



**State of Delaware**  
**Legislative Task Force**  
**for**  
**Gifted & Talented Education**

*Final Recommendations*

**March 2014**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Programs and services for gifted and talented students have long been neglected in the state of Delaware and across most of the United States.

Recommendations made in this document were based on data obtained as a result of surveys of Delaware schools conducted by this task force and included in the preliminary report of May 2013 [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/Students\\_family/gifted/Legislative7.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/Students_family/gifted/Legislative7.pdf) . These data show that a statewide process for identifying gifted and talented students is needed and that local education agencies and the Delaware Department of Education should work together to develop programs that support the needs of our highest able learners.

Members of the legislative task force for gifted and talented education are pleased to offer the following recommendations, all of which are priorities to address and support the potential of ALL our students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

At the culmination of the 146th General Assembly in June of 2012, House Concurrent Resolution 57 was drafted and passed into the law. The resolution created a task force to examine programs for gifted and talented students in the state of Delaware. The legislation mandated that the chair of the task force would be the Secretary of Education. Mark Murphy, newly appointed Secretary of Education in April 2013, named Debora Hansen, Education Associate for Gifted and Talented Programs at the Delaware Department of Education to serve in his stead. In addition to naming a diverse and multi-faceted membership the concurrent resolution specifically identified the charge of the task force for the 2012-2013 academic year.

### **Charge to the Task Force**

The Legislative Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education was responsible for the following charge identified by the Delaware and House and Senate.

- Examine models used by other states for gifted and talented programs and recommend any model that would be beneficial or enhance gifted and talented programs in the State of Delaware.
- Determine if the programs that Delaware is using for gifted and talented students could be improved.
- Examine and make recommendations regarding testing used for entry into gifted and talented programs in schools throughout the State of Delaware and determine if there is a need for a uniform test.
- Examine and make recommendations regarding qualifications, guidelines, parameters and benchmarks for gifted and talented programs in schools throughout the State of Delaware.
- Present a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate by March 31, 2013.

The 147<sup>th</sup> General Assembly drafted and passed House Joint Resolution 13 which continued the work of the Gifted and Talented Task Force regarding further study of gifted and talented programs. The resolution further defined the task force charge:

- Direct the Department of Education to collaborate with stakeholders to promulgate regulations surrounding the development, implementation and evaluation of local education agency plans to provide educational services to gifted and talented students.
- Direct the Department of Education to collaborate with stakeholders to promulgate regulations to identify gifted and talented students as recommended in the Gifted and Talented Task Force Report of 2013.

## **Description of the Task Force Process**

The Legislative Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education met for the first time on September 26, 2013 and at least every month throughout the duration of the 2012-2013 school year. The first task the group identified was to develop and disseminate a survey to school districts and charter schools to determine the extent of programs throughout the state. To ease the burden of response the survey was separated into two separate instruments where the affirmative response to Question # 14- Does your Local Education Agency identify gifted and talented students?- triggered a second survey that enabled respondents to report greater detail. These survey instruments are included as Appendices B and D.

In November the committee was presented a report from the National Association for Gifted Children. The white paper, *Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students* co-authored by National Association for Gifted Children president, Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, and executive director, Jane Clarenbach, precipitated the formation of three sub-committees: Identification; Programs and Curriculum and Personnel Preparation. The NAGC Guide to State Policy and the NAGC State of the States Report became the primary resources for state by state comparison in these three areas. From those sub-committee reports task force recommendations emerged. Task Force agendas, meeting minutes and supporting documents are available at [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/Students\\_family/gifted/default.shtml](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/Students_family/gifted/default.shtml) Two additional task force members, Dr. Bethany Hall Long, and Dr. Judi Coffield, were added in September 2013 to complete the work.

## **Financial Implications**

No state or federal resources are currently available for the planning and implementation of services and programs for gifted and talented students. The recommendations of this task force are a call to action and should be supported with the resources of time, human capital and financial infrastructure.

## **Recommendations:**

- 1. Establish by July 2014, a statewide position to oversee implementation of all recommendations pertaining to the educational needs of gifted and talented students.**

**Responsibility:** Delaware Department of Education

**Rationale:** The Delaware Department of Education should provide a staffing model for local education agencies by aligning personnel assignments to National Association for Gifted Children Program Standards which requires leadership by credentialed educators.

- 2. Establish by December 2014, statewide expectations for program and curriculum for meeting the educational needs of gifted and talented students.**

**Responsibility:** Delaware Department of Education in conjunction with the Statewide Advisory Council on Programs for Gifted and Talented Students

**Rationale:** The Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education recommends that the expectations include the development of a guidebook to assist local educational agencies and charter schools. The expectation is that this will be a task for the Statewide Advisory Council on Programs for Gifted and Talented Students.

- 3. Establish by December 2014, a formalized evaluation plan by local education agencies for identification of gifted and talented students that includes multiple assessments.**

**Responsibility:** Local Education Agencies in Delaware and reviewed by Delaware Department of Education personnel

**Rationale:** The Task Force recommends that the local education agency plan describes a process for appeals and that the plan describes reciprocity for students identified as gifted and talented from other states and local educational agencies.

**4. Establish by July 2015, a comprehensive plan by local education agencies for meeting the educational needs of gifted and talented students.**

**Responsibility:** Local Education Agencies in Delaware and reviewed by Delaware Department of Education personnel

**Rationale:** The Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education recommends that the plan describes the development of a local advisory committee and recommends that annual review of the plan is required as part of the DDOE consolidated planning process and that funding for programs and curricula is provided through this process.

**5. Establish by July 2015, a comprehensive plan by local education agencies for professional development of all educators.**

**Responsibility:** Local Education Agencies in Delaware and reviewed by Delaware Department of Education personnel

**Rationale:** The Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education recommends that the Delaware Department of Education requires local educational agencies and charter schools to submit a comprehensive plan to the Delaware Department of Education for implementing professional development for all educators focused on gifted and talented education.

**6. Establish by July 2016 a regulation requiring all teachers teaching in programs for students who are gifted and talented to be certified under the *1572 Teacher of Students Who Are Gifted and Talented certificate* based on the current Delaware Administrative Code, Title 14 Del.C. §1220.**

**Responsibility:** Delaware Professional Standards Board

**Rationale:** The Task Force for Gifted and Talented Education recommends that the Professional Standards Board require professionals working with gifted and talented students and/or programs to be state certified and recertified: Teacher of Students Who Are Gifted and Talented certificate.