

## **Gifted Testimony Bullet Points**

**March 12, 2015**

### **Honorable Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Phillips, and Members of the Subcommittee:**

Good morning and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you today.

While I have my written testimony, I thought I might just highlight and bullet point my key points to save time.

- Between 2009 and now, funding for ESCs has gone down as the money was given to districts to be used for gifted in whatever way they determined was best for their district.
- The data clearly indicates as that has progressed, the majority of our county districts have decided not to employ trained gifted teachers, opting for other methods of service.
- Budgeted gifted monies are intended to be used for gifted instructional services, identification, support services, coordination services, and training.
- Our county reported expenditures (taken off the ODE website on finances) do not show use in most of those columns, so misunderstandings of how to spend the money are clear.
- When asked how they spend their money on gifted, districts report online programming and AP coursework as the main methods.
- These strategies are positive, but should not be the exclusive methods of instructing gifted students and typically they are aimed more at the middle and high school level versus the elementary. They do not reflect a K-12 embedded plan.
- Differentiation is listed as the most utilized method of addressing the needs of all students including gifted.
- Research and my personal years of experience, have shown me, this is a highly overused and misunderstood term. It can be effective, but only when there is proper training, supervision and accountability.
- Many parents are unhappy with district choices in this regard but do not feel they have a meaningful voice, particularly when they are such a minority and there are so many other competing needs in districts.
- Using trained gifted teachers and coordinators is comparable to general practitioners in medicine using specialists. We all cannot be experts in all things. Having that specialty focus makes a difference.
- If we employed the same philosophy and methods in sports as we do in gifted education, we would hesitate to identify talent because that is “elitist”, we would employ anyone to coach because “everyone can do it well”, we would not have specialized leagues, teams, and training because everyone should have the same opportunities. Local control would mean each district could decide age issues, eligibility issues, etc. If you offered specialized service at all, it would only need to be a short amount of time each week, because you wouldn’t want to take the players away from other activities. It wouldn’t matter if the teams won or lost because we wouldn’t want the players to be “pushed” or “stressed”.
- Our future problems will be best addressed if we educate our children appropriately. For gifted students, this means broader, deeper, faster and richer curriculum with people trained to develop them fully.
- Leaving our gifted students to be educated without gifted specialists is like leaving all medical decisions to one type of doctor, or one of our legal concerns to one type of lawyer, or one of our engineering decisions to one type of engineer. It might work...but how well, and what are we sacrificing?
- If you check the charts on the last page of my written testimony, you can see how 1) the funding was flat for many years, then gone down to ESCs, but 2) as districts have been given it, it hasn’t been used fully or in ways in was intended and at the very least, it is not understood well.
- I ask that you please help ensure with your decisions about funding that gifted services become an integral and non-negotiated part of public schooling from grades K-12 through the use of trained gifted specialists.

Thank you for your time!