wanting evaluation were: to provide feedback to students and parents, help determine if it is worthwhile, provide more detail about progress, and necessary to justify the program. One parent said that the reaction of the child to the program was adequate evaluation.

Question #5. Parents were asked to list the benefits and disadvantages of the enrichment activities.

Some parents said there were no enrichment activities and therefore couldn't give an answer and others said they were not sure how to answer. Some of the responses are provided using as much as possible exact excerpts from their own comments.

Benefits

- see and experience new things; develop skills
- school is one of the happiest things in his life

- interaction with peers is very settling

- helped her to start thinking again; accelerated ability to think through issues; I.B. created a social group

- she is no longer bored but also learned that she doesn't know everything and that there are others who are smarter

- confidence improved; logical thinking increased; improved in ability to present ideas; gets lots of encouragement

- provides stimulation; being in charge of projects is good for self-esteem; not bored with school

- good intellectual stimulation; teacher has shown interest in him

- broadens horizons; gains new experiences; discovered he could write poems; improved in socialization skills

- gained self-confidence

- realizes it is O.K. to be different

- taught some skills sooner

- keeps interest up and makes children eager to learn.

Disadvantages

- none (fifteen parents said this)

- it causes friction with regular teachers

- there was some teasing from children at first

- location of school too far away

- bored when he goes back to the regular class

- liked Stretch class more than regular classes and then neglected the regular classes

- no options in I.B. and couldn't continue in music

- lose some ability to relate to others; more intolerant of the ones who are slower.

Question #6. Parents were asked to comment on the enrichment activities with respect to likes, dislikes, problems and suggested improvements.

Once again several parents could not comment because they were of the opinion that no enrichment was being provided in the school where their child attended but there were also some interesting comments. Parents liked their children to be challenged and have opportunities to learn at a faster rate, especially in thinking skills. Many parents liked the smaller classes for individual attention and the opportunity to have supervised independent study projects. There seemed to be less stress on some students as well as variety which enhanced learning and reduced boredom. Almost all parents refrained from commenting about dislikes except a few who wanted to be better informed and one who felt the program was too demanding in terms of time.

Only eight chose to comment about problems encountered. Once again lack of regular communication with the school (teacher) was the most prevalent complaint. One parent said the regular teacher would sometimes not release her child to attend the enrichment program. Another parent said the I.B. students had to cover material too quickly and they had a hard time participating in the extracurricular activities of the school because of travel time. There were a few complaints about lack of guidance and teachers assuming the children knew information or had skills not yet developed. For the most part there seemed to be few complaints yet there were several suggestions for improvement.

The suggestions for improvement were consistent with previous comments about the program. Several parents expressed the need to be better informed about programs at the school and the progress of their children. There should be opportunities for children to have challenges by expanding the curriculum to meet their special needs. Several parents want the program expanded to include more time, more subjects, and to have more personal attention from the teacher. Specifically parents requested more computer experiences, more independent study opportunities, allowance for more options, and more involvement with authors, books and study skills.

Question #7. Parents were asked to tell how long their child had been in a program for the gifted.

The answers to this question varied from zero to four years but not all parents provided an answer. Six said there was no program (equated to zero for the purposes of this

question) and six were in the first year of the program. Two students were in the Stretch program and two were in the I.B. program. One student had been at Oakley Centre and is now in the second year of the enrichment program.

Question #8. Parents were asked if they wished to make further comments about programs for the gifted.

There were some interesting observations and remarks even though not all parents made additional comments. Parents expressed their gratitude for the program and hoped it would continue into the other grade levels such as junior high school and of course some parents who did not think there was anything special provided wanted the program to be offered in their school. One parent said her child stimulates the entire home environment and didn't want the eagerness of learning now present to dissipate, so she hoped the school board would expand the program into other settings. There was a comment about the I.B. program being demanding yet satisfying but also the concern that the university would not accept courses for advanced credit. Some expressed the need for more cultural and arts activities. It seems that in the bilingual program there is the need for teachers with more expertise in subjects such as science. While one parent felt her child was not properly accommodated at Oakley, there was gratitude expressed for the interested and capable teachers at his present school. There was concern about the emphasis of the school system suggesting that teachers are not as fully informed about gifted children as they should be and also that too much effort is spent on children with learning disabilities while ignoring the contributions that gifted children can make to society. Some parents suggested a pull-out approach coupled with enrichment and regular class participation. Parents do not seem to be aware of the assistance of EAS-G and several alluded to the fact that they felt it was the responsibility of the school to keep parents informed of programs and help within the system.

IV SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

This study was begun as part of an evaluation of programs for gifted children in three school districts in the province. A recent history of how the program began in Calgary Board of Education and the present array of offerings is provided as section II of this report. Section III is a synopsis of the information gleaned from interviews with consultants and itinerant teachers employed as a part of the Education Assistance Service - Gifted (EAS-G), school principals, teachers of gifted children, children involved in activities for the gifted, and parents. Section IV addresses the recommendations which emanate from the analysis and conclusions of the study.

The questions which formed the stimulus for interviewee response were developed in cooperation with the Supervisor of Program Evaluation Services and the Supervisor of EAS-G to ensure that appropriate information needed to evaluate the program was included. Interview instruments and document collection procedures were designed specifically to assemble an information base to address the evaluation questions. This summary provides, as far as is feasible, direct answers to the questions posed, followed by a digest of comments and observations which qualify the answers and/or provide information from the standpoint of the various groups of participants interviewed.

Question #1. Is the system definition of gifted/talented:
(a) congruent with that of Alberta Education, and
(b) congruent with the literature?

Prior to April 1985, the Calgary Board of Education definition was less inclusive than the Alberta Education Task Force definition. However the current definition recommended for use in all schools is nearly congruent with that of Alberta Education. There is no single definition having universal acceptance but the current system definition is, in nearly all essential points, equivalent to that published by the United States Office of Education which is widely accepted.

During the interviews it was learned that most of the principals knew at least one of the system definitions. Unfortunately awareness does not always mean usage. In most cases schools claim acceptance of the system definition or a modified version but a few are inclined to accept the one recommended by Alberta Education. While there is acceptance of a definition, school practices do not always coincide.

Question #2. Will the identification procedures used identify all of the children specified by the system definition?

Almost all consultants, principals, itinerant teachers, and teachers believe the identification procedures will fall short of identifying all gifted students in the system. Many believed that regardless of the procedures some will missed but they were especially dubious about identificat of children gifted in the visual and performing arts. It was noted that the politics of the school, including adherence to a definition or particular philosophy, often plays an important part in the identification process and renders any set of system prescribed procedures somewhat ineffective.

It was found that there is not a standardized set of procedures followed rigorously in each school throughout the district. While there are recommended procedures and in-service by the EAS-G staff with respect to these, the final decision about how to identify gifted children is left to each school. It was the opinion of some principals that a few children are missed and others inappropriately included due to bias and unskilled observation. It was also found that while an I.Q. score of 130 on the individual intelligence test is used at Oakley Centre and ensures inclusion in the program elsewhere, a lower score is often used. The recommendation of the psychologist for talented students regardless of the I.Q. score is sufficient. A few schools do not use the individual intelligence test at all but have their own screening devices and rely on teacher nomination extensively.

