Title of Project: Lifting the Cloak of Invisibility: A Collective Case Study of Girls with Characteristics of Giftedness and ADHD

Project Abstract (< 100 words): The purpose of this research was to examine how girls with giftedness and ADHD cope with the academic and social pressures of middle school in order to frame the experiences and coping strategies of adolescent girls with these dual diagnoses. The manifestation of ADHD characteristics in girls can result in emotional and behavioral issues, placing stress on peer and family relationships. As they enter their middle-school years, these characteristics can place additional strains on both academic and personal performance. It is important that parents, teachers, and counselors develop an understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and needs of this population.

Project Personnel:

1. Describe the activities you completed this year for your Synergy Grant in relationship to the goals of the Holmes Partnership.

A sample of 5 girls was recruited for participation in the study. Each of the girls was paged twice weekly over the course of three months. Upon receiving the page, the girls would complete the Experience Sampling Form (Csikzentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993) that provided information as to their feelings of the activities and the people with whom they were involved at the time. The girls and their families also complete surveys that provided further information on the perceptions of their own abilities both in and out of the classroom, allowing us to gain a better understanding of the needs this unique population of gifted girls.

2. Describe your plans, if any, for continuation, scaling up, and/or institutionalization of the project next year.

We will continue to follow-up with the girls in the fall in order to gather further information regarding their feelings as they enter into a new school year. We will also be conducting one-on-one interviews with each of the participants.

3. Of the six goals delineated in the strategic agenda of the Holmes Partnership, this project primarily addressed two:

   Equity, diversity, and cultural competence—Current research has demonstrated that identification of ADHD in boys outpaces that of girls at a rate of 4:1. However, it is important that educators understand and respond to the distinctly different need of gifted/ADHD females as they enter secondary education.
Scholarly inquiry—The high-quality and variety of methods used in this study allowed us to collect trustworthy results, framing the lived experiences of this often ignored population of twice exceptional girls during a vulnerable time of their lives—adolescence.

4. Summarize any impact data you have collected on your project, especially impact on P-12 students, teachers, principals, etc.

The results of this study will adds to the limited literature regarding this unique population of girls with giftedness and ADHD, providing practitioners with information about the experiences of these girls during adolescence. The findings from this study can be integrated to inform both teacher and counselor preparation.

5. Summarize your plan for disseminating the results of your project to state and national audiences.

Results of this study will be written up for publication and presentation at the 2013 National Association for Gifted Children Annual Conference. A proposal will also be made for presentation at the 2014 American Education Research Association Annual Conference.

6. What suggestions do you have for future Synergy Grant participants or for the project administrators?

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Holmes Partnership and the College of Education Synergy Grant administrators for their support of this important study.