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Excellence Gaps in Education: Expanding Opportunities for Talented Students

Jonathan A. Plucker, Scott J. Peters

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In *Excellence Gaps in Education*, Jonathan A. Plucker and Scott J. Peters shine a spotlight on “excellence gaps”—the achievement gaps among subgroups of students performing at the highest levels of achievement. Much of the focus of recent education reform has been on closing gaps in achievement between students from different racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds by bringing all students up to minimum levels of proficiency. Yet issues related to excellence gaps have been largely absent from discussions about how to improve our schools and communities. Plucker and Peters argue that these significant gaps reflect the existence of a persistent talent underclass in the United States among African American, Hispanic, Native American, and poor students, resulting in an incalculable loss of potential among our fastest growing populations.

Drawing on the latest research and a wide range of national and international data, the authors outline the scope of the problem and make the case that excellence gaps should be targeted for elimination. They identify promising interventions for talent development already underway in schools and provide a detailed review of potential strategies, including universal screening, flexible grouping, targeted programs, and psychosocial interventions. *Excellence Gaps in Education* has the potential for changing our national conversation about equity and excellence and bringing fresh attention to the needs of high-potential students from underrepresented backgrounds.

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