

Commission on Funding and Services for Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland

Interim Report December 28, 2000

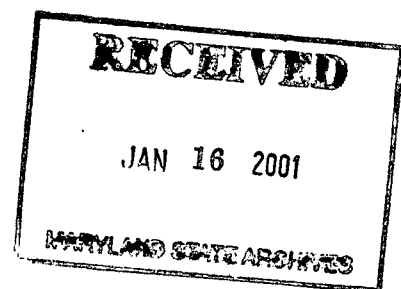
The Commission on Funding and Services for Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland has met three times since its appointment in September 2000. The following are the principle activities and topics of the Commission to date.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

The first meeting was held in the Ways and Means Committee room October 3, 2000. The subject of the meeting was primarily organizational. The only action taken was to urge the Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence (Governor's K-12 Commission) to recognize the importance of keeping funding for the gifted and talented children of Maryland in the forefront of its planning as it develops its recommendations.

The second meeting, held November 14, also in the Ways and Means Committee room, examined the State's 1994 Task Force Recommendations on Gifted and Talented Education and the January, 2000, update of that report by the Maryland State Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, which is organized at the Maryland State Department of Education.

The third meeting, December 12, 2000, at the Howard County Board of Education in Ellicott City, examined the 1983 Maryland State Department of Education document *Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines* document to aid the Commission in developing some common language in the areas of its charge. The Commission also looked at FY 01 funding and distributions for gifted and talented youth. Finally, the Commission approved this Interim Report.



TOPICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission recognizes it has an important educative responsibility, inherent in its charge, as it assists all policy makers in understanding the seriousness of focusing on the very real needs of gifted and talented children to receive challenging and well-designed instruction throughout their schooling. While the Commission has not developed a set of specific recommendations at this time, there are several emerging points of consensus it would like to convey to you and legislative leaders.

- **The responsibility of every Maryland school district to meet the needs** of every child educationally must include awareness of gifted and talented children and provision of services to meet their special needs. Gifted and talented children must be seen as a valuable part of the population whose right to an appropriate education serves not only their own needs but also, indeed, the needs of society. These children must not be lost to a misconception that, because of their gifts and talents, they “will make it on their own” without focused, appropriate instruction.
- **Maryland’s current definition of the gifted and talented child** needs to be examined to be sure that it is consistent with current education theory, supported by sound research, and reflective of best practice. Children at this end of the learning spectrum must have their needs addressed appropriately and fairly throughout the State. The Commission will be working to provide an appropriate definition based on national standards and common understandings that can reasonably apply throughout the State.
- **More attention should be given to early identification and strategies** for helping parents and educators, as well as early learning and care providers, meet the needs of very young gifted and talented children. In many respects, programs that seek to address these children’s needs long after they have entered regular school instruction come too late for maximum effectiveness.
- **Intensive training of teachers and other key personnel** are vital elements of ensuring this crucial awareness and ability to provide effective services.

The Commission is aware of the many demands on the State for education and other funding in the Fiscal Year 2002 budget and beyond. The Commission does encourage as significant an increase of funding toward Gifted and Talented education as is possible and will certainly prepare more specific funding proposals in its Final Report, due November 1, 2001.

CALENDAR

Although sites remain to be identified, the following is a tentative list of future meeting dates:

January 22 @ 9:30 a.m. – noon;
February 20 @ 9:30 a.m. – noon;
March 9 @ 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Meetings in May, September, and October are anticipated as well.

Attachments: Commission Charge
 Commission Membership

COMMISSION CHARGE

As per H.B. 572:

The Commission shall review the status of funding and services for gifted and talented students in major academic areas, the arts, and leadership and make recommendations to:

1. Ensure that all local school districts have appropriate advanced learning opportunities for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 12;
2. Ensure that there is adequate funding for services, teacher preparation, counseling, and other support for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students;
3. Develop accountability standards for gifted and talented education services in Maryland;
4. Ensure that the identification of, and delivery of appropriate services for, traditionally under-represented groups, including but not limited to minorities, non- and limited-English proficient students, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty;
5. Ensure appropriate services for gifted and talented students with special learning problems, including but not limited to learning disabilities, limited English proficiency, emotional disabilities, and attention deficit disorder; and
6. Eliminate administrative obstacles to appropriate services, including obstacles prohibiting dual concurrent enrollment options in middle and high schools, and high schools and colleges, the lack of information about such services, the lack of access, including transportation, to services, and the inability of schools to report information and test scores to families.

Interim report is due on or before January 1, 2001

Final report is due on or before November 1, 2001

COMMISSION ON FUNDING AND SERVICES FOR
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

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