

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 307

(Delegate Hubbard, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Education - Gifted and Talented Students

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This bill alters the current definition of gifted and talented students to conform to federal standards.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Altering the current definition of gifted and talented students would not affect the overall level of funding for gifted and talented education programs.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** Pursuant to this legislation, a gifted and talented student means an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as: (1) having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment; (2) exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; (3) possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or (4) excelling in specific academic fields. This definition is the federal definition arising from the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Act of 1988.

**Current Law:** Local boards of education are encouraged to develop gifted and talented education programs. A gifted and talented student is defined as an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as having outstanding abilities in the area of general intellectual capabilities; specific academic aptitudes; or the creative, visual, or performing arts. Each local school system is responsible for identifying gifted and talented students. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has not developed a standardized statewide identification process.

**Background:** The Commission on Funding and Services for Gifted and Talented Student Education in Maryland was established pursuant to legislation enacted during the 2000 session. The commission was charged with reviewing the status of gifted and talented education in Maryland and making recommendations to ensure that all local school systems have appropriate advanced learning opportunities for gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 12. The commission determined that gifted and talented programs vary dramatically among local school systems and that many of the State's gifted and talented students do not have access to the programs and services they need. State funding for gifted and talented programs is not sufficient to ensure fully developed programs for all students.

The commission made several recommendations including: (1) adopting the federal definition and nationally accepted standards for gifted and talented education; (2) enhancing professional development and support for gifted and talented education; and (3) increasing annual State funding for gifted and talented education to \$36.7 million.

#### *Components of Gifted and Talented Education Program*

The National Association for Gifted Children has determined that a high-quality gifted and talented education program must include at a minimum five basic components: (1) a system coordinator to develop and administer the program; (2) a professional to provide services at the public school; (3) effective staff development for identifying gifted and talented students and preparing instructional materials; (4) development of curriculum and activities appropriate to students' needs; and (5) materials and experiences appropriate to student needs.

#### *Funding for Gifted and Talented Student Education*

Chapter 288 of 2002, the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act, altered the State's public school finance system by phasing out or eliminating 27 State education aid programs in order to simplify the structure while significantly increasing overall State financial support for public schools. The basic support grant for gifted and talented education was eliminated. The fiscal 2004 State budget does include \$534,829 for two

specific gifted and talented education programs: \$75,000 for Destination Imagination and \$459,829 for Summer Centers.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 515 of the 2002 session would have required State funding for gifted and talented education programs be included in the State budget. The bill received an unfavorable report by the House Ways and Means Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 10, 2003  
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