



# A "BRILLIANT" COLLECTION OF MINDS

**Reimagining Gifted & Talented  
Education for Twice-Exceptional  
Learners in NYC Public Schools**

Presented by Kelly Brady,  
CUNY Graduate Center



***"Do you want a  
collection of brilliant  
minds  
or a brilliant  
collection of minds?"***

**-Meredith Belbin, Researcher**





# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM



# In re-imaging Gifted and Talented education in NYC Public Schools, Twice-Exceptional learners must have seats at the table

Brilliant NYC can build a bridge between District 75 learners and "G&T" instruction in service of equity, inclusion, and de-segregation

As the Adams administration tackles Gifted and Talented programming, District 75 teachers should be include in any and all teacher development.

Identifying learners who may be "twice exceptional" creates a bridge of inclusion in the least-restrictive environment.



THESIS STATEMENT



# CAN WE SERVE EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS WITHOUT SEGREGATION?

- The NYC DOE is the largest school system in the country, as well as the most segregated, as per a 2014 study by the UCLA Civil Rights Project, which found:
  - Less than 15% of urban students were white, compared to 60% of suburban students
  - Nearly 75% of Black students in NYC attended a school with an enrollment of less than 10% of white students
  - "Minority" or "apartheid" schools with a majority makeup of Black and Latinx students also had the highest percentage of students living in poverty, separating by class as well as race.



# DISMANTLING A PROBLEMATIC SYSTEM: GIFTED AND TALENTED

## G&T Demographics

- Over the 2018-2019 school year, the Independent Budget office (IBO) found "roughly 40% [of G&T students] were Asian, 35% white, 9% Hispanic, and 7% Black."
  - Source: <https://www.amny.com/news/report-half-of-nyc-schools-with-gifted-talented-classes-did-not-enroll-a-black-student-in-the-program/>
- Many parents want G&T programming to boost their student's chances of entry into a specialized high school. In 2021-22, white and Asian students were admitted at almost double the rates of Black and Latinx students, with just 8 Black students admitted to Stuyvessant High School that year.
  - Source: The City, May 26th, 2021



STATEMENT OF PROBLEM,  
CONTINUED

# THE OPPOSITE END OF THE EDU SPECTRUM: D75

How a mis-appropriation of programming can lead to exclusion and inequity

- According to [data.nysed.gov](https://data.nysed.gov), in the 2019-20 school year, Black and Latinx students made up 76% of D75 enrollment, with white students representing 13% and Asian students only 9%
- 87% of D75 students are "economically disadvantaged," and 22% are English Language Learners (ELLs)



# TESTING

## How "Exceptional" Students are Sorted

- Prospective G&T students are selected aged 4-7 using the NYC Gifted and Talented Test, which combines the verbal section of the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) with the nonverbal sections of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), which test emerging verbal, aural, logic, and mathematical ability. Once in, a student receives G&T programs through 8th grade.
- D75 students must be formally diagnosed by a psychologist, after evaluation and recommendation from parents, teachers, school counselors, or other service personnel. Once in, a student can remain in D75 to age 21, when they must "graduate" with a certificate in lieu of a high school diploma.

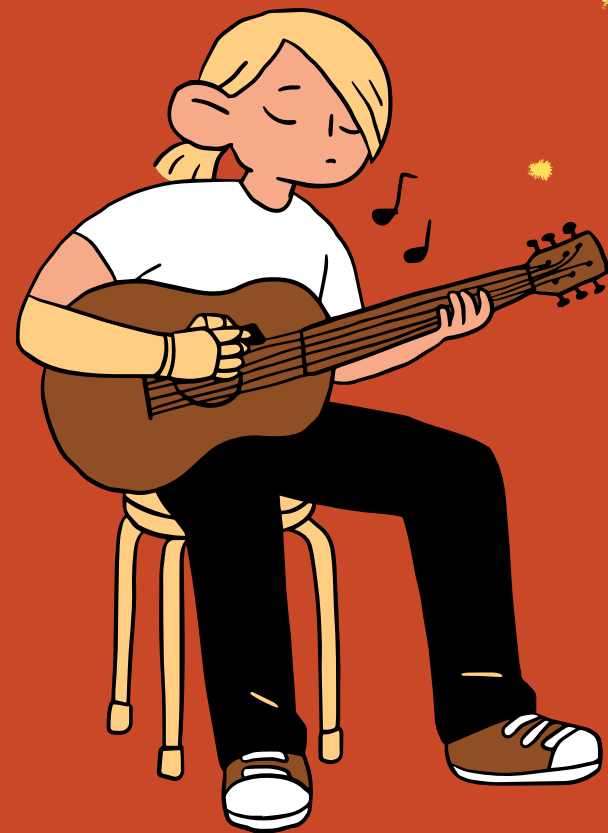


ASSESSMENTS





# WHAT IS "GIFTED" ANYWAY?



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GIFTED EDUCATION?