It can be concluded that:

(a) there is no known set of identification procedures which is infallible. Certainly within a system the size of CBE, some students whose later careers will attest to giftedness will be missed, whatever procedures are used for identification.

(b) many of the regular classroom teachers who must play a key role in the nomination process have not had adequate in-service preparation. The current literature

suggests that without such preparation, teachers inappropriately identify about half of the gifted students.

(c) identification procedures vary, as do definitions, from school to school. The system definition is often at variance with that of the school, resulting in a lack of congruence between the system's expectations and the school's identification procedures.

Question #3. Are the identification procedures educationally sound?

None of the procedures recommended by EAS-G seemed inappropriate according to those interviewed. Since, however, it is accepted as good practice that several criteria be used in the identification process, the further pertinent question is whether the procedures used in any one school are educationally sound, i.e. sufficiently complete, effective and efficient? Because procedures are, in practice, determined by each school, it is difficult to generalize an answer.

Most of those interviewed considered the procedures to be educationally sound but there was some incompleteness noted. The deficiencies relate to the lack of a common philosophy and understanding of the meaning of the nature of giftedness as well as inadequacies in those performing the identification. It is generally agreed that using competent teachers will reduce error to a minimum. There were several complaints about the insufficient number of psychologists available to administer the WISC-R, which tends to reduce the accuracy of identification as well as add to the length of time necessary to complete the process. There was strong support for a more efficient set of procedures which would be universally applied and supported by each level of administration within the school system.

Question #4. Has the organization set up by the school district to address the needs of gifted/talented been staffed so as to:

(a) assist those identified in terms of the definition?

The organization is designed to identify all students described by the definition and provide for their needs but the staffing in some areas is inadequate. There are too few psychologists to meet the demands of service, resulting in many schools finding alternate methods of identification which do not require these services. There are scarcely any counselors in the system adequately trained to help gifted

children cope with those affective needs which may be directly related to their high ability. While the system allows for the identification and delivery of programs to children gifted in the visual and performing arts, there is in practice too little attention given to this group.

Other problems can be traced to two extraordinary requirements appropriate for educating gifted students. The first is that teachers need specific preparation in order to fill their role in identification; this role is most often to provide nomination of students into a pool from which final selection is made. The second is that teachers must develop specialized, often individualized, curricula and devise appropriate delivery strategies. The first is a requirement of all teachers, the second of those directly responsible for providing the educational experience. But in both cases teachers are usually inadequately prepared in their teacher education programs and experience to fill the requirements.

EAS-G is organized to provide a service to teachers in both identification and curriculum. There are obstacles, however, to providing adequate service. The rate of growth in the number of schools implementing programs has resulted in needs which seriously exceed the capacity of EAS-G to meet. Making schools responsible for their own educational programs is doubtless an excellent policy in theory but breaks down somewhat in providing for gifted students unless there is adequate opportunity to learn about the nature of giftedness and the educational options appropriate for the gifted. Some schools initiate programs without being fully aware of the depth of need for in-service and other assistance teachers require in identifying gifted students and providing appropriate learning experiences. In consequence, identification of gifted students across the system is somewhat spotty and educational provisions for them range from useful to excellent.

Another, less serious, problem is related to decentralization of supervision. EAS-G personnel are housed, for the most part, in the area offices. This deployment negates, to some degree, the capability of EAS-G to operate as intended, i.e. as a team chosen to bring a variety of expertise to bear on the development of programs for gifted students. To the extent that EAS-G personnel are constrained to focus their efforts on the geographical area to which they are assigned, the variety of expert services available system wide are reduced and at the same time their use of the extensive library of materials housed in Christine Meikle School becomes somewhat more awkward.

In summary, it seems that while the central administrative and resource staff are theoretically organized to care for those defined as gifted, this has not made its way to the school level to provide for a standardized procedure. Because of the move to decentralization schools are encouraged to make their own provision for gifted children. Therefore very few schools carry on identical procedures or have similar staffing arrangements. Unfortunately the philosophy of some schools and the one espoused by EAS-G are often in opposition. Yet EAS-G is charged with assisting schools even though the philosophical stance of each may be at odds, sometimes causing an undercurrent of dissatisfaction. The result is often a rejection of EAS-G services by the schools, which the consultants and itinerant teachers are unable to surmount.

(b) cover the range of students identified?

In theory the organization and staffing is such as to provide for the range of students identified but in practice this is not completely realized. This conclusion is reached because, (1) while there is adequate attention paid to the academic needs there is little done for those who are gifted in the visual and performing arts and there are many complaints about inadequacies for gifted children in the bilingual programs; (2) likewise, while there is much attention given to the cognitive needs of children, there seems to be less sensitivity for the affective needs; and (3) while it appears that all schools are expected to provide enrichment for the gifted and talented, in many schools nothing is being done. It must be recognized that these statements are generalizations gleaned from overall observations and that there are specific instances where the individual needs of children are being met adequately.

(c) meet the expectations of students and parents?

The answer to this question would have to be no; at least not completely. Expectations for a program in every school has increased among parents of gifted children and there simply has been insufficient time for program development to take place. Not all schools are equipped with adequately educated personnel to meet expected needs.

In some schools there are gifted students who do not receive any special provisions and there are also some teachers who seem to be jealous about having a child leave the regular classroom in order to receive special assistance. While there are some interesting activities being conducted and many students are quite satisfied, there are many students who receive nothing specific to enhance their talents and

gifts. Unfortunately there were many complaints about students being expected to finish all assignments of the regular class (whether present or not) and in addition expected to complete heavy assignments from activities designed to challenge the gifted. This tends to act as a punishment or deterrent to being involved in such activities.

(d) address ... expectations of the administrators, consultants and teachers?

Based on the interviews, the answer is no. In a system as large and complex as CBE, the response could hardly be otherwise. In a group of people as large as the one interviewed, expectations held by some are certain to be so high as to be beyond reason, while the expectations of others will be extremely low. Once more philosophical differences of how to meet the needs of the gifted play an important role.

It is difficult to assess whether the organization is at fault or whether it is due to the lack of resources (including qualified teachers); probably a combination of both. The senior central administration seem to be clear on what they want but this is not always communicated clearly to the rest of the organization. Principals feel a sense of duty to provide for the needs of all children which, of course, includes the gifted. But the mechanism to provide for specific expectations, coupled with the variety of expectations and responsibilities of each principal, is often a detriment to efficiency and effectiveness in providing an adequate program for the gifted. Sometimes the school administrator is not sufficiently informed and at other times there is information overload. In some cases the administrators and teachers are supportive of methods proposed and in other cases lukewarm or even opposed. It seems that the best programs result when there is a specific interest on the part of the principal, when there are interested teachers who sense the support of the principal and when someone specifically takes the lead, either through delegation or through self-initiative, to develop a program, whether it is enrichment in the regular classroom or special activities in a pull-out arrangement. While this does not mean that all efforts should cease if these conditions are absent, it does support the fact that enthusiasm on the part of school administration and teaching staff is vital to superior programs.

