

# Idaho Gifted and Talented Education



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
CONTENT & CURRICULUM | GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

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CREATED 12/2023

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## GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION FY2023 HIGHLIGHTS

### Qualitative/Quantitative Data

- In May 2023, Idaho traditional school enrollment was 309,891 with 13,821 identified as gifted, 4.46% of all Idaho students. This is a small decrease from 4.81% in Spring of 2022.
- IDAPA code 08.02.171.02 requires “each school district shall develop and write a plan for its gifted and talented program.” 88% of school districts are complying; as of October 2023, only twelve (12) traditional districts are missing their current 3 Year GT Plans.
- 44% of traditional school districts in Idaho have reported zero (0) gifted students in ISEE. This is not in compliance with IDAPA code 08.02.03.171.03 requirements.
- In May 2022, Idaho has 231 educators endorsed in gifted education. Of the 231 educators endorsed, 162 are currently working in gifted education.
- House Bill 620 (2017) allowed funding for professional development increasing attendance to Edufest by 40%. Numbers have steadily decreased from 205 attendees in 2018 to 76 attendees in 2023.
- Idaho Universities have announced that they will no longer be providing the Gifted and Talented Endorsement courses and credits because of lack of enrollment.

### Unserved Gifted Students in Idaho

- Idaho schools in almost every district, small and large, do not identify gifted students in three of the five areas mandated by statute: creative, leadership, visual and performing arts.
- 51 school districts have reported zero (0) gifted students in ISEE even though these districts have a GT 3-year plan on file with the SDE.
- Students who are twice exceptional (meaning they have high abilities and disabilities concurrently) are often excluded from gifted programs due to lack of services, qualified staffing, and understanding of this population of students.
- According to the National Association of Gifted Students, 3-6 out of every 100 students are considered gifted or potentially gifted. Based on student counts in each district that reported (0) gifted students, Idaho could be missing up to 215 rural gifted students. Students who attend small rural schools in Idaho are less likely to be identified as gifted, and if they are, are less likely to receive services.

## GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION AND FUNDING HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

### 2018

The impact of the \$1 million-line item appropriated in House Bill 620 (2017) shows the number of students in the State of Idaho doubles from 8,207 identified Gifted students to 17,804 identified Gifted students. Idaho shows an increase from 2.75% of students identified to 5.83%. Another specific indicator of the first year's impact on funding was through the direct count of attendees at the annual summer conference for gifted and talented educators, Edufest, showing a 40% increase in attendance.

### 2020

Due to budgetary holdbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the \$1 million-line-item funding for gifted education was removed from the state budget. Edufest was cancelled with the hopes of returning in 2021. The identification of students as gifted and talented increases to 5.36%.

### 2023

The \$1 million-line-item funding for gifted education is not reinstated into the state budget in FY 2021 – FY 2023. Districts have reported that the loss of dollars has negatively impacted screening, identification, professional development, and services. Identification yields the greatest costs and 44% of traditional districts are reporting zero identification numbers in ISEE. Edufest is reporting that Idaho teachers are not participating in professional development opportunities and university programs are not offering the endorsement program due to lack of enrollment. This is not in compliance with [Idaho State Legislature 33-2003](#). The number of identified students in Idaho has steadily declined to 4.46%.

## NEED FOR ENDORSED TEACHERS IN GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

In the May 2023 ISSE count, Idaho has 231 educators endorsed in gifted education. However, only 162 are currently working in gifted education. The data places the total enrollment of Idaho traditional students at 309,891 with 13,821 being identified as gifted (4.46%). To serve these students, each gifted educator would need to be placed with 86 identified students. Many districts have trouble finding an endorsed educator to fill the position and must hire staff without an endorsement who are not prepared to meet the needs of the students they serve. Most districts reported their use of the 2017 dollars was used specifically to assist teachers with their gifted endorsement and/or professional development. Idaho saw a significant increase in endorsed educators from 2017- 2020, however that number has steadily decreased including

Idaho educators attending the Edufest professional development conference. Universities are no longer offering a gifted endorsement because there are not enough Idaho teachers enrolled in the coursework.

## EDUFEST

Edufest is the Northwest’s premiere summer conference on Gifted and Talented Education held every year at Boise State University. Keynotes, Institutes, Strands, and Special Topic presentations are by internationally and nationally recognized experts in the field of gifted and talented education. Topics focus on differentiation, creativity, and a variety of learning and teaching strategies for implementation into core subjects including assessment, curriculum, and instruction, for gifted and advanced students across all grade levels.

