Gifted and Talented Education in New Zealand Schools: A Decade Later

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Introduction

In 2004, the Ministry of Education released research investigating identification of and provisions for gifted and talented students in New Zealand Schools (Riley, Bevan-Brown, Bicknell, Carroll-Lind, & Kearney, 2004). This was landmark research: the first national study of gifted and talented education funded by the Ministry and released alongside a range of initiatives for students and those who identify and educate them in the schooling sector. The research comprised a comprehensive review of the literature, a national survey of schools, and ten case studies of best practice, with an aim of creating "a roadmap for future research and initiatives" (2004, p. 36).

This earlier research concluded that while there was a growing awareness of the need for gifted and talented education, identification and provisions were both supported *and* impeded by professional learning and development, access to resources and support, funding, time, and cultural understandings. While giftedness and talent was defined broadly and school-based definitions were inclusive of multiple areas of abilities and qualities, many reported definitions did not embody Maori perspectives and values. Identification of gifts and talents was highly reliant on teachers and standardized forms of assessment. A preference for combining enrichment with acceleration, across a range of approaches, was desirable, but limited in implementation, with partiality towards regular classroom and withdrawal or pull-out programmes. These limited methods of identification and subsequent provisions were seen as potentially excluding and overlooking students from under-represented groups, especially Māori and ethnic minority groups and also potentially socially and emotionally damaging for gifted learners. Parental engagement in policy development, organization, identification and provisions was reportedly low. Professional learning and development for all teachers was identified as a priority, but schools reported barriers of time, funding, access, and resources as impeding growth. Finally, the need for ongoing research in gifted and talented education was identified and, importantly, practitioners needed access to the findings in order to work from an evidence base.

Since the release of the research, in 2004, there have been a number of important initiatives within New Zealand designed to enhance the identification and education of gifted and talented learners:

- A change to National Administration Guidelines to include gifted and talented students [NAG 1(c)iii] was implemented in 2005.
- Professional learning and development has been provided through Ministry of Education national contracts using different models and approaches: advisory support based in Colleges of Education; regional symposia to develop local networking and support; clusters of schools working together; and facilitators working alongside schools with a particular focus on gifted Maori and Pasifika students, twice-exceptional students, and underachievers. Some Ministry-funded Talent Development Initiatives also offered professional development, alongside special programmes for gifted learners.
- Resources have been developed, including guidance for parents and teachers working together (Ministry of Education, 2008) and a revised handbook for schools (Ministry of Education, 2012). These and other New Zealand developed resources are freely available on a refreshed community website, TKI Gifted and Talented Online, that is supported by a facilitated mailing list.
- The Ministry of Education Gifted and Talented Policy Advisory Group actively contributed to policy, funding, and initiatives.
- The Education Review Office released a report in 2008 that provided additional guidance to schools in response to a lack of good practice evidence, and, in 2010, an evaluative study provided guiding principles and practices for sustainable provisions (Riley & Moltzen, 2010).

While these initiatives are very positive, it must be noted that the support for gifted and talented education by the Ministry of Education has declined, with cuts to funding and support since 2009. Gifted and talented education has seen its advisory group disbanded, targeted funding for innovative programmes lost when the Talent Development Initiatives were abandoned, and no Minister with responsibilities, and a revolving door approach within the Ministry of Education resulting in continuous changes in personnel explicitly responsible for identification and provision for these learners. These changes have come alongside broader Ministry of Education initiatives, including a revised curriculum; the implementation of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement, including New Zealand Scholarship for secondary students; the introduction of National Standards for primary and intermediate students; development of Ka Hikitia, the Maori Education Strategy, and the Pasifika Plan; and the release of Success for All: Every School, Every Child. While each of these initiatives has implications for gifted and talented learners, it must be noted that as a distinct group their needs are not explicitly addressed within any of these.

In addition to Government funded approaches, there has been an increase in research, particularly that which develops our understandings of culturally

responsive pedagogies (Ministry of Education, 2012). A professional organisation, giftEDnz: The Professional Association for Gifted Education, has developed and, alongside the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children, provides national and regional networking and support through conferences. These national organisations have actively supported Gifted Awareness Week, initiated by the Gifted Education Centre in 2009. Opportunities for advanced courses in tertiary education continue to be provided, with the development of an intensive and specialised postgraduate diploma in gifted and talented at Massey University. Most recently, the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education has formed with the merger of two not-for-profit providers, Gifted Kids and the Gifted Education Centre.

