

## SUPPORTING GIFTED AND ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PTA supports high-quality gifted programming and asserts that exceptional academic ability and talent are qualities that transcend all genders, races, national origins, incomes, neurological differences and family circumstances. It is imperative that opportunities are identified and expanded to reflect the diversity of the nation's students and provide an appropriately challenging curriculum to fuel a high-performing and highly skilled workforce.

Gifted students are defined in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act as *“Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.”*

Approximately 6% of public-school students are enrolled in gifted and talented programs, however, African American, Hispanic, Native American, low-income, English Language Learners and students with disabilities are often underrepresented in gifted programs. Twice exceptional students—often referred to as “2e”—have gifted characteristics or high academic aptitude and one or more disabilities may face unique identification challenges to access gifted programs.

### IDENTIFICATION

Gifted student identification is often based on the use of national norms or standards that identify students who score above a certain percentage of national test takers rather than the use of local norms which are proven to expand identification of historically underrepresented gifted students.

PTA supports early identification and multiple entry points to gifted services through the use of multiple identification criteria, universal screening, local screening and an open-access referral process, whereby classroom teachers, parents, students or community members can recommend students for gifted identification. PTA further urges state and local Boards of Education to select universal screening tests that provide accommodations for special education students.

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Gifted Curriculum should enable all students to meet their full potential and include differentiated instruction, compacted curriculum, enrichment and accelerated learning to meet the unique abilities and academic needs of all learners as well as the development of programs and communication that seeks to improve access to gifted services for students from culturally, linguistically, ethnically, neurologically diverse, economically disadvantaged, military-affiliated and historically underrepresented populations.

## **FUNDING**

Lack of access to advanced course work and math curriculum in a student's school and financial barriers exacerbate inequities in gifted programs. PTA urges school districts to provide free access to admissions testing, test preparation programs and/or sample tests, and free, convenient and consistent transportation for students admitted to advanced academies and schools.

PTA supports dedicated federal and state funding for gifted programing and additionally urges State Education Departments to invest in early childhood education and culturally relevant curriculum that creates pathways that prepare students for advanced coursework.

PTA supports funding for ongoing consistent professional development and urges State Education Departments to encourage gifted education certification for principal, teacher and school counselor licensure and special education certification for gifted education teachers.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

PTA urges school districts to provide on-going consistent outreach and communication to families, in their home language, beginning in kindergarten that explains available gifted programs and advanced academic opportunities including but not limited to advanced Fine Arts programs, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Dual Enrollment, Academies and other gifted schools.

PTA supports the required establishment of local Gifted Advisory Committees and Regional Governing Boards that consist of school administrators, gifted education teachers, special education teachers, parents/guardians of gifted children, members of the school mental health team and other appropriately trained school and community specialists that reflect the ethnic, geographic and economic composition of the local school division to assist in identification and determination of appropriate gifted educational programs and services.

PTA urges the U.S. Department of Education to require gifted student data be included in annual ESSA school report cards and furthermore urges local, state and national annual

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reporting on goals designed to improve diversity in gifted programs/schools as well as student enrollment and turn-over within advanced academies/schools.

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Per the National PTA Governance Policy Manual, this position statement will be reviewed in 2027.