

many districts, are largely fictional and reported only to secure “points” for the gifted performance indicator. Until districts are accountable for gifted funds and for true service to gifted students, the most vulnerable, particularly those in rural areas, will continue to be underserved.

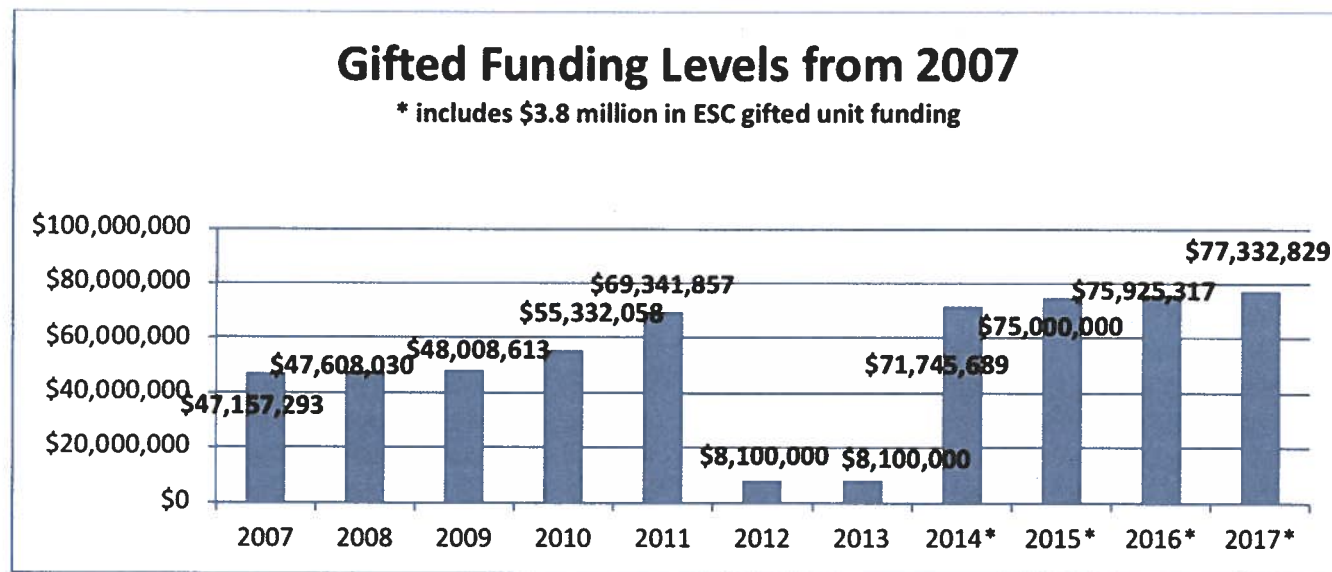
**GIFTED COST STUDIES**

The problem with studying gifted funding in Ohio is that gifted services are not mandated. Therefore, very few districts actually provide services to all gifted students, and even those districts that report high levels of services may not always be providing those services. Throughout the years, there have been multiple attempts to study the appropriate level of gifted funding as well as the best funding mechanism. The OAGC conducted two cost studies: one in 1999 and a second based

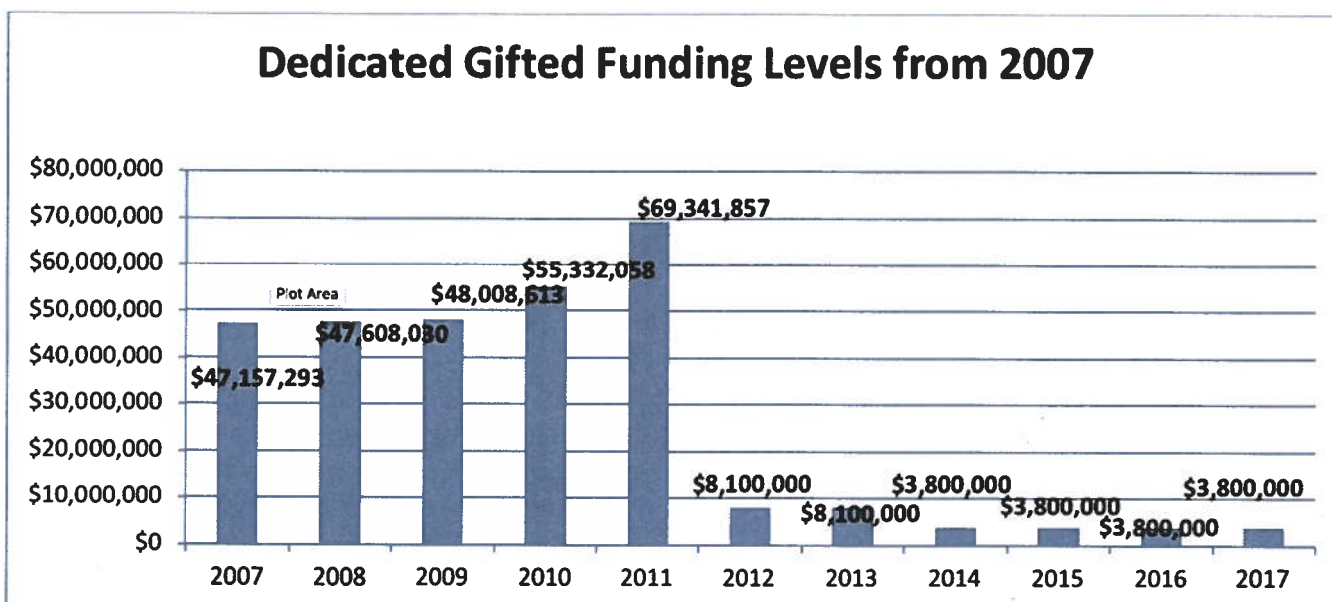
on revised costs in 2002. These studies were based on various district types and service models. In addition, the ODE attempted to quantify an appropriate level of funding for gifted services in 2008. All three studies indicated that significantly more funding was necessary to provide adequate levels of service to gifted students in Ohio. It is also clear that without accountability for how gifted funds are spent, a change in the funding system will not solve the gifted funding and service problem. Finally, without particular attention to the needs of smaller, rural districts in any new funding system, gifted students in these districts will continue to be the least appropriately served students in Ohio.