Consultants noted that they are often left to [illegible] devices to provide ideas to teachers. While the criteria for consultant selection may be personal creativity and

leadership skill, it is nonetheless quite disconcerting to the consultants to receive little assistance in gaining background knowledge about the nature of giftedness and how to address it. The consultants and itinerant teachers perceive that there is a lack of attention to their need for extra training and support, which probably needs to be addressed. This does not mean that the supervisor of EAS-G is slothful but rather that the demands are heavy on this organizational unit and also that the total organization has a complexity which allows some concerns to be neglected.

Teachers have received much help but once again demands are numerous and specific concerns are not always adequately identified and thus are not addressed. Because teachers generally lack knowledge of the nature of giftedness their needs are great and cannot easily be met with a few isolated in-service sessions. The solution can in part be addressed by the organization but some must also become the professional development responsibility of each teacher. Incentives spread more broadly throughout the system may be needed to enhance the occurrence of the latter, such as paid conference trips, payment of fees for courses and even release time for retreading.

(e) provide for appropriate program development?

Most teachers have inadequate knowledge of curriculum development procedures nor time for such and thus depend upon others to assist in all aspects of providing for gifted children, including program development. The Calgary School Board seems to have many adequately trained specialists employed to assist with program development for gifted children. There is concern however, that information relevant to meeting the needs of gifted children does not always reach the teachers involved. This may be due to an insufficient mechanism for communication or, that through a philosophy of decentralization, the school is viewed as autonomous.

Schools are the prime movers on programs to meet the needs of children. If the school does not request information or assistance then it might be overlooked but there are far more instances where schools have been visited by a consultant only to have the services given little attention. In some cases this is because consultants are perceived as having very little to offer either in terms of expertise or packaged program elements. It is true that there is not, and usually cannot be, a specific curriculum to follow in meeting the needs of all gifted children because the needs are so diverse. But it may also be true that insufficient time and expertise is available to develop numerous teaching

units which could be effectively used by teachers even if they were aware of how to select and adapt them. This suggests that the organization may not make adequate provision for specialized curriculum developers nor have sufficient resources to employ people for this purpose. It could also be that because each school is responsible for its own program, the consultants should be more concerned about presenting alternative approaches rather than emphasizing one basic approach; a current perception of many schools. It was also suggested that Alberta Education should be more active in presenting curricular alternatives.

(f) provide for appropriate staff development?

Some aspects of this question have already been addressed and little more needs to be added. It seems that more does need to be done to help consultants, principals, and teachers become more knowledgeable with respect to the nature of giftedness and how to address it. Most consultants are of the opinion that there are numerous opportunities for staff development but the teachers are not willing to take full advantage of them.

(g) provide services to meet the expectations?

Generally speaking the district is organized to provide services to meet most expectations of all participants in the education of gifted children. There are some deficiencies, as noted above, but it may be a lack of commitment to provide adequate financial resources for differentiated staffing rather than the organizational structure which is at fault for the inadequacies cited by those interviewed. There is definitely a need however, to have consultants who can address the needs of gifted children in the schools with immersion programs.

Question #5. Is there an adequate evaluation component to:

(a) examine the congruence of plans and action with respect to definitions of gifted children and expectations of achievement?

The area of evaluation was noticeably wanting. Nearly all individuals in every group interviewed gave overwhelming support for evaluation of children and programs but the conclusion reached upon analysis of the comments is that this area is woefully weak.

Most people, including students, believe evaluation of gifted students is necessary to provide feedback on progress

and to assist in determining if the program is worthwhile. It was discovered that nearly half of the students receive only the regular report card with no mention of their special classes or enrichment activities. (It should also be noted here however that a number of schools do not provide anything extra and therefore a special report was not deemed necessary.) Many students do not receive grades for their enrichment work but rather are given verbal feedback about the projects and activities. In some cases there are interviews held with the student in which objectives are mutually agreed upon and evaluated based on the student's needs and expectations, but this is rare. Teachers generally believe that evaluation should be different for the gifted but they are not sure on what basis the evaluation should be conducted. Teachers and consultants noted a dearth of knowledge is evident and it seems the topic is seldom addressed.

When asked to provide opinion on how to improve evaluation, the answers seemed insightful. One student said he resented being given lower marks as an incentive to do etter and some students thought the evaluation should be on a longer term than one year. Some students wanted an opportunity to make suggestions about how they should be evaluated and several did not want to be evaluated at all. Teachers thought there should be less concern about evaluating the learning of content and more concern about evaluating whether the students had learned processes and skills.

(b) examine the degree to which programs and activities provided are reflecting needs and expectations?

There is no formal attempt, and little done informally, to evaluate whether the students identified as gifted have an achievement level commensurate with their ability or whether programs are meeting specific individual needs. There have been some instances where students have been excused from the program because they did not seem to have adequate interest. Whether the student's needs couldn't be met with the resources available or whether program design was paramount and the student's needs were secondary could not be determined by the researchers. It is interesting to note however that a substantial majority of students are happy with the special activities provided and those identified as gifted, but who do not receive anything special, expressed a desire for something better.

There seemed to be little attempt, on the part of school-based personnel, to determine if the needs and

expectations of gifted students are being met. It seems to be sufficient to say that something is being provided.

(c) examine adequacy of personnel involved?

Apparently everyone in the system undergoes an evaluation of some type but there does not seem to be anything done specifically for those teachers involved in programs for the gifted. The staff of EAS-G undergo evaluation from supervisors but teachers in the schools rely mostly on informal feedback and self-evaluation and thus self-selection determines whether they stay in the gifted program beyond the initial appointment.

(d) examine the long range effects of programs on the students identified?

There is a project underway at the present time to examine the long term effect on the participants of special provisions for the gifted. This will involve students in the regular schools as well as students attending Oakley Centre.

Question #2. Which factors act to impede programs for the gifted?

There seem to be numerous elements which inhibit greater success in programming for gifted children within many schools.

The regular classroom teachers feel that they have too many demands on them to give adequate attention to planning for the gifted. They feel pressure to meet the needs of every child by delivering the core curriculum first. This acts as a deterrent to differentiating the curriculum, often resulting in the gifted child being subjected to boredom. The number of students in each classroom, linked with lack of space, lack of readily available materials, lack of teacher aides, and in many cases lack of adequate knowledge about the nature of giftedness and how to plan appropriate programs all act to impede success. When these factors are coupled with less than enthusiastic support from school administrators who also feel pressure to provide something for the gifted but lack the knowledge, there is usually anxiety and frustration but little progress.

