Module 3 : Challenges and Issues in Addressing Diversity

# Summary Ideas and Take Action Plans

* How we think about who benefits from highly capable services colors our lenses when we look for strengths and talents in our students.
* Diverse populations of students (African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Southeast Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, English learners, twice exceptional, low-income, and/or rural) are often associated with deficits rather than strengths and have a higher chance of being overlooked for advanced academic work and other highly capable services.
* We must improve our cultural competencies and experience a paradigm shift from a deficit framework to a strengths-based one to offer appropriate highly capable services for diverse learners. This process may require continuing education (e.g., readings, certification courses, graduate school coursework), regular engagement in high-quality professional development, and commitment (self, school, district, and state) to improve access and equity for diverse learners.
* Best practices for identifying diverse populations of highly capable students include the following:
  + Understand that highly capable students are those who need advanced learning opportunities and design services that match their needs.
  + Match research-based assessments with highly capable services and be sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences. Use multiple objective criteria as part of holistic identification process.
  + Avoid overreliance on rigid cut-off scores on IQ tests or cognitive ability tests, or use a single test for identification.
  + Curriculum and instruction is an important component for identifying strengths in all children
  + Offer professional development to various stakeholders such as parents, educators, and community members. Furthermore, engage parents as partners and collaborators and provide opportunities for families and educators to develop inclusive educational communities.

# Take Action Research Possibilities

* Examine district plan and student demographics. Explore what changes need to be made to employ best practices for the assessment of diverse populations. Share suggestions and/or ideas with colleagues, principal and/or district gifted coordinator.
* Develop and design an identification plan that incorporates best practices in the identification of students from diverse populations from a strengths-based approach.
* This module introduced five sample models in practice to improve identification and/or services for diverse students. Develop and design an intervention plan using inspiration from one or a combination of these models for your own school or district.