A decade later, what difference has this work had on the identification and provisions for gifted and talented students? This was one of the questions, we, as researchers, asked ourselves, when we decided to replicate the survey to schools (Riley et al., 2004). The survey specifically sought to determine:

- How common are school-wide policies and plans for gifted and talented education?
- How is giftedness and talented defined by New Zealand schools?
- What methods of identification and approaches to provision are used in New Zealand schools?

This summary report provides responses to these questions, as reported in late 2012-2013 by a sample of 327 schools from across New Zealand, and in relation to the 2004 results. The results are reported in the same manner as the summary report produced for the Ministry of Education in 2004, but it must be noted that this research was not funded or supported by the Ministry of Education.

Sampling New Zealand Schools

All schools in New Zealand were invited to take part in an online survey in Term 4 2012 and Term 1 2013, resulting in 327 school responses which represent approximately 13% of New Zealand schools. This response rate is much lower than one might expect in survey research and certainly lower than that received in 2004; however, the sample is closely representative of the country's demographics in terms of school type, region, decile, and school roll (as was the case in 2004). Table 1 shows a slightly disproportionate sample of secondary schools: 22.9% of the sample for the current study is higher than the 13.4% of schools nationally reported by the Ministry of Education (2012) or the 11.7% who engaged in the Riley et al. (2004) study. This over-representation has implications in the interpretation of results,

which we have taken into account but, on a positive note, may demonstrate greater engagement in gifted education by secondary schools.

Table 1. School Type

School Type	Riley et al. (2004) Results		Ministry of Education Data (2012)		Responses to this Study	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Primary	1074	84.4%	2000	78.2%	222	67.9%
Secondary	149	11.7%	342	13.4%	75	22.9%
Composite	50	3.9%	216	8.4%	30	9.2%
	1273	**100%**	**2558**	**100%**	**327**	**100%**

Geographically, responses were received from throughout New Zealand, with a greater representation from the Auckland region (26.3% of our sample in contrast to 21% in Ministry of Education 2012 data). One might have anticipated a lowered response rate in the Canterbury region (2011 earthquake), however 45 schools responded (13.8% of the total sample for this study, comprising 12% of schools at the time of data collection). Seventy-one percent of our sample was from the North Island, which is slightly lower than Ministry of Education data that 73.8% of schools are based in the north, and general trends show a lower response rate in rural regions, including Northland, Gisborne, Southland and the West Coast.

Despite responses being received from schools representing all decile ratings, our sample is not representative, with 77.6% from higher decile 6-10 schools and 32.4% from lower decile schools. This should be a 50:50 split, as was more closely achieved in 2004 when only 53.2% of the sample was from higher decile schools. The sample for this study includes responses from all school types, regions, and deciles, but it is not a representative sample with its over-representation of secondary schools and schools with higher decile ratings. It is important to keep these demographics in mind in the interpretation and application of the results. The responses may represent increased engagement by secondary schools. It may also represent a lack of engagement in lower decile schools, which have had an increased focus on priority learners (Maori, Pasifika, and special needs), perhaps with a detrimental effect on gifted and talented students. The lower response from rural regions may represent isolation from professional learning and development initiatives, which tend to be based in cities. However, One can only speculate the reasons some schools responded and others did not but overall, given that we received tresponses from over 300 schools in New Zealand, then the findings are worthy of reporting.

Defining Giftedness and Talent

The majority of schools reported the existence of a school-based or adopted definition (73.1%), and this shows growth since 2004 when less than half of schools (46.7%) reported definitions. However, on closer examination and using the criteria developed by Riley et al. (2004), only 182 of these schools (55.6% of the sample) actually provided evidence that would be considered a definition: some schools reported work was underway to develop a definition; others provided identification methods, philosophy statements, programmes or policies rather than definitions; and several replied that there school did not have a definition.

The schools which did provide a definition showed strong evidence of good practice in relation to multicategorical concepts that acknowledge both potential and performance (38.5%), with over half of the respondents (51.1%) indicating giftedness and talent in one or more areas. Areas of giftedness were comprehensive, including academics, arts, leadership, creativity, and physical abilities but less emphasis on cultural abilities and qualities. Around 35% of the definitions were adopted or adapted from other sources, including the Ministry of Education (2002), Gagne's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent, Renzulli's Three-Ring Concept of Giftedness, and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences.