The itinerant teachers categorize the factors that impede success into lack of support in terms of both resource support and attitudinal support. There is a need for more and better trained teachers to meet the needs of the gifted

as well as money to develop more adequate curricular resources. They attribute lack of support in some cases to principals and other administrators and in some cases to the classroom teachers. They did not feel that the possible developmental procedures and expectations of the program were well communicated to the school personnel. There was a definite feeling that more money is needed to provide personnel and material resources at both the consultant and school levels. These itinerant teachers also believe that the demands for curriculum differentiation exceeds the understanding of most regular classroom teachers.

Principals also cited lack of financial support as the major impediment to success of programming for the gifted. They do not believe that the expectations are matched with adequate funds to provide qualified personnel for identification, and extra assistance to teachers or to purchase special materials. There seems to be some lack of information about the program but the main concern was the need for more qualified personnel to assist the teachers and the school generally.

The consultants also agree that lack of support, mainly financial, is the main cause for concern. There are far more opportunities for helping teachers than there is consultant time available to render assistance. The idea of providing release time for the classroom teacher to attend in-service seems to be well accepted and effective but there are not enough substitute teacher days budgeted for the need when there is such a lack of knowledge about teaching gifted children. The complexity of the administrative structure seems to contribute to confused communication at times and this also contributes to the feeling that there is a lack of long-term planning and even commitment to providing programs for gifted children.

Parents seemed to have less information but some offered opinions about why the programs were not going as well as expected. The attitude of some teachers toward the program was one reason cited since it seems that children are not always allowed to attend special activities. Parents were mostly unhappy about not having more opportunities for their children to experience challenges commensurate with ability.

The comments of children were insightful and direct and it must be realized that these qualities are inherent in gifted children. They seemed to be saying that the programs for gifted are not a district priority, resulting in an insufficient number of teachers, poorly organized activities, insufficient space and materials, and a tendency [illegible] schools to threaten withdrawal of the program as a

disciplinary tactic. These students also believe that inclusion of some children who are disinterested or not capable of adequate achievement is a detriment. This may mean that the "running-room" concept should receive further examination and/or that schools having insufficient numbers should examine their criteria for including other students in activities for gifted children.

Question #7. What factors are facilitating the success of programs for gifted students?

The success of the program thus far seems to be attributable to dedicated people, including dedicated teachers and principals. The most often acclaimed by the schools which took advantage of their services, were the staff of EAS-G. The EAS-G supervisor, consultants, and program specialist were given the credit for their knowledge, enthusiasm and willingness to assist by sharing ideas, developing units and team teaching with the regular classroom teacher. The other group given credit for the success was the itinerant teachers. Of course many people noted that it was the resource allocation which provided for the services of the specialists, the substitute teachers available while the regular classroom teacher attended in-service, and the materials that made the entire program viable. There were other factors which seemed to lubricate the wheels of the movement but they were minor by comparison to the dedicated people involved.

V RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations accrue from a study of the gifted and talented program in the Calgary Board of Education. They are a result of information received from the many interviews conducted and from a study of the curriculum provisions for this segment of the school population. It is recognized that many of the recommendations are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan dated March, 1985 (appended to this report) and approved by the Board. However it is believed that the recommendations should be stated in this report to provide emphasis to the need for action since they are primarily the recommendations of professionals, students and parents involved with programs for the gifted and talented within the school jurisdiction.

1. BOARD POLICY

a). The Board has broad statements regarding philosophy, goals and provisions for students with exceptional needs. Lacking though, is a statement on specific outcomes to be met through programs for the gifted and talented. This lack of expectation causes confusion within the system, especially at the school level. It is also extremely difficult to assess the value of programs and success of students without a statement of expected outcomes upon which to make judgements.

Recommendation: That the Board develop and approve a statement of expectations to be achieved in provisions for gifted and talented students.

b). There is inconsistency throughout the system in identification procedures even though there is an approved definition of gifted and talented. Oakley Centre has one set of criteria which includes a specific I.Q. score and this is sometimes used as the base criterion throughout the district to ensure that

students will have access to programs for gifted children. Yet most schools rely primarily upon student nomination by the teacher which is supported by test data and, when available, a psychologist's report. There are students in the program who would not normally qualify as gifted but are included to provide a critical mass and for other reasons known only to the school. There are numerous instances where a student would be included in one school but not in another. Some schools will not make any decisions on acceptance without a psychologist's report while others are more casual in their approach. Because the psychologist is the only one allowed to administer the WISC-R, there is often a considerable time lag between a request for testing and the report being received at the school.

There is need of a common set of identification procedures or guidelines to be followed by all schools. This should be as simple and efficient as possible and should incorporate a multiple criteria approach; one which has been found in practice to be relatively accurate. It appears from the information received, that there are many individuals in the system who are perceived as being adequately trained in the administration of the WISC-R and who should be given permission to help in the identification process. A determination of this adequacy would seem to be appropriate. There is also the need to have procedures which will identify students gifted in the visual and performing arts, providing there is a program established that will challenge them.

Recommendation: That the Board develop guidelines and procedures that will efficiently and effectively identify the gifted and talented intended by the approved definition so as to provide for consistent entry to the program.

c). There seems to be need of a policy governing the in-service preparation and assignment of teachers with specific responsibilities for the gifted within a regular school and also a statement about teaching environments or minimal standards when providing activities. Teachers are currently selected with a variety of qualifications and for a variety of reasons. It is well accepted that the teacher is the most important part of the instructional process and therefore considered selection is of utmost importance. It would be appropriate for the Board to issue a set of guidelines and teacher expectations that would assist

principals in selecting teachers and acquainting them with their responsibilities. One requirement that should be explicitly mentioned is the attendance of teachers at in-service sessions provided within the school district.

The Board is to be commended for allowing teachers of the gifted to attend in-service sessions during regular school hours by providing a substitute teacher. This practice has been widely acclaimed throughout the district. Teachers in the system, even with the in-service provided, are still finding it quite difficult to meet the demands of students and their parents in the regular program, as well as try to offer quality instruction to children in special activities for the gifted. The request of these teachers is that some compensation be allowed in terms of preparation time so that the gifted are not short-changed. It is common practice in many school districts in Canada and the United States to provide these teachers with less contact hours so that there is time for curriculum development and planning. It might also be necessary to provide teacher aides for some schools in order to enhance the quality of instruction for the gifted.

Recommendation: That the Board, (a) develop and publish a set of guidelines for the selection and evaluation of qualified teachers assigned specific responsibilities for special activities for gifted students, (b) expect these teachers to attend in-service sessions provided by the district, and (c) provide additional release time, teacher aides or both to allow more time for curriculum development and program planning in order to enhance the quality of instruction to the gifted.

d). Many teachers seem to have inadequate knowledge about evaluating gifted children. This does not seem to be an area of expertise among EAS-G staff members either.

