Module: A Deep Dive into the Uses of Multiple Criteria

# Summary Ideas

* It is important to realize that there is no perfect identification system. The instruments that we use, the ways in which data are interpreted, and the decision-making process itself is frequently filled with error. Knowing this, the process of identification should be flexible enough to include mechanisms for consideration of additional information when selecting students for highly capable services.
* The identification process and the assessments used should align with a program’s definition of giftedness and the types of services provided to students to ensure continuous growth.
* Identification systems should be flexible and allow for ongoing identification by creating multiple pathways to bring student gifts and talents to the attention of those in charge of the identification process.
* The identification process should include the use of multiple assessments that have sufficient technical support and psychometric evidence supportive of decisions about students’ readiness for specific services. If using rating scales or other protocols for which psychometric data are not available, the data must be collected locally to defend the use of the instrument.
* Multiple assessment data should not be combined in ways that could bias any particular subgroup of students or limit our interpretation and recognition of a student’s area(s) of strength(s).
* Careful consideration should be given to the selection of instruments that align to a district’s definition of giftedness. If non-test assessments are used (e.g., a performance task), careful training for teachers who evaluate these performances is needed.
* Cautionary measures should be taken to ensure that some criteria are not given too much weight at the expense of others. Weighting a specific test six times more than a teacher rating scale, makes the teacher rating scale unimportant.
* Providing professional development to families, staff, faculty, administrators, and in particular the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee members in understanding the identification process, procedures, and use of the assessments creates a more effective system for recognizing and supporting the advanced learning needs of highly capable students.

# Take Action Research Possibilities:

1. Examine your own district policies and procedures to assess and evaluate the degree to which you are using multiple sources of data to identify and consider the services needed to match your students’ learning needs.
2. Possible Action Steps:
* Revise identification procedures if needed to reflect your new knowledge about the use of multiple criteria.
* Develop procedures for a holistic review of collected student data during the identification process.
* Redesign the criteria used for selecting highly capable students based on what you have learned in this module and the cautionary suggestions that are made when an identification system is considered.
* Add some new services based on what the data reveal to you about students’ needs.
* Create a professional development plan for educating those in your school district who will have a role in the identification and selection of students for highly capable programs.