Research shows that, on average, teachers have different expectations based on the ethnicity of students. Moreover, teachers make less referrals for gifted testing for African American and Latino students than for White students. However, little research has explored the vital roles that diverse families can play in gifted education. Thus, the home-school relationship between traditionally underrepresented students' families and their schools has the potential to make significant improvements.

Building trusting relationships between educators, schools, and parents of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse gifted students is the keystone to the home school connection. Teachers and schools can both work to improve relationships with families and communities through home visits, offering family workshops, and becoming active members within their communities.

Longitudinal studies have found that parental involvement is more connected to student achievement than socioeconomic background, ethnicity, or family structure. In addition, parental involvement is also associated with better psychological adjustment. This further substantiates the hypothesis that improved home-school connection can potentially improve the diversity within gifted and talented programs.

One of the biggest barriers for parental involvement and school partnerships for immigrant students is language. Time in the United States and English language ability have been found to be positively related to parent involvement. Language barriers and opportunities to learn English may also be among the obstacles to parental involvement, as it is often difficult for immigrant parents and teachers to effectively communicate with one another.

Gifted diverse students may also face stereotype threat and feelings of “fewness”, or the belief that they are one of the only students of their cultural group participating in advanced programs. Thus, improved home-school relationship for traditionally underrepresented gifted and talented students may also improve their own perception of being included in this population.

Improvements in the identification of underrepresented students in gifted and talented programs is to invest in more comprehensive and inclusive admission practices. Several states have improved their identification practices by allowing for flexibility in test score thresholds, incorporating holistic forms of assessments like creativity tests and teacher ratings of specific characteristics, and having schools play a more central role in advocating for students who are often overlooked.

Resources:


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