

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Richardson & Education Committee Members for the opportunity to speak to you all. I am Dr. Melissa Malen, Vice President of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented or MCGT, which is a 65-yr old nonprofit serving gifted and talented children and their families. MCGT joins the Minnesota Department of Education in **advocating for the following amendments** to Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 120B.15, 120B.15 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The amendment

- 1) Changes the language from Programs to Programs and Services which recognizes the efforts of districts of all sizes and includes services to facilitate learning for all students, regardless of the advantage or disadvantage that exists for each student in education.
- 2) Changes to the language include requiring that assessments are equitable to all groups and explicitly adds students of color, American Indians, and students with 504 plans (that may have ADHD or mental health challenges) to assessment language. Sensitivity to English Language and low-income students had already been included.
- 3) Adds language stating that assessments and procedures must be coordinated to allow for optimal identification of programs and services for underrepresented groups.

Equality refers to offering all students equal access to educational programs and services so they can achieve to their highest potential.

However, equity refers to actively providing services, and coordinated programs and services, to all students and especially to students who are underrepresented in gifted and talented education. Services may include positive behavior interventions that can replace suspensions, restorative practice training, social and emotional learning support and skill development, and support for implementing learning accommodations. The result of providing services that establish equity is a leveling of the playing field that facilitates equitable representation of all students in gifted and talented education, in a way that mirrors each group's representation in the school population.

Services are a missing component that is required to establish equitable inclusion of underrepresented students in gifted and talented education. A critical result of using services to facilitate the inclusion of underrepresented students in gifted and talented education will be increased enrollment in STEM classes and college degrees and careers.

For Reference:

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 120B.15, is amended to read:

120B.15 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

(a) School districts may identify students, locally develop programs and services addressing instructional and affective needs, provide staff development, and evaluate programs and services to provide gifted and talented students with challenging and appropriate educational programs and services.

(b) School districts must adopt guidelines for assessing and identifying students for participation in gifted and talented programs and services consistent with section [120B.11, subdivision 2](#), clause (2). The guidelines should include the use of:

(1) multiple and objective criteria; and

(2) assessments and procedures that are valid and reliable, fair, and based on current theory and research. Assessments and procedures ~~should~~ must be sensitive and equitable to underrepresented groups, including, but not limited to, low-income students, ~~minority~~ students of color and American Indian students, twice-exceptional students, students with 504 plans, and English learners. Assessments and procedures must be coordinated to allow for optimal identification of programs or services for underrepresented groups.

(c) School districts must adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students consistent with section [120B.11, subdivision 2](#), clause (2). These procedures ~~must~~ include how the district will:

(1) assess a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration; and

(2) match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to a student to achieve the

best type of academic acceleration for that student.

(d) School districts must adopt procedures consistent with section [124D.02](#), subdivision 1, for early admission to kindergarten or first grade of gifted and talented learners consistent with section [120B.11, subdivision 2](#), clause (2). The procedures must be sensitive to underrepresented groups.