- 2018 205 Attendees (141 from Idaho)
- 2019 181 Attendees (145 from Idaho)
- 2020 Placed on hold because of Covid-19
- 2021 172 Attendees in Hybrid format (91 from Idaho)
- 2022 86 Attendees (49 from Idaho)
- 2023 76 Attendees (53 from Idaho)

In a survey developed by the Educator Preparation Working Group by the EcosySTEM, one of the questions asked was, “What is the best professional development that you have had, and what made it so great?” Edufest was listed multiple times as one of the best professional development experiences. Below are a few narrative comments from the survey in response to the question.

*Edufest was a top PD experience. We engaged in fun activities, were provided with ample resources, facilitators genuinely cared about their courses/audience. Credits had clear expectations.*

*Edufest - a wealth of ideas to take back to the classroom and networking with like-minded teachers. It has provided the most useful information and implementation.*

*Edufest Summer Institute because of the variety of strands offered, as well as the focus on specific areas of interest and expertise: strategies for gifted education.*

## NEED FOR FUTURE FUNDING

While funding dedicated to gifted and talented has benefited Idaho in many ways, the impact of no funding has left districts to identify several needs for serving gifted students. These areas include:

- Support to districts to increase the number of endorsed gifted educators.
- Financial support for districts to provide additional funds/stipends for a district gifted/talented supervisor.
- District purchase of universal screening materials to find and support underserved populations that may be gifted.
- District purchase of materials and resources to support a new or reinstated gifted program.
- District payment of registration for students who cannot afford after school programs, such as technology, the arts, or enhanced reading experiences.
- District efforts to train staff on differentiation, curriculum compacting, and other research based accelerated practices.
- District efforts to identify students in all five areas of giftedness including Academic, Intellectual, Visual/Performing Arts, Creativity, and Leadership.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The 1-million-dollar funding line item increased the number of students identified, the number of teachers endorsed, and solidified accountability of the development and implementation of 3 Year Gifted Plans in school districts. Without it we have an unfunded mandate that districts are struggling to meet compliance, especially rural districts.
- The gifted and talented funding allowed districts to purchase identification and evaluation tools and screeners allowing for multiple assessment strategies per code (08.02.03.171.05).
- GT funding language should require a 3 Year Gifted Plan, which is already in code, (08.02.03.171) but not always followed or implemented by districts.
- The impact of no line-item funding has caused a decrease in identification, programing, and endorsement of staff.

## IMPACT

“Each public-school district is responsible for and shall provide for the special instructional needs of gifted/talented children enrolled therein” (Idaho Code §33-2003). There is a concern that 44% of Idaho traditional schools reported no gifted education programs and no identified gifted students. IDAPA code 08.02.03.171.03 states *“The district shall screen all potentially gifted and talented students to ensure they have an opportunity to be considered; and the district shall match student needs with appropriate program options.”* The U.S. Department of Education estimates that three to six percent (3%-6%) of public-school students are gifted/talented. If a school has 100 kids enrolled, based on research, at least three (3) students could be considered as gifted. 88% of traditional districts have submitted a current and mandated District Plan which means there is a system in place for most Idaho districts to identify and serve their gifted and talented students through differentiation or other strategies. The State Department of Education has adopted a [“Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho”](#) that supports districts through a variety of flexible approaches for instruction and training. It aligns to Idaho Code §33-2003 by including research-based strategies for administrative accommodations, curriculum modifications and other special programs. Post Covid 19, districts and departments have been forced to cut budgets, pushing gifted education even farther down the priority list and has made it even more inequitable in Idaho. Wealthier and larger school districts identify more children as gifted than rural and poorer ones. Without the funding for appropriate programming and identification, we have seen a steady decrease in quality programs and a decrease in identification numbers. Districts need line-item funding to support their gifted identification, professional development, and programming.

Although House Bill 620 (2017) made a significant shift to fund the enormous need for Idaho students in gifted education, districts are struggling to comply with Idaho Code without the specific line-item funding to provide support for these students. Under Chapter 20 of Idaho Education Laws and Rules, Education of Exceptional Children, a natural tie exists between those with disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. Those students who are twice exceptional, need services for disabilities and identified areas of giftedness. Because no federal funding exists for gifted education, as it does for special education with reference to students with disabilities, our state and local districts face a great burden to recognize and meet the needs of these students. The overarching use of the 1-million-dollar allocation (House Bill 620), was used to identify students not receiving services and to help increase the number of teachers endorsed in gifted education. Most districts used the dollars to send educators to Edefest, Idaho’s week-long professional development for GT educators, as well as other training, such as university credits for gifted courses, and state and federal conferences. Several

districts were able to hire more gifted teachers and district supervisors. It is important that gifted and talented and twice exceptional professional development is available to all educators.

Idaho identifies and tests children in all five areas of giftedness: Academic, Intellectual, Visual/Performing Arts, Creativity, and Leadership. This makes identification in Idaho measured in relative terms and not absolute terms, allowing for a wider representation of gifted students than very high intelligence or the top 1 percent. The National Association for Gifted Children defines its target group as students whose “ability is significantly above the norm for their age.”