Exceptionality in relation to peers was another commonly reported element of schools' definitions, which included phrases like "beyond age and stage" and "stands out from the rest." This exceptionality was often linked to performance, with some schools providing definitions that required achievement. For example, two schools reported that gifted learners were those performing "well above the norm in National Standards," while others used benchmarks like the "top 10%" or "2+ years above the norm." While there was some acknowledgement of multicultural perspectives, and particularly Māori cultural concepts, only about 14% of the definitions included cultural abilities and qualities. A similar number acknowledged that giftedness and talent is evidenced in all groups of learners and a few schools specifically included twice or multi-exceptional learners in their definitions. Less than 10% of reported definitions included a statement indicating the need for differentiated educational services.

Most definitions incorporated definitional elements to varying degrees, but a few were comprehensive, like the one below:

> *Gifted and talented students at ABC High School are those that demonstrate higher levels of performance and/or potential in one or more areas compared with others of a similar age, culture, experience or*

environment.   These areas may include: Academic and intellectual; Critical and creative thinking; Visual and/or performing arts; Leadership; Interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills; Physical and sporting; Technological; and Cultural traditions, values and ethics.   ABCHS recognizes that within its group of gifted and talented students there is a wide range of ability from mild to profound. Most will be catered for through differentiated programmes within the classroom, while some may require provision beyond the classroom. The school is committed to its gifted and talented Māori students and recognizes that in addition to the areas above, these students may demonstrate or show potential in areas specifically valued from within a Mori worldview.

Identifying the Gifted and Talented

The majority of schools in this sample (81.7%) indicated formal identification. This positive response shows growth since 2004 (60.3% identified). As in 2004, the overwhelming majority – over 95% – of these schools reported identification of academic and intellectual abilities. However, this study found a slight increase in identification across all areas, as shown in Table 2. This table also shows multiple areas of identification, as schools were able to respond to each area identified. The rise in identification of students who are creatively gifted and with social and leadership skills has created a shift in the rankings but, notably, culture-specific abilities and qualities were reported by less than half those schools formally identifying.

Table 2. Areas of Formal Identification

	Riley et al.(2004) Responses		Current Study Responses	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Intellectual/Academic	727	94.6%	280	95.2%
Visual/Performing Arts	492	64.1%	205	69.7%
Creativity	487	63.4%	224	76.2%
Physical/Sport	486	63.3%	196	66.7%
Social/Leadership	473	61.6%	210	71.4%
Culture-Specific	333	43.1%	139	47.3%

As in 2004, the most commonly reported method of identification, regardless of area of ability, was teacher nomination, with an average of 94.1% of respondents indicating this method in each area of ability. Teacher nomination was most frequently reported in the areas of social-leadership (96.7%), intellectual/academic

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(95.9%) and culture-specific (95.7%) abilities and qualities. There was a decline in the use of teacher-made tests and teacher rating scales across all areas of ability, but most notably in the identification of academic abilities. 55.3% of 2004 respondents used teacher-made tests, whereas, only 35.4% of this study reported their use. Similarly, only 31.8% of the current participants reported the use of teacher rating scales, compared with 54.7% in 2004.

, the use of other methods of identification varied dependent on the area of giftedness and talent being identified. For example, the use of standardized tests was most often reported for intellectual/academic abilities (85.7%), whereas, auditions and performances were most common for visual and performing arts (71.7%). The greatest shift was an increased reporting of parent nomination across all areas, but particularly in identifying academic abilities (from 38.2% in 2004 to 61.8%) and creative abilities (from 13.9% in 2004 to 40.2%).

A new question was asked regarding identification of giftedness outside the reporting school's context, and this revealed that nearly a quarter of the schools in this sample had students identified by out-of-school providers, as shown in Table 3. These outside providers include one-day-a-week programmes facilitated by the Gifted Education Centre, Gifted Kids, and REAP clusters. A little over a fifth of participating schools reported students identified as gifted by educational psychologists or in their previous schools. Comments indicated that some schools also use outside professionals, like tutors and coaches, to help with identification in sports and cultural areas.

Table 3. Identification Outside School

	Frequency	Percent
Out of School Providers	84	23.2
Educational Psychologist	81	22.4
Previous School	76	21.0
Specialist Teacher	39	10.8
Early Childhood Centre	12	3.3

Schools reported identification based on performance and participation in competitions at local, regional, and national levels, particularly for sports, but also for creativity through programmes like Future Problem Solving, musical and artistic performances, and te reo Māori speech competitions. Several respondents shared their approaches to identification as being embedded within a responsive learning environment:

… providing opportunities to draw out potentially gifted behaviours and qualities within and outside the classroom

Mostly through opportunities to 'draw out' (potentially gifted behaviours and qualities based on Renzulli 3 rings): in-school clubs, interest groups, service opportunities, buddy class programme, mentorships and outside competitions (e.g., CREST, Science Fair, BP Challenge, 'City Class' - city based classroom for year 5-6), Enrichment Triad Model within classes with GATE teacher facilitating PD for classroom teacher, conceptual based learning, past/present teachers getting together to discuss potential children, 'Total Talent Portfolio' (adapted form Renzulli) … enrolment for One Day School , mentorships...