The following issues need to be addressed if there is to be consistency throughout the district and if gifted students (and their parents) are to benefit by being given adequate feedback about progress. How will evaluation differ from that of regular students? What is the role of self-evaluation for gifted students? What is the role of peer evaluation? What is the role of the teacher in helping the student plan projects with objectives and criteria upon which to evaluate quality?

Recommendation: That the Board develop policy and guidelines with respect to evaluation of gifted students that will be emphasized throughout the district and result in students of similar gifts and talents receiving more consistent assessments.

2. IN-SERVICE

Because most teachers selected to teach the gifted have received little, if any, special training for such an assignment, it is necessary to provide such opportunities. It was found through this study that teachers and principals were desirous of receiving information about the nature of giftedness, characteristics of gifted children, how to differentiate curriculum for the gifted and provide challenging alternatives, how to provide special instruction for students gifted in the visual and performing arts, and how to involve students in developing their own curriculum. The staff of EAS-G have been heavily involved in this type of service and this must continue. In addition there should also be provision for teachers to attend university courses, workshops and conferences that go beyond the normal in-service sessions in order to become better prepared to guide the learning of gifted children. Incentives may need to be provided, such as paid conference trips, payment of course fees, and release time for retreading in order to encourage professional development.

Recommendation: That opportunities for teacher development related to educating gifted children continue to be made available and that teachers, and when possible principals, be expected to attend as part of their responsibility to provide quality instruction to gifted children.

3. EDUCATION ASSISTANCE SERVICE - GIFTED (EAS-G)

a). It must be recognized that EAS-G has had a great impact on the development of programs for gifted children in the Calgary Board of Education. This organization has provided in-service to teachers in group sessions as well as providing individual help when requested. There have been opportunities for the teacher to observe consultants and team teach with them. There have been special curriculum units painstakingly, and usually voluntarily, prepared by consultants. These have been willingly shared with teachers in order to

meet the needs of the gifted in schools. There have been opportunities for teachers to study materials at the EAS-G Centre and receive guidance about unit preparation. Yet the services have not always been fully appreciated or filled the needs and expectations of several schools.

Some schools have developed their own philosophies for educating the gifted, which are incompatible with that of EAS-G. This has led these schools to believe EAS-G is "out-of-touch" and to question the worth and effectiveness of EAS-G. Since each school has the right to develop its own program, there may be merit in having EAS-G provide services which give the schools an opportunity to make choices consistent with each school's philosophy.

By this is meant that EAS-G staff could use their expertise to aid schools in making choices about meeting the needs of gifted children. The consultants might prepare a variety of curriculum units from which a school could select those most appropriate to the teaching styles of the staff and learning styles of students. EAS-G could also offer suggestions to teachers about how to make the units more effective and even help teachers adapt the units to fit a particular philosophical stance. It might also be the place of EAS-G to prepare workshops which illustrate different approaches or teaching models for meeting the needs of gifted students as well as provide guidance on the various student grouping patterns that could be employed. EAS-G must also be familiar with, and emphasize, the policies and procedures outlined by the Board concerning identification. Inherent in these suggestions is the necessity to have the role of EAS-G defined relative to the autonomy of each school and expect levels of service that complement the various philosophies of the schools.

Recommendation: That the role of EAS-G be defined relative to the decision-making accorded to the schools and provide services complementary to the philosophy adopted by a particular school. (An alternate recommendation is for the Board to adopt a philosophy to which each school is expected to adhere and have the services offered by EAS-G consistent with it.)

b). The Supervisor, consultants and itinerant teachers at EAS-G are to be commended for their dedication and expertise but there is need to address some issues of

staffing. The consultants are appointed on a term basis, often for a period of one to two years. This short term staffing arrangement does not allow for adequate training to meet the needs of the teachers in the district, especially when the demands are so extensive. It thus becomes necessary to select consultants on the basis of the defined role of EAS-G and assist them in developing objectives relative to the needs of schools in the district.

It must be taken into account that schools vary in their needs. One school requested that more be done for the gifted in schools offering bilingual programs. While this request was directed toward schools with a specific linguistic philosophy, requests from high schools and elementary schools were often just as specific but based on other philosophical dimensions. Oakley Centre has even different expectations. When selecting consultants, the various needs of the schools, their philosophies, student groupings and age levels must be addressed.

The requirements of the schools should be reviewed yearly prior to the annual review of EAS-G. The staff, once selected, should have sufficient training to become the experts for the Calgary Board of Education and be left together long enough to form a cohesive unit. A plan should be developed to replace consultants and itinerant teachers that will cause the least amount of disruption to the functioning of EAS-G. The staff of EAS-G need to be given opportunities to attend conferences and workshops to enhance their expertise. There is also the need, expressed by some, for more guidance from the supervisor with respect to the role and expectations of the staff and additionally the desire to have additional feedback on staff performance. More involvement by the supervisor in the training and evaluation of staff would likely strengthen this assistance service unit.

Recommendation: That the staff of EAS-G, (a) be carefully selected, with the requirements of the schools in mind, (b) be given longer term assignments, (c) be given adequate training regarding their expected role and the use of various instructional models which might be employed to meet the needs of gifted children within the school district, and (d) be given more supervision evaluative feedback about their performance relative to role expectations.

4. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

There is a tendency in all curriculum development processes to exclude input from the student and rely upon what the educator deems is best. No doubt this is sound procedure in many instances, but gifted students have been found to be exceptionally able and willing to offer worthwhile suggestions about what would benefit them most. It has also been found that programs for gifted children tend to be directed more toward cognitive needs at the expense of meeting affective needs. This appears to be true in the Calgary Board of Education also and is no doubt influenced by the curricular expectations published by Alberta Education.

Recommendation: That teachers be given guidance about how to solicit student participation in order to build curricula that address the cognitive and affective needs of the gifted while they are also ensuring that the skills and knowledge components, published by Alberta Education for each grade (age) level, are also being developed and/or maintained.

5. COUNSELORS

Many school districts have found that one of the most crucial needs of gifted children is that of having a counselor to help them make adjustments for their special abilities. The gifted have more need for remedial and therapeutic help because of their differences. Sometimes there are attempts at self-destruction and other trauma associated with these students because they cannot reconcile the differences they perceive. There is also the need of early career counseling for these students because of their exceptional capability. It not only takes specially trained personnel but sufficient time for the counseling process to be accomplished. It takes both group counseling sessions and one-on-one sessions to meet these needs. The request for more counselors and counseling time was made by several teachers in the Calgary Board of Education.

Recommendation: That more counseling services specifically addressed to the needs of gifted children be provided.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Significant numbers of parents seemed to feel that they were not adequately consulted with respect to their gifted children. Several parents were not notified that their children were being recommended for special activities; others were not informed that their children were taking special instruction. Even when parents were aware that their child was in a special setting, they were often naive about the program and their child's progress. Several parents requested that more information be provided about their child, the opportunities available and the progress being made.

