



Every student should experience the joy of learning something new each day

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March 9, 2021 BILL: [SB0915](#) -The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Performance Standards – Clarifications

POSITION: Strongly Support COMMITTEE: [Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee](#)

The Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE) is celebrating 40 years and Maryland's voice for gifted children as defined by Maryland statute. Our mission is to educate about and advocate for the unique needs of diverse gifted children in their homes, schools, and communities. MCGATE is an official affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

MCGATE strongly supports the approval of SB 915-The Blueprint for Maryland's Future-Performance Standards-Clarifications as a technical amendment to HB1300-Blueprint for Maryland's Future to clarify the use of the term "performance standards" by ensuring that the foundation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future for education is sufficient to enable all students, including those identified as gifted and talented, to achieve the State's performance standards, as required in [Maryland COMAR Regulations, Title 13A State Board of Education](#).

MCGATE believes that this clarification of performance standards is an important first step toward rectifying the serious omission of gifted and talented students as a targeted student population and subgroup. Gifted and talented students, as defined by Maryland law, are a special needs group and a subset of all students, including early childhood, English Language Learners, special education, and those living in concentrated poverty. However, **the Blueprint does not recognize gifted and talented students as a group for which resources will be targeted. What is not named, doesn't exist.**

SB0915 will ensure that the provisions of [COMAR 13A.04.07 Gifted and Talented Education](#) will be implemented. These COMAR regulations strongly support an equitable and excellent education for all of Maryland's students that is consistent with the Blueprint provisions:

- The Annotated Code defines giftedness in an inclusive way as "students who are 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*" (§8–201).
- The Annotated Code further states that "Gifted and talented students are to be found in youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor" (§8–202). **This includes students who are ELL or special education gifted, which we call "twice exceptional."**
- The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.04.07) requires **all** schools to identify and serve gifted and talented students. **This includes schools with concentrated poverty.**
- COMAR 13A.04.07 requires all school systems to **identify and serve at least 10%** of their population. Statewide, this effects at **a minimum 90,000** children from all cultural groups and economic strata.
- School systems are required to provide **ongoing professional learning** for teachers, administrators, and other personnel in the identification procedures, characteristics, academic, and social-emotional needs of gifted and talented students.
- **There is NO state funding** earmarked for gifted and talented education. Schools must fund gifted education from the foundation.

Therefore, we urge support of SB 915 to help ensure all students, including those that are gifted and talented, have access to a quality education.

Respectfully Submitted,

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