

### FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON FUNDING AND SERVICES FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT EDUCATION IN MARYLAND November 2001

#### Decades of research have demonstrated that:

- Gifted and talented students who do not receive appropriate services frequently do not develop to their fullest potential;
- Appropriate educational programming targeted to the special needs of gifted and talented students will help these students realize their full potential;
- Gifted and talented learners are found in all cultural groups and across all economic strata; and
- Particular attention must be given to identification of and programming for students in traditionally under-represented groups including, but not limited to, minorities, non- and limited-English-proficient students, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.

The extensive research in gifted and talented student education has led to the development of nationally-accepted standards for gifted and talented student education. These standards have been articulated most recently in the National Association for Gifted Children publication, *Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program Standards, Annotations to the NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards*. [NAGC, 1707 L St. NW, Suite 550, Washington DC 20036. [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)]

#### Summary of Findings Regarding Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland

The Commission's comprehensive review of national and Maryland data on gifted and talented student education found that Maryland has a significant group of students who are underserved: gifted and talented students.

- Currently there is no documented evidence of a fully-developed continuum of services for gifted and talented students preK-12 in any local education agency (LEA) in Maryland.
- Services are particularly sparse for frequently under-represented gifted and talented students, including but not limited to minorities, economically disadvantaged students, non- and limited-English-proficient students and students who have other special educational needs such as physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, learning disabilities and/or health impairments such as attention deficit disorder.
- LEAs in Maryland require both increased funding and increased technical assistance if they are to develop appropriate programs to serve the gifted and talented students for whom they have responsibility.
- There are academic, intellectual, social and economic costs associated with the failure to educate gifted and talented students to their fullest potential.
- Maryland will not achieve excellence in education until appropriate educational services are provided for all Maryland gifted and talented students at all grade levels.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure that appropriate educational services are provided to gifted and talented students throughout Maryland, the Commission on Funding and Services for Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland recommends that:

1. The Maryland State Board of Education adopt into regulation the federal definition of "gifted and talented students." This definition is based on the definition used in the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 and is found in **National Excellence** (1993)...
2. The Maryland State Board of Education adopt into regulation for Maryland nationally-accepted standards for gifted and talented student education.
3. Identification of gifted and talented students be implemented by the LEAs in accordance with clearly-delineated and research-based principles.
4. Local education agencies (LEAs) develop gifted and talented student education programs based on nationally-accepted standards adopted into regulation by the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE).
5. Professional development and support in gifted and talented education be increased in Maryland.
  - 5.1. Annual and ongoing basic training in identification of and programming for gifted and talented learners be given to all staff members, including administrators and counselors. Administrators and counselors with responsibility for large numbers of gifted and talented students will need additional training.
  - 5.2. New staff members complete 12 hours of state-approved staff development in gifted and talented student education.

- 5.3. Teachers regularly assigned to instruct students identified as gifted and talented learners obtain an endorsement as a Teacher of Gifted and Talented Students.
- 5.4. Supervisors/coordinators assigned to supervise or assist educators assigned to work specifically with gifted and talented students and/or to advise administrators or board personnel obtain an endorsement as a Specialist in Education of the Gifted and Talented. Funding for endorsements, once adopted by MSDE, will become part of the current funding ratio within LEA guidelines for reimbursement of approved coursework.
- 5.5. School system personnel with responsibility for gifted and talented learners receive adequate resources and support in order to provide differentiated curriculum and instruction for gifted and talented learners. This includes funds for curriculum development, materials, training, mentoring, and regularly scheduled released time as needed.
6. MSDE, in collaboration with the LEAs, develop both programmatic and student performance accountability benchmarks for gifted and talented education programs in accordance with nationally-accepted standards.
  - 6.1. Identification procedures and program design be evaluated for congruence with national standards.
  - 6.2. Student achievement be evaluated using a portfolio of quantitative and qualitative measures tailored to the population being served.
7. Continue the State Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education. This Advisory Committee can play an important role in implementation of the recommendations of the Commission.
8. MSDE, in collaboration with LEAs, develop a uniform instrument for data collection on gifted education services in Maryland. The data collected will be important in sharing successful programs and program elements and in avoiding duplication of efforts among the LEAs. The data collected will also serve as an important guide to program planners and policy makers.
9. The MSDE budget for the Gifted and Talented Education Office be increased to allow MSDE to expand its role in providing technical assistance related to gifted and talented education services to LEAs.
10. State of Maryland funding to LEAs for gifted and talented education programming be increased to \$36.7 million annually, specifically earmarked for local infrastructure and identification of and programming for gifted and talented students. In order to receive State funds, LEAs must have adopted nationally-accepted standards for education of their gifted and talented students and must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to implementing those standards.

**MCGATE is developing an action plan to ensure these recommendations are implemented. Share with MCGATE any ideas you have on actions needed.**  
 Send to [president@mcgate.org](mailto:president@mcgate.org)

Full report can be downloaded from [www.mcgate.org](http://www.mcgate.org)

## CONCLUSION

Maryland has a significant group of students who are underserved: our gifted and talented students. Maryland's policy makers and educators need to address with a sense of urgency the unmet needs of this sector of our school population. There are academic, intellectual, social and economic costs associated with the failure to educate gifted and talented students to their fullest potential. Maryland will not achieve excellence in education until appropriate educational services are provided for all Maryland gifted and talented students at all grade levels pre-K-12 and in all subject areas.



## MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTION ON COMMISSION REPORT JANUARY 29, 2002

At its January 29, 2002 meeting, the Maryland State Board of Education received the Final Report of the Commission on Funding and Services for Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the report and to:

1. Adopt the current national definition, as provided by the federal Javits Act research, for use by all Maryland school systems effective July 1, 2002.
2. Adopt the national program standards, as published by the National Association for Gifted Children, which [the Board] received from the Department's advisory committee in June 2001, for use by all Maryland school systems applying for State funding effective July 1, 2002.
3. Endorse the funding recommendations to provide approximately \$36.7 million annually to support local infrastructures that will ensure the availability of standards-based, quality education services to gifted and talented students and include this amount of money in the budgets adopted by the Board.
4. Direct the Department [Maryland State Department of Education] to develop a strategy for implementation of all of the Commission recommendations over time.

**This summary has been prepared as a public service by the Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education. For more information, contact Laura Carriere at [president@mcgate.org](mailto:president@mcgate.org).**