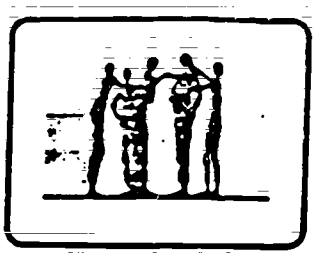
Recommendation: That schools (principals and teachers) be more sensitive to the requests of parents to have communication with the school before a recommendation is made that the child be enrolled in a special program as well as the need to furnish them with detailed information about programs and student progress.

7. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Too often programs are begun in schools for the purpose of providing for the needs of gifted students without appropriate planning of a program evaluation component. The Calgary Board of Education, through its Program Evaluation Services, has been involved with evaluating programs for the gifted through the regular process of questionnaires and school visits. It is often necessary however, to addrers the special features of these programs, and this takes some familiarity with gifted children and provisions for them.

Recommendation: That an evaluation component to determine if program objectives are being achieved be required as a part of any school's plan and that someone with expertise in programming for gifted children be appointed to assist the Supervisor of Program Evaluation Services in determining evaluation questions and how they might be addressed.

APPENDIX



Calgary Board of Education

PROVISION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

for

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

in the

CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION:

FOUNDATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

March, 1985

CONTENTS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

I. BACKGROUND

1. The philosophical orientation of the Calgary Board of Education with respect to the education of gifted and talented students is expressed in the following documents:

   (a) Policy 1,002: School Philosophy and Goals

   The purpose of the Calgary Board of Education is to ensure individual student development through effective education...

   (b) Policy 3,003: Special Education - Students with Exceptional Needs

   The Board shall provide for early and systematic identification of students with exceptional needs. A spectrum of programs and services will be offered by appropriately qualified staff, in order to ensure that students with exceptional needs have access to their most enabling learning environment. Placement into the most enabling learning environment shall be determined by considering the nature/extent of learning needs and program capability.

2. Alberta Education indicated in its Program Policy Manual, 1984, 0502, Page 35,

   For 1984 - 1985, the Provincial priorities suggested for teacher in-service are:

   - Computer Literacy
   - Gifted and Talented
   - Evaluations

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The comprehensive plan is based upon the following principles which are derived from current research and recent consultation with authorities in the education of the gifted and talented.

1. In order to develop appropriate programs for gifted and talented students, the nature of the group must first be considered and described. Current theory supports a multi-faceted definition of giftedness, in consideration of which, the following description of the target population is appropriate:

   Gifted and talented children are those who can be identified by personnel professionally qualified in education for the gifted/talented as having superior general ability and/or creative aptitudes and talents. Due to demonstrated or potential exceptional ability, these students require special educational provisions based upon their exceptional needs.

2. Since the needs and interests of gifted children vary over time, the identification process consists of an ongoing review of children involving the children themselves, their parents, peers, and teachers. It is not a matter "once identified as gifted the educational needs remain constant" nor is it "not identified as gifted at a particular time using a particular method, never to be identified as gifted." Moreover, the type and location of a gifted student's education will likely change over time.

3. Gifted children may be gifted in certain subject areas rather than all; giftedness may be identified at any stage during a student's school life. They may require different special kinds of programming as needs and interests vary.

4. Gifted children may be:

   (a) achieving gifted - children who are achieving in accordance with their ability,

(b) underachieving - gifted children who are not achieving well in school, because they may have potential gifts and talents which have not been identified, or may exhibit types of conduct which mask gifts and talents. They may be affected by physical or learning disabilities, cultural differences, or forms of economic or social deprivation.

(c) talented in specific areas - children with particular talents who need opportunities providing flexibility to experience or explore them.

The school system must provide a range of options for such children in order to be responsive to the needs of all types of gifted and talented students.

5. Parents must be closely involved in the identification and education of their gifted and talented children. Parental concerns such as the following must be included in any comprehensive plan:

(a) awareness of appropriate schooling and program choices,
(b) information and regular consultation for parents, and
(c) workshops for parents whose children have been identified as gifted.

6. (a) The local designated school, in conjunction with the specialized assistance available within the system, could be expected to provide for the special needs of the <u>majority</u> (approximately 65% to 80%) of identified gifted or talented students.

(b) Not every individual school will be able to meet the needs of every gifted and talented student who attends it. Therefore, <u>a proportion</u> of the gifted/talented school population may be served better in other schools within each administrative area of the system. Such schools may have developed programs and staff expertise which may be more appropriate to the needs of certain gifted or talented children than are those which are available in the local designated school.

(c) The needs of a small proportion (5% to 10%) of gifted/talented students who require very specialized programs, organization and staff beyond those available in a regular school may best be served in a congregated, special environment, either full or part time.

7. Counselling services for gifted children are necessary to help them accept and deal with their own abilities in order to be fully productive and fulfilled. Counselling services must be an integral part of any provision for gifted students.

8. A person having expertise in the area of education for gifted and talented students must be in charge of the program for the school system.

9. There must be adequate system-level coordination, leadership and budget to plan for and ensure that the required staff and program development activities take place.

10. Those teachers who have special responsibilities in the education of gifted and talented children, either in a congregated setting or in a system leadership role, require special qualities and skills in the following areas: professional/personal commitment to gifted and talented children, stamina, ability to handle stress (both personal and in students), skills in differentiating instruction, counselling students and parents, program development, coping with inconsistency and diversity.

11. Because all schools and all classrooms will be serving the needs of the majority of gifted and talented children, teachers and administrators throughout the system will require the assistance of qualified experts with respect to:

(a) identifying gifted and talented children,
(b) the identification and development of teachers who will be responsible for gifted-talented students and programs, and

(c) the identification or development of programs and resources required by gifted and talented students.

12. Provision must be made for teachers of gifted and talented students to have ongoing liaison and communication with other such teachers and professional support and assistance in their work.

13. Provision must be made for the ongoing system level selection, acquisition, coordination, design, and evaluation of those resources most appropriate for use with gifted and talented students.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The objectives of the comprehensive plan for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students in this school system are:

1. To identify gifted and talented students.
2. To provide a range of programs and modes of delivery in order to address the individual needs of these students as they progress through school.
3. To provide teachers who are qualified and skilled in the teaching of gifted and talented students.
4. To provide leadership, coordination, and ongoing staff development in this area of education.
5. To provide counselling assistance and/or advice to gifted and talented students, their parents, and their teachers.
6. To maintain and extend a comprehensive resource collection accessible to all system personnel and the community at large.
7. To develop ongoing evaluation procedures to monitor the extent to which the objectives of the comprehensive plan and the programs and services therein are being attained.

IV. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The comprehensive plan envisioned for the Calgary Board of Education reflects the guiding principles enunciated in Section II of this report. The features of this plan are as follows:

1. The identification of gifted and talented students will be an ongoing process of screening, referral and verification, involving classroom teachers, resource teachers, school administrators, educational specialists outside of the local school, parents, peers, and the students themselves.

