

# Gifted and Talented Education in Maryland



## Gifted and Talented is Defined in Maryland Law

A gifted and talented student is identified as “having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students” (Maryland Annotated Code § 8-201). The law recognizes that students may have different types of gifts and talents, such as intellectual ability, excelling in specific academic fields, or high performance capability in creativity, leadership, or the visual and performing arts. In addition, other students may exhibit a keen ability to lead, influence, and organize others.

Gifted and talented students are found in all Maryland schools and in all cultural, ethnic, and economic groups. The COMAR 13A.04.07 regulations establish the minimum standards for:

- **Student Identification**  
Each local school system shall establish a process for identifying gifted and talented students as they are defined in § 8-201.
- **Programs and Services**  
Each school system shall provide different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to develop the gifted and talented students’ potential. Appropriately differentiated programs and services shall accelerate, extend, or enrich instructional content, strategies, and products to demonstrate and apply learning.
- **Professional Development**  
Teachers and other personnel assigned specifically to work with students who have been identified as gifted and talented shall engage in professional development aligned with the competencies specified by the Gifted and Talented Education Specialist certification §13A.12.03.12.
- **State Advisory Council**  
The State Superintendent of Schools shall maintain an Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education that shall advise the Superintendent on issues and best practices relevant to the education of gifted and talented students in Maryland.
- **Reporting Requirements**  
Local school systems shall, in accordance with §5-401 (c), report in their Bridge to Excellence Master Plans their goals, objectives, and strategies regarding the performance of gifted and talented students along with timelines for implementation and methods for measuring progress.

## Gifted and Talented Students Think and Learn Differently

These students learn rapidly in areas of interest, have excellent memories, and make unique connections among facts and ideas. They are curious and ask the “big” — hard-to-answer — questions. They can concentrate for long periods to explore an area of interest. They like to solve problems and may be sensitive beyond their years to moral and ethical issues.