We often hold practical activities and observe students carefully for qualities that can be utilised particularly in leadership (eg.during leadership camp), academic (e.g., in external examinations), and specific cultural and sporting activities (cluster and representative involvement).

Provisions for Gifted and Talented Students

Schools were asked to report their preference for enrichment, acceleration, or a combination of the two approaches, with the majority of schools (66.1%) indicating preference for a combined approach. However, over a quarter of schools (32.1%) reported a preference for enrichment only. This is a slight shift since 2004, showing an increase in combined approaches and decrease in enrichment or acceleration used in isolation.

The delivery of enriched and accelerated programmes was preferred across a continuum of approaches, as was the case in 2004, but with growth in school-based provisions as shown in Table 4 below. While the classroom-based and community-based provisions have only changed slightly, the ways in which these are delivered shows changes in practice that are masked by these overall percentages.

Table 4. Provisions for Gifted and Talented Students

	Classroom-based		Community-based		School-based	
	2004	Current	2004	Current	2004	Current
Percentage of schools	82.4%	84.0%	46.1%	44.6%	63.6%	85.3%

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Classroom-based practices are still dominated by ability grouping, with 93.3% of these schools reporting its use (as shown in Figure 1). Independent study continues to be a common practice used by over three-quarters of schools reporting classroom programmes (76.3%). Differentiated teacher planning has shown the greatest shift, reported by 42.1% of respondents in 2004 and 73.5% of respondents reporting classroom programmes in this study. As the chart below shows, there have been increases in the reported use of all types of provisions in the regular classroom. A new question asked how many schools used tiered lessons, with 54.8% of respondents reporting this practice.

Figure 1. Classroom-Based Provisions
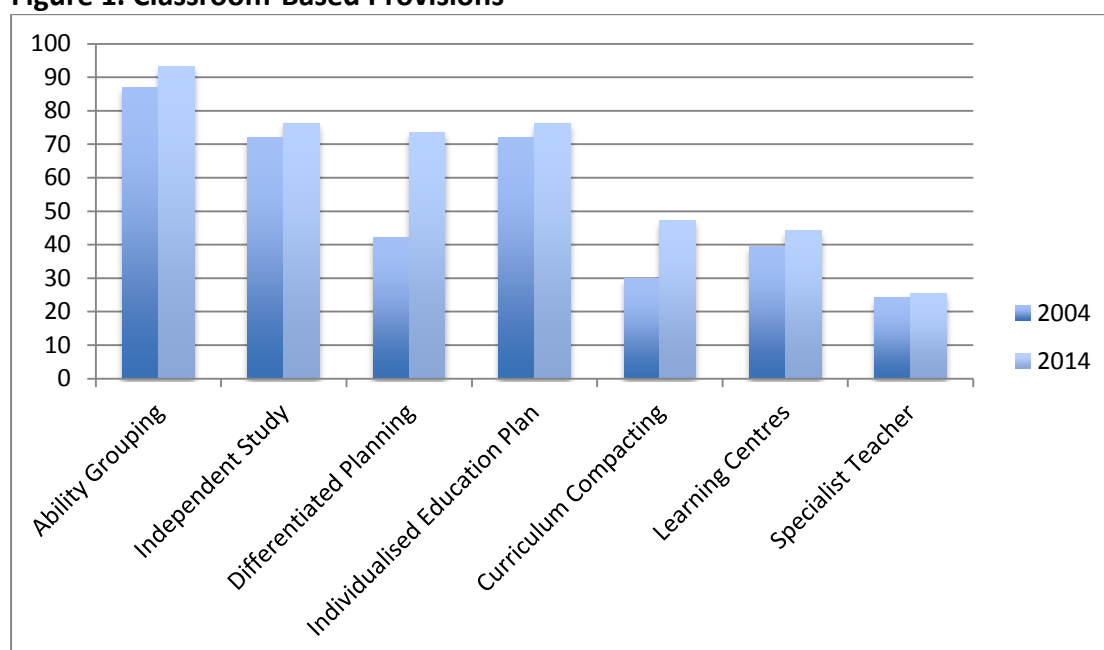
On the other end of the provision continuum, community-based opportunities are also utlised by schools in New Zealand with 44.6% of this sample reporting their use (a slight decrease from 2004 when 46.1% of the sample reported their use). Nearly half of the sample of schools reporting community-based programmes (45.3%) had students engaged in one-day-a-week classes (an increase from 39.5% of the 2004 sample). There was a dramatic decline in the percentage of schools reporting enrolment of their gifted and talented students in the Te Aho O Te Kura Pounamu – The Correspondence School. Only 18% of schools reporting community-based provisions reported this form of full-time or dual enrolment, compared with 40.9% in 2004. About a third of schools engaged in community-based provisions (31.3%) reported their involvement in school networks or clusters. Schools also reported the use of community-based arts and sports programmes, field trips, tertiary providers, and the Rural Education Assistance Programmes.