2. (a) Most gifted children will continue to be educated in their regular neighborhood schools. Specialized assistance and guidance will be available to schools to assist in the development of programs and activities required by the gifted and talented students in that building.

   (b) In situations where the individual school is unable to address satisfactorily the needs of particular students, a process will be followed which will provide for the matching of students to programs, activities, or situations already in place in other schools, as close to the neighborhood school as possible.

   This will always be done in consultation with the students themselves, their parents, educational specialists outside of the school, and teachers and administrators in both the present and proposed schools.

   The student might transfer into the identified school for all instruction or could possibly remain in the local school but attend the other school for a period of time which will be subject to review.

(c) In cases where schools in the local or nearby communities are unable to address satisfactorily the needs of certain students, the system will provide special opportunities and programs for these children in congregated settings (e.g., Oakley Centre) which the students would be enrolled on a full-time basis for a period of time, subject to review.

3. Whenever gifted and talented students have very specific needs which cannot be addressed by personnel within the school system, an attempt will be made to suggest appropriate individuals or organizations to whom students or parents may have recourse. Often such recourse will occur within the context of the student's educational program within the school with EAS/G providing a community-based mentor in the requisite area.

B. WHAT IS NOW IN PLACE:

At the present time, a number of elements of the proposed comprehensive plan are operating in the school system to some degree.

These include:

1. Procedures for the identification of gifted and talented students

Many gifted and talented children (approximately 1400) have already been identified as a result of referral by teachers, administrators and parents with subsequent consultation with various types of specialists in the school system. Ongoing staff development currently taking place is enhancing the accuracy of the referral process and research is underway concerning a more effective screening process involving the use of a group screening instrument with a greater degree of validity than is the case with the test now in use.

2. The services of the Education Assistance Service for Gifted and Talented Children (EAS/G) became system-wide as of September, 1984. EAS/G provides direct services to teachers who work with gifted children, to gifted children themselves (either individually or in groups), to parents, and to various personnel across the system who are in some way involved in educating gifted children. The provision of these services is effected by means of four teams, each assigned to one of the four administrative areas of the C.B.E., and each consisting of one consultant and three itinerant teachers.

3. An extensive collection of print and non-print materials is currently maintained in the EAS/G Resource Centre. This collection, consisting of commercially-produced and teacher-designed materials, is available on a circulatory or a reference basis to all teachers in the system who work with gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.

4. Currently, based upon an estimated population of approximately 4,000 gifted and talented students in the Calgary Board of Education, the needs of about 7 1/2% of this group are being met in a full-time special referral setting, namely Oakley Centre, which offers programs from Grade 3 to Grade 9 to a maximum of 300 students. Placement of students in this setting occurs after examination of the level of intensity of a student's needs, the capability of the student's present placement to meet his or her needs, and appropriate consultation with staff of the student's home school, parents, the students themselves, staff of Oakley Centre, and other Student Services personnel.

5. In a number of schools, special programs are being developed for gifted children. One example is a program entitled "Striving To Reach Excellence Through Challenge" (S.T.R.E.T.C.H.) in Crescent Heights High School.

6. A possibility for some students who are academically talented and motivated (but not necessarily gifted) also exists at the senior high school level in the form of the International Baccalaureate Program currently operating in two high schools. A potential, additional system-level resource for a small minority of gifted high school students could be offered through the Alternative High School.

7. In addition to the examples provided above, many schools have modified programs or approaches which have been created by teachers to address the needs of gifted and talented students. However, a system-wide inventory of such offerings and their appropriateness for various types of gifted and talented students does not exist in the system.

8. The Instructional Services teams are available to work with EAS/G staff and with schools in developing and supporting programs.

C. NEEDS:

The following are the main elements of a satisfactory and comprehensive plan for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students which are either partially in place or lacking in the school system at the present time.

1. Since the principle focus of the comprehensive plan is to provide for gifted and talented students within their home schools, and since there are in excess of 200 schools in the CBE, the provision of adequate assistance to all schools remains a challenge. Until September 1984, the majority of schools had little external assistance and had to rely on their own ingenuity and abilities to meet the needs of gifted and talented students.

2. As mentioned, the EAS/G operation has only become system-wide in its operation since September, 1984. However, since EAS/G was created specifically to work with teachers, parents, and students at the individual school level, it is important that it be given adequate time and resources to develop its operation across the system, then to assess its effectiveness.

3. Oakley Centre provides a congregated school setting for 300 of those gifted and talented students in Grades 3 to 9 who have been identified as needing the type of educational program provided there. At the present time, there is no recognized provision for gifted students who may need something comparable to Oakley Centre at the high school level. This is not to imply that Oakley Centre students automatically require a similar type of high school to which they will progress from Grades 9 to 12; it is anticipated that most of the Oakley Centre graduates will move into programs offered in regular high schools throughout the system. The question is one of providing for those particular students, whether from Oakley Centre or from other junior high schools (or senior high schools), who cannot function to their satisfaction in the traditional high school setting. The ABC Project and the Alternative High School are potential resources for addressing the needs of such students.

4. There needs to be a concerted effort to increase the range of offerings available to gifted and talented students in regular schools at all levels of the system. As indicated, certain schools are known to have (or be in the process of developing) such programs, but there need to be more offerings and alternatives available. Increasing the range and availability of sufficient and adequate programs for gifted and talented students involves such matters as program planning, development of teaching and student materials, and the development of staff capable of operating the programs and evaluating student progress in them.

While the Elementary Principals' Association acknowledges the necessity for differentiation of programs for gifted and talented students within each local designated school, it maintains that additional assistance and resources are required for satisfactory differentiation to take place.

The majority of teachers in the Calgary Board of Education have and will continue to have major responsibility for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students. Since most of these teachers do not have in their pre-professional training any experience whatsoever in the area of gifted and talented education, it is essential that adequate time, with substitute coverage as necessary, be available to enable teachers to engage in planning and program design activities.

5. There is a need to increase the amount and nature of parent involvement in the education of their gifted and talented children. Parents cite areas of importance to them such as:

   (a) awareness of appropriate school choices,
   (b) consultation with parents regarding the placement and programs of these children,
   (c) informational and workshop sessions for parents of gifted and talented children,
   (d) counselling for both gifted students and their parents,
   (e) the need for a central agency which can provide information of use to parents wanting to locate appropriate schooling for their children.

6. One of the means of assessing the effectiveness and viability of educational programs for the gifted and talented is to follow such students over a period of years to find out what happens to them as they progress from grade to grade and from public school into post-secondary school activities. Feedback collected systematically from such students and their parents provides

useful information to schools about their programs. The CBE Program Evaluation Team is presently developing such studies.

7. There is a need to provide for adequate stability of professional staff within the EAS/G operation. At present, this staff consists of two permanent people who operate at the heart of EAS/G (a supervisor and one specialist), four consultants who are each assigned to an administrative area, and three itinerant teachers for each administrative area. Although EAS/G wishes to provide opportunities for the cycling of teachers into EAS/G then back to the schools, (a form of staff development) the service requires a small group of long-term personnel who have developed the skills and abilities needed to assure the continuation of ongoing high quality assistance to schools.