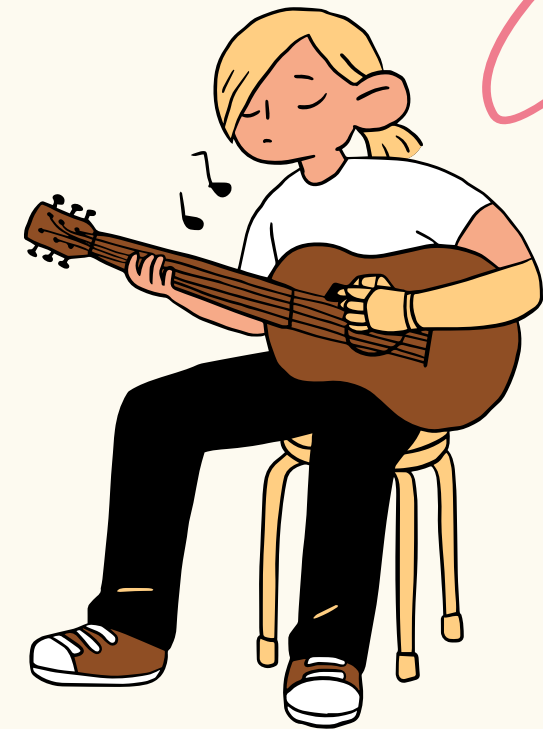
Are our goals to challenge exceptional learners, or to make excuses for why curriculum isn't working?

- Common Core State Standards, Next GEN Standards, and state testing including the NY Board of Regents were designed and implemented to create "rigorous and challenging" curriculum.
- The citywide adoption of Universal Design for Learning and "AP for All" were meant to make this rigorous curriculum accessible to all learners
- If these systems were working according to plan, would we need pullout classrooms for "Gifted" students?

THE "WHY"



# THE MARLAND DEFINITION:



Published in 1972, the Marland Report defined "Gifted and Talented" youth as:

- *Requiring differentiated programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular programs in order to realize their contributions to self & society*

*Children capable of high performance in areas including:*

**Leadership ability**

**Specific Academic Aptitude**

**Creative or Productive Thinking**

**General Academic Ability**

**Visual and Performing Arts**

**Psychomotor Ability (Sports)**



# Renzulli & Reis Definition

Renzulli & Reis (1986) defined G&T this way:

"An interaction among three basic clusters of human traits:

1. Above-average intellectual ability
2. High levels of task commitment
3. High levels of creativity

"Persons who manifest, or are capable of developing, an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs" -Renzulli & Reis, 1986, p. 218