*For details on this paper and other gifted education issues, please contact Ann Sheldon, OAGC executive director at 614-325-1185 or [anngift@aol.com](mailto:anngift@aol.com).*

**APPENDIX A**



OR



# Ashland University and Gifted Professional Development for Our Teachers

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING AND WHAT IS HAPPENING NEXT

By Pat Farrenkopf, Adjunct Professor and Faculty Course Designer, and Jennifer L. Groman, Assistant Professor, Talent Development Program, Ashland University

In late winter 2017, just a year ago, we were learning about the new gifted operating standards in Ohio and the requirement for general education teachers to be offered high-quality professional development in gifted education. Eugene Linton, dean of the Founders School at Ashland University, wanted to ensure that the university was ready to offer teachers two courses to address this new requirement. Those courses, Gifted and the General Education Teacher I and II, were developed and advertised as available for Ashland instructors to provide or for districts or for ESCs to purchase for one of their own qualified staff to teach. Course I, with 30 contact hours attached, focused on introductory concepts in the nature and needs of gifted students as well as appropriate curriculum and instruction to serve them. Course II, with an additional 30 contact hours, represented a deeper dive into the same competencies, addressing all eight listed in the standards. Two hours of Ashland University credit were available, but not mandatory, for taking each of the classes. Those who took the course for college credit were required to complete a capstone assignment.

These courses, delivered through online Blackboard and blended platforms, began in early June 2017. Ashland was not yet finished with the specifics on these offerings. Conversations with ESCs, district personnel, and individual teachers came around to the question “Will this count toward a gifted endorsement?” Collaboration within Ashland University resulted in an agreement that if an educator is interested in pursuing a gifted endorsement and takes both of the Ashland gifted education PD courses in addition to the general education teacher courses, that the PD courses will count for the first course in the gifted endorsement series. But there were more questions.

The next question was whether the PD courses could be taken for CEU credit. In early fall 2017, two gifted and the general education teacher CEU courses were established. As with the university credit options, the eight competencies in the gifted operating standards were the focus of the work. But there were still more questions.

The next involved when teachers could register and how long they would have to take the online courses. Registra-

tions for both the CEU and the Ashland credit online options were adjusted to allow a start date any time between September 2017 and August 2018. This schedule has worked very well; in fact, most of the teachers in this group finish the course in a shorter period of time than do those on the conventional seven-week—a first-hand example of differentiation for the teachers themselves.

With the recently proposed adjustment to the gifted operating standards timeline for professional development, from 60 contact hours over two years to 60 contact hours over four years, the Ashland University design team is at it once again. We have heard from teachers who want to continue taking advantage of the 30-hour-per-year option for two years. Others prefer switching to 15 hour-per-year for four years. Both will be available, continuing to focus on the eight required competencies.

Altogether, 378 teachers have taken or are currently taking the coursework.

So, what happens next? The Talent Development Program at Ashland University, in addition to offering coursework for endorsement at both the main and Columbus campuses, has established cohorts throughout the state. The cohorts are site-based, and the enrolled teachers are building relationships and supporting one another as they move through the courses and try out new ideas and strategies in their classrooms. Cohorts formed by ESCs and districts across the state are now evolving into gifted endorsement groups. Teachers who have taken or who are taking both of the online Ashland courses are transitioning into the endorsement program with credit for the first required course already earned. Others are just starting their first online course or taking their deeper dive experience.

The Gifted and Talent Development Program at Northwestern Local Schools has been supported greatly by the Northwestern Board of Education, the district superintendent, and administrators. From two cohorts at Ashland University we will have added eight additional gifted intervention specialists to our total of 12 over a three-building campus, with the majority at the middle and high schools. Two guidance counselors have also applied their new knowledge and resources to support