The significance of a disparity in funding for gifted education is that districts lacking a gifted/talented program need support knowing how to test and identify giftedness. Often small districts use the ISAT as the sole measure to identify gifted children, which is an assessment not intended for this purpose. Districts are going back to using a single criterion instead of multiple measures as mandated per IDAPA 08.02.03.171.05, because they don’t have the resources to purchase and use appropriate assessments. If testing is not consistent statewide, students that transfer from a smaller district to a larger district are not automatically accepted into the Gifted and Talented program. A child moving into another district may be retested, according to district guidelines, but even then, a seat in a gifted program may not be available for that child, especially if 44% of the districts are not in compliance with providing services. Also, once a student is identified, programming, strategies, curriculum, and resources need to be made available to continue to foster their strengths and provide challenging learning environments. Above average ability in all content areas should be a focus for not only identified gifted and talented students but for all students that consistently score in the top ten percent.

## **PURPOSE**

Regardless of the state and the varying code and rule requirements, schools have the responsibility to meet the learning needs of all students. The term “gifted and talented” is not about the label but about the providing services. Every student needs an opportunity for growth, which will provide opportunities that are context specific, locally focused, and meet the needs of the learner in their specific domains.



**TABLE 1: FY2023 GT ENROLLMENT BY DISTRICT**

District	GT Students	Percentage
001	3702	16.5%
002	2476	6.4%
003	88	1.5%
011	9	7.2%
013	0	0.0%
021	0	0.0%
025	476	4.0%
033	59	4.2%
041	0	0.0%
044	3	0.9%
052	63	2.2%
055	163	4.2%
058	15	2.3%
059	0	0.0%
060	107	4.3%
061	297	9.3%
071	2	0.8%
072	1	0.3%
073	0	0.0%
083	0	0.0%
084	0	0.0%
091	544	5.5%
092	0	0.0%
093	1029	7.6%
101	44	3.3%
111	0	0.0%
121	0	0.0%
131	319	2.4%
132	84	1.6%
133	1	0.2%
134	203	4.7%
135	6	1.8%
136	0	0.0%
137	63	6.2%
139	335	3.5%
148	15	2.9%
149	0	0.0%

District	GT Students	Percentage
150	9	1.0%
151	181	3.3%
161	0	0.0%
171	0	0.0%
181	7	2.2%
182	0	0.0%
191	0	0.0%
192	0	0.0%
193	57	1.5%
201	92	3.9%
202	45	5.4%
215	57	2.6%
221	67	2.7%
231	71	5.7%
232	58	5.3%
233	0	0.0%
234	0	0.0%
242	0	0.0%
243	0	0.0%
244	5	0.5%
251	251	3.8%
252	0	0.0%
253	29	5.2%
261	173	4.3%
262	0	0.0%
271	0	0.0%
272	44	1.0%
273	358	6.1%
274	0	0.0%
281	148	6.9%
282	1	0.3%
283	0	0.0%
285	0	0.0%
287	0	0.0%
288	0	0.0%
291	32	5.0%
292	0	0.0%

District	GT Students	Percentage
302	0	0.0%
304	0	0.0%
305	0	0.0%
312	0	0.0%
314	0	0.0%
316	0	0.0%
321	206	3.7%
322	0	0.0%
331	37	0.9%
340	625	13.6%
341	0	0.0%
342	0	0.0%
351	49	0.6%
363	11	1.3%
364	0	0.0%
365	19	6.8%
370	21	1.7%
371	129	9.5%
372	0	0.0%
373	49	3.1%
381	19	1.2%

District	GT Students	Percentage
382	0	0.0%
383	0	0.0%
391	0	0.0%
392	0	0.0%
393	50	10.1%
394	0	0.0%
401	7	0.4%
411	240	2.6%
412	2	0.2%
413	0	0.0%
414	50	2.5%
415	0	0.0%
416	0	0.0%
417	0	0.0%
418	21	5.4%
421	63	4.7%
422	0	0.0%
431	0	0.0%
432	0	0.0%
433	13	9.6%
<b>State Total</b>	<b>13,821</b>	<b>4.46%</b>

## TABLE 2: FY2023 GT ENROLLMENT – CHARTER SCHOOLS

Public charter schools are exempt from submitting a 3 Year GT Plan; however, some still do and have reported to ISEE their identified Gifted and Talented student numbers.

Charter	GT Students
452	96
454	6
455	16
456	32
457	28
463	13
464	14
472	3
473	21
477	18
479	19
480	33
488	2
492	39
493	2
494	1
496	12
498	1
508	30
534	8
562	3
768	18
785	14
794	17
796	3
813	12
<b>State Total</b>	<b>922</b>