## Gifts and Talents are Identified using Multiple Methods

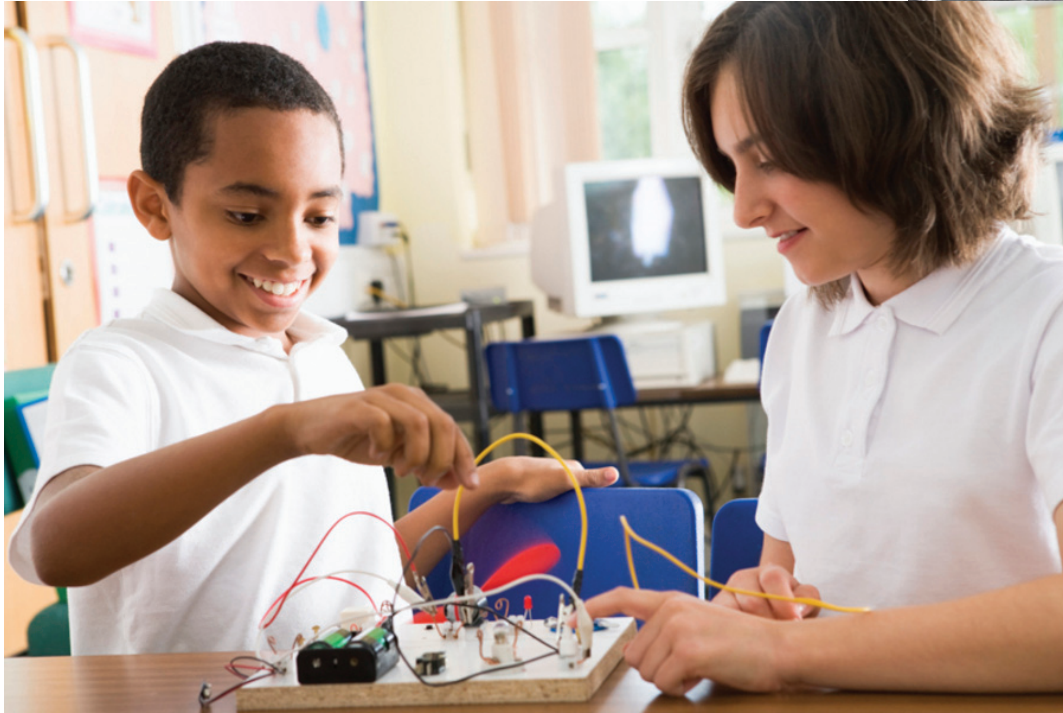
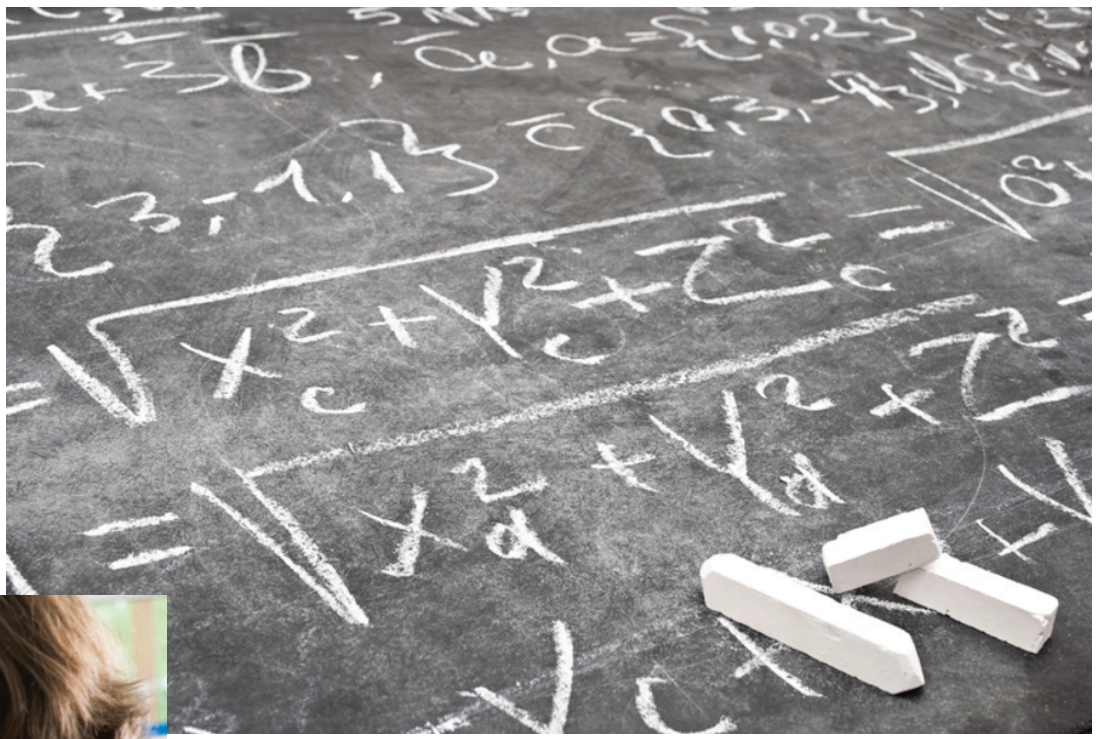
All school systems use multiple ways to identify students’ gifts and talents. Ability and achievement test scores are typically used, but teacher and parent observations of students’ learning behaviors are also important. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed the Primary Talent Development Early Learning Program in which teachers systematically observe and document gifted learning behaviors in all preK-2 students. Examples of student work, such as a science experiment, model, painting, or poem may provide evidence of advanced capabilities.





## Programs and Services Available

Maryland public schools offer a variety of acceleration and enrichment opportunities that include early entrance to kindergarten, advanced reading or mathematics groups, gifted and talented curriculum units, pull-out enrichment classes, single-subject or whole-grade acceleration, special magnet programs, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, original research, mentorships, or dual enrollment in college. Check with your local school system to see which are offered in your area.