The provision of school-based programmes increased across most areas of ability, as shown in Figure 2, with the highest response to intellectual/academic programmes.

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There has been a 20% increase in the percentage of schools reporting culture-specific opportunities (from 36.3% in 2004 to 56.3%), and similar jumps in social-leadership (an increase by 21.7%) and creativity (an increase of 19.3%). Across all areas of ability, the percentage of schools reporting provisions increased from 63.6% in 2004 to 85.3% in this study. This reported use of school-based provisions aligns well with the number of schools also reporting formal identification (81.7%) and is the most commonly reported means for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students.

**Figure 2. School-Based Provisions by Area of Ability**
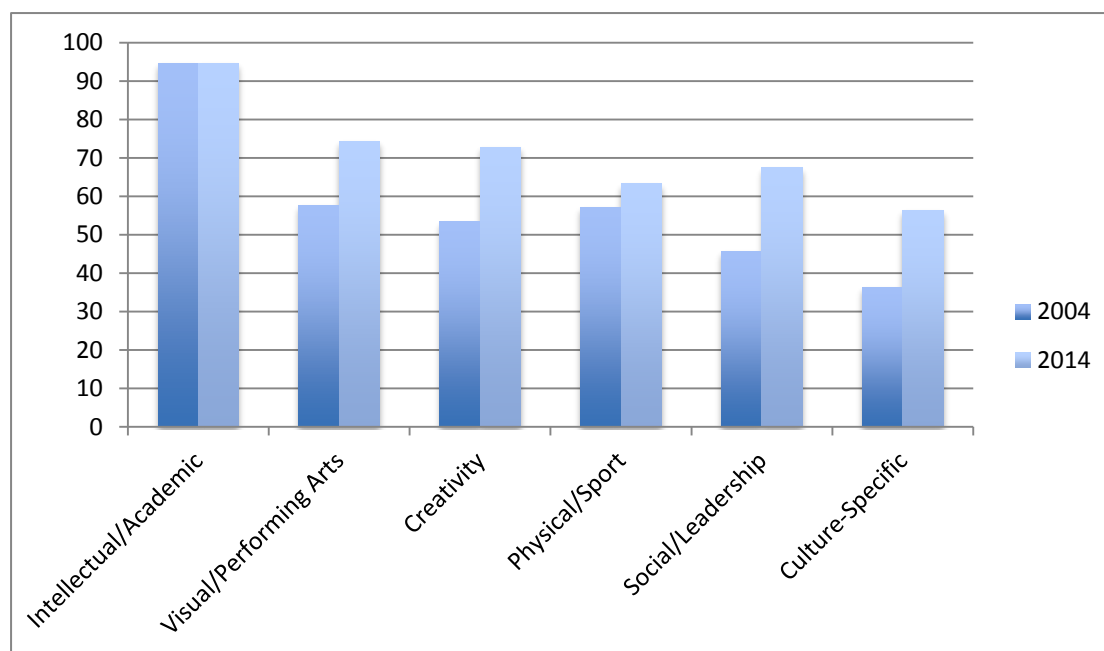
As in 2004, the most commonly reported school-based provision – across most areas of ability – was a withdrawal or pull-out programme. Interestingly, for students with academic/intellectual abilities this trend was bucked, with the most common provision being competitions (76.9%) followed by withdrawal programmes (72.3%). Both of these are increases on their reported use in 2004 when 67.6% of schools reported withdrawal programmes and 54.4% reported competitions.

As Figure 3 shows, there was a reported increase in the use of all provisions, other than external exams, dual enrolment, and full-time special classes. The greatest increases are seen in the adoption of competitions, mentorships, and web-based learning opportunities. In the most recent survey two additional provisions were added: 32.2% of respondents reported the use of subject-based special classes and 14.0% reported enrichment clusters.