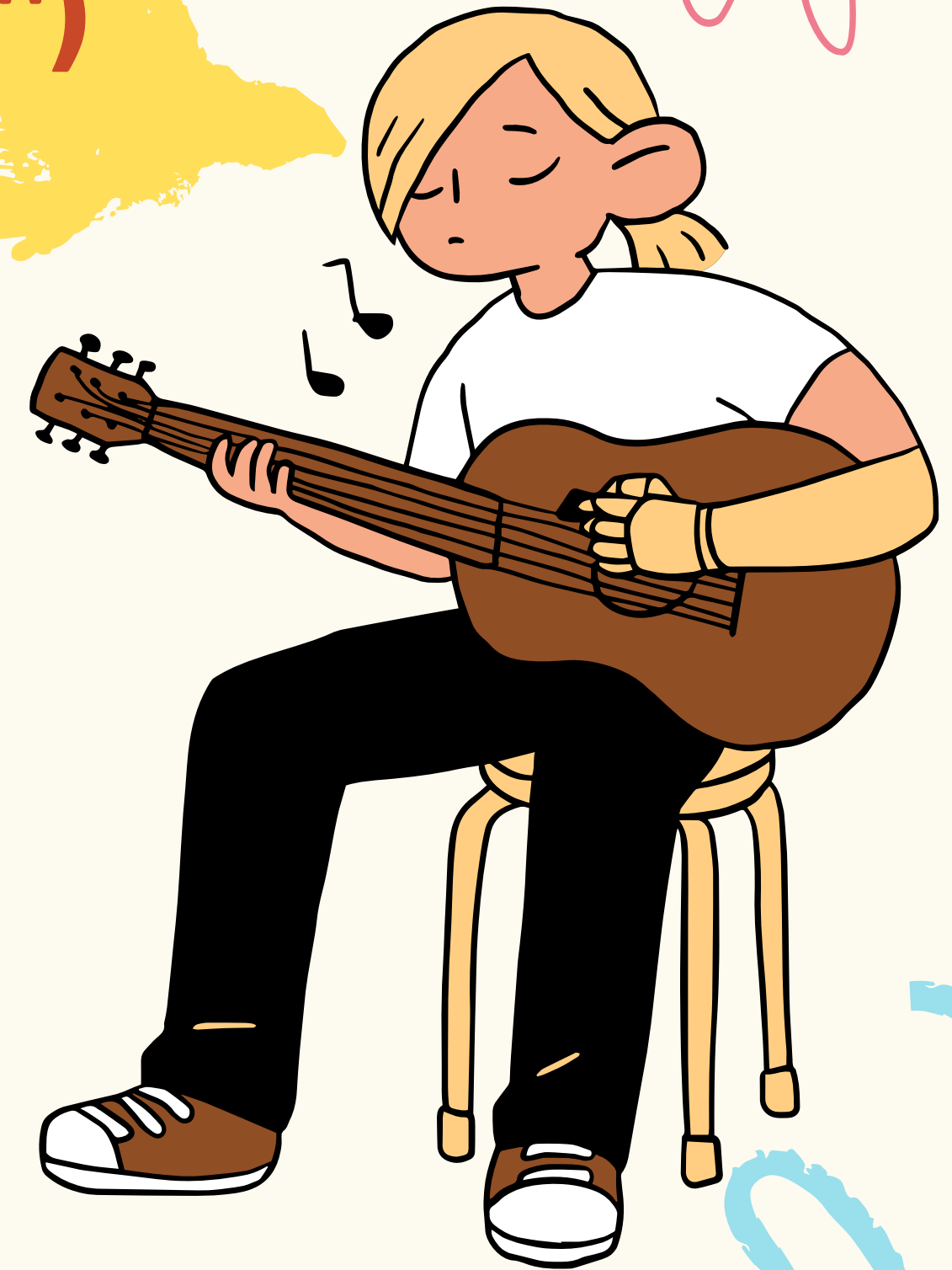


# THE TWICE- EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER



# TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL ("2E") LEARNERS

- The twice-exceptional (2E) learner is one who presents high-level academic or artistic talent but also has learning challenges/special needs, such as Autism, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, or other needs.
- Students who are "gifted" can have their talents mask their needs, and vice-versa
- Undiagnosed 2E's can experience frustration, academic underachievement, disenchantment with schooling, higher rates of drop-outs, and lowered college and career expectations.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED LEARNERS

"Gifted behaviors can be found 'in certain people, at certain times, and under certain circumstances" - Renuzilli & Reis, 2014



Propensity for advanced content

Desire to create original products

Task commitment in areas of talent and interest

Nonlinear Learning Styles & enjoyment of the abstract

Identification with others of similar talent and interest



# CHARACTERISTICS OF 2E LEARNERS

From Baum, Schader, & Owen's "To Be Gifted and Learning Disabled," (2017)



Creative and sophisticated ideas, but difficulty putting them down on paper

High-level comprehension, but with reading complications

Task commitment but difficulty when things lack novelty or require listening and auditory processing

Potential for expertise but difficulty developing automaticity

Desire to fit in but little social awareness and sense of appropriateness





# WHO MIGHT WE BE MISSING?



"We know that more than a few of our civilization's most gifted individuals did not do well in the classroom - Pablo Picasso, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill - and might very well be excluded from gifted programs by today's standards. Their abilities became known by what they produced, created, or performed, not by their grades in school."

- Baum, Schader, & Owens, 2017



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS





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## Recommendation #1

The NYC DOE should give attention to identifying 2E learners and including them into advanced programs such as Brilliant NYC (or its equivalent).

## Recommendation #3

Expand collaboration, co-planning, and professional development around 2E learners for educators, service providers, and parents.




## Recommendation #2

The NYC DOE needs to be clear on how it defines "gifted and talented," and what the goals in specialized education for this population are.

## Recommendation #4

By including District 75 teachers into the conversation around G&T education, we open up possibilities for 2E learners to showcase their unique gifts and integrate with general education peers.



# ARGUMENTS & OBSTACLES





# TOO DIFFICULT TO INTEGRATE

Won't it be a logistical nightmare to provide services for students in D75 schools?

Most D75 schools co-locate with general education schools in the same building. If the goal is to have Brilliant NYC in EVERY gen-ed school building, D75 students can use the Brilliant programming as a way to connect with gen-ed peers and grow community and collaboration between formerly isolated (and segregated) schools.