## Some Gifted and Talented Students also have Learning Difficulties

Some students are “twice exceptional,” which means they are very advanced in one area, such as mathematics, but struggle with organization, writing, or reading. These students may need special education and gifted education services. To learn more, contact the Council for Exceptional Children, [www.cec.org](http://www.cec.org).

## Extracurricular Activities are Important

No curriculum can adequately address gifted and talented students’ many interests, so extracurricular programs are an essential supplement to the school schedule. Academic clubs — the debate team, the literary magazine, the French or mathematics or robotics club — don’t just give students a chance to explore their chosen disciplines more deeply, they give the students a chance to socialize with others who want to do the same.

The Maryland Summer Centers for Gifted and Talented Students serve both functions — learning and socializing. In its 45th year, the statewide program offers gifted and talented students in grades 4-12 challenging, hands-on learning experiences that can last a week or two and a select few are residential. MSDE and its corporate partners operated 14 Centers in summer 2012, including computer science, robotics, law and government, Arabic and Chinese, digital and performing arts, creative writing, environmental science, physics, and engineering. For information and applications (due every year by April 15), go to [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters).

Another program, Destination ImagiNation (DI), teaches students teamwork and creative problem solving. DI teams are sponsored by parents after school and on Saturdays. DI is the world’s largest creative problem-solving program for K-college learners. Challenges cover the sciences, technology, mechanics, engineering, theater, improvisation, goal-setting, time and budget management, team-building, and leadership. To find out more, visit [www.ImaginThis.org](http://www.ImaginThis.org).

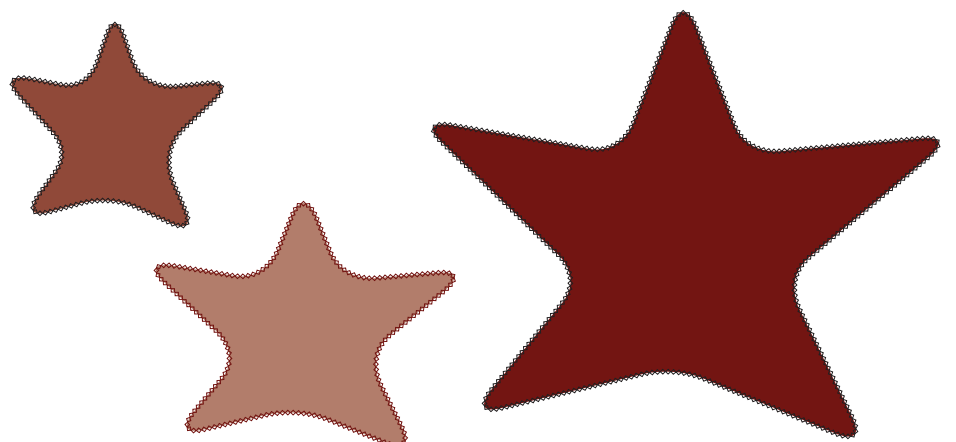
## Special Training and Certification in Gifted and Talented Education is Available

Just as gifted and talented students need specialized instruction to fully develop their potential, teachers of these students need specialized training in that instruction. MSDE offers several online courses for teachers of gifted and talented students. Teachers who wish to pursue leadership roles in gifted and talented education are encouraged to obtain Gifted and Talented Education Specialist certification. For more information on the online courses, or for certification questions, go to [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/GiftedTalented](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/GiftedTalented).

Every fall, MSDE and the Maryland Educators for Gifted Students (MEGS) sponsor the Annual Maryland State Conference on Gifted and Talented Education in October. Local colleges and universities offer graduate courses. For more information go to, [www.megsonline.net](http://www.megsonline.net).

## Parent Support is Vital

Parents need to educate themselves and help to educate others about the special needs of gifted and talented students. Become active in your local school’s PTA/PTO. Some school systems also have gifted and talented parent groups. At the State level, parents can join the Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE). Visit [www.mcgate.org](http://www.mcgate.org) for more information.