These types of trends in provisions are similarly reported across the other areas of ability. There are some differences reported; for example, outside experts are most often reported as working with children with culture-specific abilities and qualities, and physical-sporting skills. Clubs are most likely reported by schools as providing for culture-specific abilities. As in 2004, and as Figure 3 illustrates, provisions that

would be identified as opportunities mainly for acceleration (such as dual enrolment and early entry) are the least likely to be adopted by schools reported in this study.

Figure 3. School-Based Provisions for Academically/Intellectually Gifted
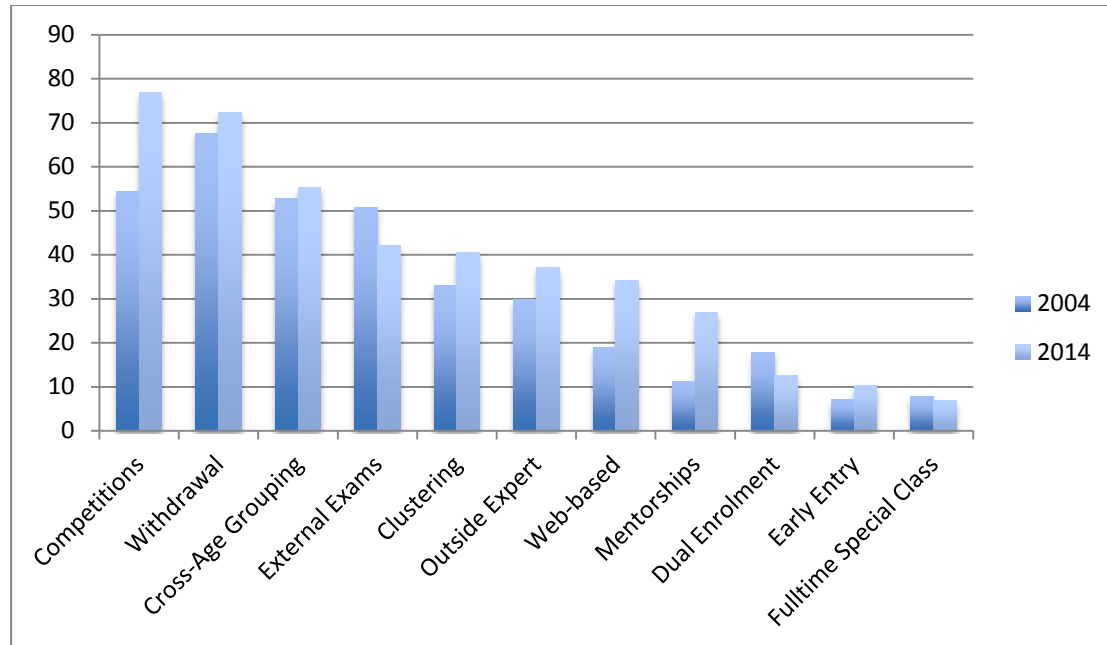
Participants were asked for any further comments on their provisions for gifted and talented learners and many elaborated on their practices. Barriers to provision were voluntarily provided and these mostly related to a lack of resources and funding, as well as calls for more opportunities for professional learning and development. In open-ended comments, a number of schools indicated that they were currently undergoing self-review and as a result gifted and talented education was a "work in progress" or change was "in the pipeline". A small number of schools indicated current involvement in professional development contracts and others made reference to private providers, like Reach Education.

Sometimes practices were elaborated upon, and the contrasts between schools were evident in the details; for example, these two schools each reported quite different practices reflective of their school needs:

> "Our school is large - 2300 students, so GATE students tend to be catered for in their area of giftedness."

> "Our school is a sole-charge school with only 6 students, so our gifted students get to learn at whatever level is appropriate. All of the students whether gifted or not have an IEP, which is reviewed with the teacher/principal, a parent and the child. We have used dual-enrolment before, but Te Kura don't seem well set up for gifted kids, despite the enrolment being FOR gifted kids!"

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One school respondent elaborated upon their philosophy: "Our kaupapa: If we can do it for one we are duty bound to do it for all." Funding, specialist staffing and access to resources like professional development were also mentioned in these responses.