PROBLEM #1



# TOO MUCH ADDED TO TEACHERS' PLATES

Aren't D75 teachers (and Gen Ed teachers) already doing enough?

- Feeling included in the general education system can be nothing but a boon to D75 teachers, who are tasked with teaching modified grade-level versions of the same curriculum as per IDEA (2004).
- Teacher retention could be improved for both populations; D75 teachers could feel a part of the mainstream, while gen ed teachers can develop further skills in differentiating instruction.

PROBLEM #2



# PARENTS WILL FEEL THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION IS BEING COMPROMISED

How can my gifted child be challenged in the same classroom with special needs students?

- Brilliant NYC's initial plan includes assessing all gen ed students and placing them in accelerated groups when, where, and if needed for select periods per day. If the D75 student is chosen to participate in that particular period, such as advanced algebra, they will have been admitted to the room because they have demonstrated ability and aptitude for the subject matter at hand.



PROBLEM #3

# WHAT IS THE END GOAL HERE, TO CLOSE DISTRICT 75?

What about the teachers and administrators who need jobs? What about the students with severe needs who need specialized services?

- Some students will need to remain in self-contained classrooms due to severe mental, intellectual, or physical needs. In the best-case scenario, including 2e learners in the Brilliant NYC program may cause enough D75 students to eventually phase into general education that 12:1:1 classroom settings may end up closing. In that scenario, the teachers of those classrooms would be integrated into general education classrooms as special education learning specialists and co-teachers, as required by a student's IEP.



PROBLEM #4



# CONCLUSION





# G&T, 2E, & NYC: THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

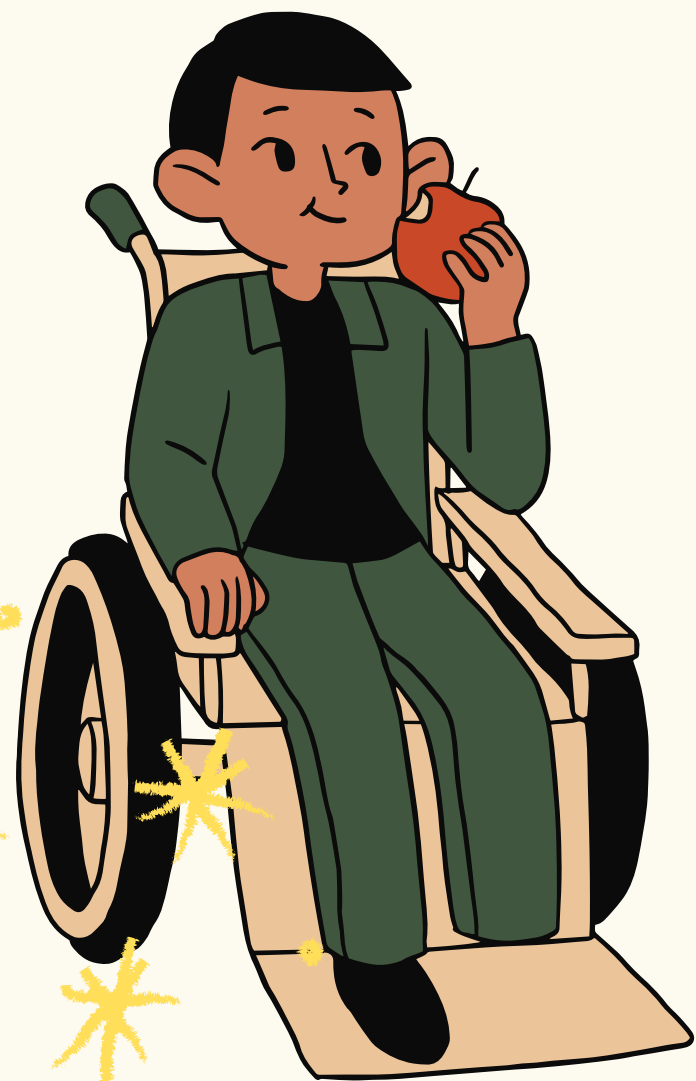


NYC is home to some of the world's most exceptional art, music, sports, entertainment, business, and higher education, not to mention the incredible community and cultural wealth provided by its citizens.

The DOE can continue to build on the already-established partnerships with these organizations to provide supplementary programming to meet the needs of our most exceptional learners, as well as increase classroom efforts to meet student's interest and passions. By expanding G&T programming to 2E and D75 learners, NYC can set the pace for inclusive G&T programs nationwide, and start to mend it's currently segregated system.



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!



Please feel free to contact me at [kellylbrady@gmail.com](mailto:kellylbrady@gmail.com) if you have any further questions, or I can be of service in any way.