D. PROCEDURE:

Rather than setting out a complete "cut-and-dried" comprehensive plan which would attempt to anticipate and address in advance every aspect of the education of gifted children, this paper proposes a general direction for the Calgary Board of Education to follow. It is based on current research and is mindful of the input received from spokespersons from various groups, including CBE principals, parents, teachers, and various personnel already involved in gifted/talented programs in this system. This information points out that much is already in place in the sy and identifies areas where further attention and development is : red.

The recommendations in this re indicate that the best way to proceed is to adopt a developmental approach, taking into account services already available in the system, then, on an ongoing basis, reassessing the situation to determine the adequacy of what is happening in the system, and make appropriate plans for the future.

E. BUDGET:

1. Resources

(a) As of September 1984, the EAS/G Resource Centre has moved from a situation of serving 65 schools to serving all schools in the system. Full-time clerical personnel in the Centre consists of one secretary, one library clerk, and since September 1984, one teacher aide.

This Resource Centre is used on a daily basis by EAS/G staff throughout the system in the development of original programs for individual or groups of children, and in planning and in-servicing activities involving teachers and administrators. Groups of teachers come to the Centre on a daily basis to make use of the resources available and to work with the EAS/G staff members. (EAS/G has actively enlisted the assistance of volunteers in the development and circulation of materials, but dependence on this type of help does not assure the amount and availability of staff required to meet the increased demand for services since EAS/G became system-wide.)

Accessibility of resources to both EAS/G and to classroom teachers (as is the case in its location in Christine Meikle School) combined with adequate work and conference space is an essential ingredient for successful operation of EAS/G. Conversely, a separation of these materials from EAS/G personnel through consolidation with existing library collections elsewhere in the system could severely frustrate an operation which is presently working very successfully.

Since EAS/G now serves the entire school system and the demands on the material resources and the Resource Centre

staff are so greatly increased, additional clerical staff is recommended as of September 1985, in the form of:

- one library clerk Cost: 1985 (4 months) $ 8,171
- one teacher aide Cost: 1985 (4 months) $ 7,304

(b) The need for counselling services for both gifted and talented children, their parents and teachers, beyond that which can be done by school staff or EAS/G personnel, was identified by parents and teachers as urgent. To meet this need, it is recommended that:

- one itinerant counsellor Cost: 1985 (4 months) $15,000

be added to the EAS/G staff commencing September 1985.

2. Program Development in Schools

The comprehensive plan envisions a spectrum of programs which in its entirety and diversity will meet the needs of all gifted and talented students in the system. To achieve this, the following action is proposed:

1. As indicated in this paper, the major thrust of the plan calls for the provision of programs for gifted and talented students within each individual school in the system with assistance from EAS/G. EAS/G will maintain an inventory of the programs available for use by administrators, teachers and parents.

2. Once an inventory of programs in operation is created, examination of it may reveal the absence of particular program components within the school system. As this is

done, EAS/G will make the program needs known and will invite schools to submit proposals for filling the gaps. The plans that result could, depending on the comprehensiveness of a school's endeavors, require no additional costs or might involve budgeting for such costs as:

- materials,
- planning time,
- staff development activities,
- additional or different staff required to carry on the the proposed programs.

Upon receipt of the proposals from the schools, the EAS/G Supervisor, in consultation with appropriate Area and other personnel, will approve and prioritize the program proposals to be activated and include developmental costs in the annual EAS/G budget.

This aspect of the plan will enable gifted and talented students whose needs are more specialized or intensive than can be addressed in a generally appropriate program within the home school to find a more appropriate program or activity in a different school but in the same community or administrative area of the city.

Those students having the most intensive needs which cannot be met within the local school or nearby schools will continue to be served at the system-level through special placement in referral types of programs such as that offered in Oakley Centre.

3. In addition to assisting in the development of programs as outlined in Items 1 and 2 above, it is recommended that the Calgary Board of Education continue to endorse present budgeting practices whereby funds are provided to EAS/G for the funding of staff development activities

related to the creation of school-based programs for gifted and talented students.

This approach to the development of programs in schools is advocated as the best means of encouraging and recognizing creativity and imaginative planning in schools, providing for continuing assistance to students and teachers in small schools, and eliminating the need for increased staff at the system level. Moreover, it will broaden the number and variety of programs and materials available to students and to schools.

3. Transportation

The aim of the comprehensive plan is to provide for the gifted and talented student in his or her home school. When the home school cannot meet a student's needs, the plan calls for that student to be matched up with appropriate programs in a nearby school, and only to be moved out of his district or community when needs cannot be satisfactorily addressed within them. Since this scheme of program delivery is always on a referral-consultative basis (including teachers, students, parents), the responsibility for transporting students outside of their home schools will rest with the Calgary Board of Education.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

1. THAT the Calgary Board of Education endorse the guiding principles outlined in Section II of the report as those which are to apply in the ongoing implementation of a comprehensive plan for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students in this school system.

2. THAT the Calgary Board of Education endorse the approach outlined in this paper as the method of developing and implementing a comprehensive plan.

3. THAT this plan for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students be incorporated into the CBE long-range plan to be presented to the Board by June, 1985.

4. THAT the Supervisor of the Education Assistance Services for Gifted and Talented Students (EAS/G) be assigned responsibility for the coordination of programs and services for gifted and talented students throughout the school system.

5. THAT appropriate action be taken by Administration to ensure the continuity of EAS/G staff during the implementation of the plan.

6. THAT the following additional staff be allocated to the Education Assistance Service for Gifted and Talented Students (EAS/G) as of September 1985:
   - one library clerk
   - one teacher aide
   - one itinerant counsellor

7. THAT school principals, in consultation with their staffs, be invited to submit to the EAS/G Supervisor proposals for the development of specialized programs for the gifted and talented within their respective schools or in groups of schools. The nature of specialization will be determined by identification of program gaps in existing provisions within an administrative Area. Appropriate guidelines will be established for the writing of such proposals together with provision for the evaluation of programs subsequently developed.

8. THAT the Education Assistance Service for Gifted and Talented children (EAS/G), in consultation with appropriate personnel in schools, the Division of Instruction, and the Staff Development Department develop a program for the identification and development of staff who will have specific responsibility for the operation of programs for the gifted and talented. [This would be in addition to the existing provision for on-going inservice and staff development for all teachers in the system who are providing differentiated programs for gifted and talented students in the context of the regular classroom.]

9. THAT the Calgary Board of Education continue to provide funds under the control of the EAS/G whereby teachers may be released during school hours to plan and design, with the specialized assistance of EAS/G team members, appropriate programs and strategies for use with gifted and talented students.

10. THAT evaluation of the comprehensive plan take place on an ongoing basis to ensure the implementation and increasing effectiveness of the various components of the plan and the interaction among them.