Supporting Identification and Provisions

The survey also sought to determine what school wide policies and practices support gifted and talented identification and provisions. Just over 93% of respondents indicated that their school had a coordinator or person responsible for gifted and talented education (an increase from 72.6% of schools in 2004). However, there was a decrease in the number of schools reporting having a team that supports this coordinator: in 2004, 42.5% of schools reported this, whereas in this study only 37% did so. The coordinator in most schools was a classroom teacher (35.6%), followed by an associate or deputy principal (30%). This is a shift from 2004 when 29% of the respondents indicated that principals coordinated gifted education (only 12.8% reported in this study) and a little less than a third indicated associate or deputy principals (23%) or teachers had this responsibility (24%).

More than double the number of schools reported specific gifted and talented policies in the more recent survey, with 59.4% reporting this compared with 27.9% in 2004. However, this is counteracted by a decrease in the inclusion of gifted and talented in policies for special needs (down to 60.2% from 75.3%) and equity (down to 31.8% from 52.5%). More schools reported curriculum delivery policies that address giftedness and talent: 57.7% in comparison to 33.0% in 2004.

Table 5. Policies and Procedures for Gifted and Talented Education

Components	2004	2014
Rationale	32.3%	56.1%
Goals	30.2%	56.4%
Definition	27.7%	55.2%
Identification	32.8%	58.0%
Programmes	26.2%	40.9%
Curriculum Model	11.4%	27.9%
Professional Learning & Development	22.1%	27.3%
Funding	27.3%	24.6%
Self-Review	24.7%	30.7%
Register	30.3%	53.6%

But what is included in these policies and procedures? There have been some shifts since 2004, as shown in Table 5 above. While more than half the schools reported having articulated the rationale, goals, definition, identification, and a register for gifted and talented students, less than a third reported policies and procedures that include curriculum models, professional development, funding and self-review. Open-ended comments elaborated on the role of school coordinators, engagement

in or need for school review of gifted and talented education, and an indication that the current policy and procedures were "works in progress".

Given the emphasis placed upon professional learning and development, and ongoing funding for this area since 2004, it seemed pertinent to ask what services had been accessed. Around a third of all respondents reported engagement with the tki Gifted and Talented Online site (32.0%), attendance at national conferences (31.5%), or access to the former advisors (30.4%). Other opportunities for professional development included participation in regional events (27.1%), national association events (20.2%), the tki mailing list (19.1%), regional symposia (19.6%), university study (14.6%), private professional development providers (12.4%), and Ministry of Education contracted facilitators (Te Toi Topu and Te Tapuae O Rēhua) (6.7%).

Respondents were asked, *What changes in policies and practices have positively impacted gifted and talented education in New Zealand in the last decade?* Overwhelmingly, they reported a growing awareness and acknowledgement of the needs of gifted and talented learners in schools. This growth in understanding was most often attributed to the change in National Administration Guidelines; professional learning and development, including university study; and access to professional resources. These quotes are typical of the types of statements made:

> "I think the fact that it is a NAG … makes teachers HAVE to offer programmes that are catering to all needs. You know the detractors, or those just plain not wanting to have to cater for a variety of needs. It is now mandated these pupils are identified and catered for so kids hopefully won't have to wait for the 'right' teacher to appear."

> "NAG change. Higher profile of gifted ed. Availability of resources. Passionate advocates. TKI."

> "There is now a greater understanding of the needs and rights of gifted and talented students, mainly due to specialist groups and individuals advocating for them, helped by the policy to ensure schools identify and provide for gifted and talented students. It would be nice to have that policy backed up with some government funding to enable this to be carried out more effectively."

Finally, respondents were asked to report on the enablers and barriers to provision, and, not surprisingly, these have shifted little since the last national survey (which reported these based on an analysis of open-ended comments, as a Ministry of Education-funded survey would not allow such questioning by researchers). The school-based factors that enabled identification and provisions for gifted and talented students included dedicated funding and resources, a range of assessment and teaching tools, staffing allocations, knowledgeable and committed teachers, principal leadership and support, professional learning and development, and keen

parents and students. This response is a good summary of most of these enablers, and clearly shows the importance of people:

> "Active and aware principal, committed and experienced Head of Supported Learning and a small collection of 'rockstar' colleagues who share our concerns. We also have supportive whanau/community groups, especially Maori, who are keen to see this area develop. Also many of the potentially GaTE students are responding to initial conversations about GaTE. Good networking with colleagues in other schools and tertiary institutions. Strong chances for cultural models of giftedness."

