Increasing Support Systems for High Potential At-Risk Learners in Rural Areas

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Gifted and high potential learners exist in all groups.
Low Income and Achievement in Gifted Students

• 44% of lower income students who enter first grade in the top 10% will not score in the top 10% by the fifth grade

• Gifted students from higher income homes progress twice as fast in their academics as their gifted peers from lower income homes.

• High-achieving, lower income students drop out of high school or do not graduate on time at a rate twice that of higher income peers.

12 of the 15 districts with the highest Free and Reduced Lunch enrollments in greater MN have significant American Indian student percentages.

9 of the 15 lowest greater MN median income districts have significant American Indian populations, and the bottom 4 in median income have 53-100% American Indian
How Do Gifted Drop-Outs Differ?

Gifted and non-gifted learners share similar characteristics but may drop out for different reasons and have different intervention needs.

Reasons cited for dropping out:
- a lack of challenging coursework
- poor peer relations (lack of similar peers)

Useful interventions:
- Accelerated learning may reduce dropout rates for gifted and high potential learners.
- unique support from school counselors to foster academic and social engagement.

Adapted from Engaging High Achieving Students At Risk Of Dropping Out, 2015 Hanover Research.
Project North Star: Overview

- Federal three-year Jacob K. Javits Grant
- Identifies and supports underserved gifted and high potential elementary students
- Provides professional development, resources and materials for rural schools in poverty centers
- Prepares teachers, administrators and communities to support academic and social-emotional needs
- Contributes lasting resources
Project North Star: Professional Development

- Two teacher modules per year
  - Identification and Models of Support
  - Instructional Strategies
- One administrator module per year
  - Intentional School Leadership
Project North Star: Additional Resources

• Community and Family forums
• Searchable spreadsheet of educational resources
• Annotated bibliography of books for disadvantaged gifted learners living in rural settings, focus on American Indian populations
• Affective response guides
• Movie clips with gifted connections
• Book resource quick guide
# Book Resource Quick Guide

**Key:**
- **R** = Reflection Guide Created for North Star
- **S** = Study Guide Created by Publisher or Teacher
- **“Award Winner”** indicates Newbery, Newbery Honor, National Book Award, and several that are lesser known
- **“Gifted character”** with a number preceding the X indicates how many gifted characters are featured.
- **X2E** indicates twice-exceptional protagonists.
- **HL** indicates a title with more mature subject matter and a lower Lexile level.
- **NF** indicates Non-Fiction
- **PB** indicates Picture Book

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>Rural/Remote</th>
<th>Impoverished</th>
<th>American Indian/Minority</th>
<th>Lexile Level</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Reflection/Study Guide</th>
<th>Gifted character</th>
<th>Award winner</th>
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What Are We Looking For?

Growth in:

1. Teacher and administrator understanding of giftedness and gifted students
2. Teacher use of differentiation strategies
3. Student engagement in the classroom
4. Student self-efficacy, motivation, and attitudes toward achievement
5. Parent/community attitudes toward and understanding of the unique challenges and needs of gifted children
What Have We Found So Far?

Relationships Matter:

• Teachers unanimously agree that group collaboration on modules is most effective

• Administrators as instructional leaders for the modules reinforce the validity of the project

• Modules were of interest to staff beyond the targeted classrooms

• Ongoing communication with schools and communities builds trust and support

• Time for content and research team to meet is invaluable