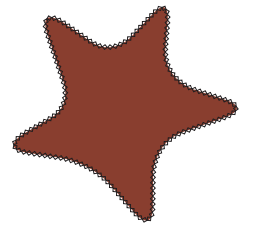
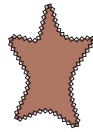
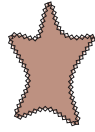






## The Structure of Gifted and Talented Programs in Maryland & the State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Students

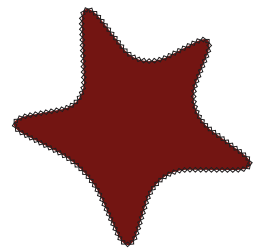
Each local school system's Board of Education is responsible for funding and managing its gifted and talented education program. MSDE provides technical assistance to school systems and sponsors quarterly State briefings, professional development courses, an annual State conference, differentiated curriculum tools, and student summer programs. The State Superintendent of Schools appoints the Maryland State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Students, which meets quarterly with the mission to encourage and support the education of students who are identified as gifted and talented.



### You can get more Information

Your local school principal or your local Board of Education's coordinator of gifted and talented education can provide specific program information. Contact the Specialist for Gifted and Talented Education at the Maryland State Department of Education at 410-767-0363 or go to [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented).

For information and resources for identifying and nurturing giftedness, go to the National Association for Gifted Children, [www.NAGC.org](http://www.NAGC.org).



### The Maryland Summer Centers Program

The Maryland Summer Centers Program, in partnership with public and private nonpublic agencies, provides Maryland's diverse gifted and talented student population with advanced, rigorous, experiential summer learning opportunities that nurture these students' talents and abilities within unique learning environments. For more information, go to [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters).



**Maryland  
Summer  
Centers**

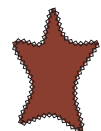
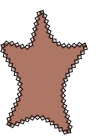
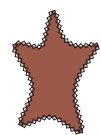
**Computer  
Science &  
Robotics**



**Physics &  
Engineering**

**Environmental Science**

**Digital and  
Performing  
Arts**



### Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE) School Awards Program

The Maryland State Department of Education and the State Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education initiated the *Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE) Schools Awards Program* to honor elementary, middle, and high schools that offer gifted and talented programs aligned with the objectives and criteria of the *Maryland Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines*. Each EGATE school must submit a comprehensive application providing documentation of 21 different criteria under four program objectives from the *Guidelines*.

In 2011, seven schools from Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Charles County Public Schools, Harford County Public Schools, and Prince George's County Public Schools received an *EGATE Award*.



## Top Ten Myths In Gifted Education



## Top Ten Myths in Gifted Education - Video

Adapted from: *Common Myths in Gifted Education*, National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). The video is a compilation of decades of research that dispels myths related to gifted education that have distorted the perception of not only what gifted students need in the classroom, but also what they can offer the nation now and into the future.

To view the video go to:

[http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/top\\_ten\\_myths\\_video](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/top_ten_myths_video)

### Additional Resources:

Maryland State Department of Education, [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented)

Maryland Summer Centers (MSC) for Gifted and Talented Students, [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/summercenters)

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

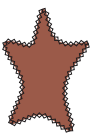
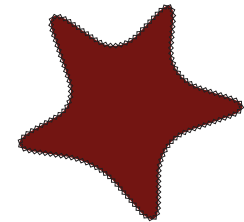
Council for Exceptional Children, [www.cectag.org](http://www.cectag.org)

Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE), [www.mcgate.org](http://www.mcgate.org)

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page, [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)

Destination ImagiNation (DI), [www.imaginthis.org](http://www.imaginthis.org)

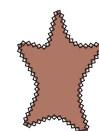
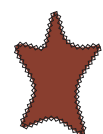
Maryland State Conference on Gifted and Talented Education (October), [www.megsonline.net](http://www.megsonline.net)



### Attention Teachers!

Teachers have the opportunity to earn additional endorsement. For more information visit

[www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented).



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