A text analysis of these open-ended responses shows that around a quarter of respondents mentioned staff and parents in their enablers. Interestingly, when the same analysis of responses to the barriers or challenges was conducted the shift moved from staff and parents to students. This does not mean that students were barriers, but that schools reported being hindered in their identification of and provisions for gifted and talented students. Comments focused on impact on students when there are challenges of funding and resources, time, access to services, professional learning and development, teacher knowledge and attitudes. Most of the barriers or challenges were succinctly stated and to the point, except when teacher knowledge and attitudes were problematic, as these quotes show:

> "Teachers do not recommend students to the programme … Teachers don't feel that gifted kids need 1-1 instruction and that time is necessary to help the bottom."

> "A challenge is ensuring that all teachers are adequately catering for these students in their day-to-day programmes. We continue to provide professional development and support in this area for teachers who require it."

> "A limited mindset of what talent looks like – and a closed expectation of what provision should look like."

Just as in the previous study, each enabler to identification and provision can also act as a barrier.

A Decade Later

The responses demonstrate positive changes across all aspects of gifted and talented education in New Zealand. The quantitative results show increases in all aspects of gifted and talented education. Sometimes, the qualitative, open-ended responses begin to tell a different story, as this summary will describe. Also, the results of this study must be considered against the backdrop of its limitations: a small sample size that disproportionately represents the secondary schooling sector and higher decile schools. These demographics have no doubt influenced some of the results, which

show some changes in identification and provisions for gifted and talented students, but perhaps not to the extent one might hope for given some educational initiatives. The response rate was around a quarter of that received in 2004, yet it does represent the work of over 300 primary and secondary schools in New Zealand. Importantly, this study represents a quest by independent researchers to determine what changes have occurred over the last decade: it was not funded by the Ministry of Education or any other external body.

The Ministry of Education (2012) guidelines encourage schools to develop policies and practices that demonstrate an interconnectedness between schools' definitions, identification, provisions and evaluation, and this same framework is used to consider the results of this study. Schools are guided to develop, adopt or adapt school-based definitions of giftedness. On the surface, it appears that more schools in New Zealand are grappling with school-based definitions of giftedness and talent, however, a little scratching below the surface shows that this is not really the case. There continues to be some confusion between definitions, characteristics, and identification practices. However, schools have reported an increase in formal identification of gifted and talented students. This growth is seen across all areas. Predominately intellectually gifted students continue to be most commonly identified. Teacher nomination and formal assessment are the identification methods of choice. Positively, there is noticeable growth in parent involvement in identification processes.

Most schools reported a preference for enrichment and acceleration, used in tandem to support provisions across the continuum. The most noticeable growth area was in the increased school-based provisions. There have been few shifts in the preferences for ability grouping and independent study in classroom programmes or withdrawal or pull-out programmes (including one-day-a-week providers). Most often the programmes are designed for intellectually/academically able students. There has been a marked increase in the use of competitions, mentorships and web-based pedagogies. Provisions that provide part-time opportunities for enrichment are favoured, with acceleration options (such as dual enrolment and early entry) less likely to be adopted by schools.

Finally, there has been growth in specific policies for gifted and talented students, but a decrease in inclusion in special education policies. This study shows heavy reliance on teachers and associate or deputy principals to lead gifted and talented education programmes, often in isolation of other professional support. The enablers and barriers have remained quite similar, but, interestingly, the challenges reported by schools were more student-focused than the enablers, which tended to focus on teachers and parents. Time, money, and people continue to make or break gifted and talented identification and provisions.

Without doubt, the most significant initiative reported by respondents to this study was the change to the National Administrative Guidelines which has led to increased awareness. This awareness was also attributed to the professional learning and development provided through informal learning and sharing through resources like

the tki Gifted and Talented Online site and associated mailing list and more formal opportunities facilitated by advisors, facilitators, and regional and national conferences and events.

Since the study conducted in 2004, the Ministry of Education (2012) has articulated a vision for gifted and talented learners, which is supported by a set of core principles for supporting their achievement and well-being. Are we any closer to realizing the vision that:

> "Gifted and talented learners are recognized, valued, and empowered to develop their exceptional abilities and qualities through equitable access to differentiated and culturally responsive provisions" (p. 10)?

While this study goes some way to answering that question, by providing evidence of growth, it also shows some signs of potential stagnation of gifted and talented education in New Zealand. The growth and awareness in gifted and talented education needs to be harnessed and injected with ongoing resources for funding, professional learning and support, and, most importantly, encouragement to continue developing an evidence-base of effective practices. Critically, the implementation and evaluation of identification and provisions, as required by the National Administration Guidelines, should continue to develop, be shared and celebrated in New Zealand. As our research team concluded in 2004, these are "snapshots of promise" in an ongoing journey to develop gifted and talented education in New Zealand that is world-class. Are we there yet?

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