

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
INFORMATIONAL REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON GIFTED EDUCATION
OCTOBER 27, 2014

Background Information:

The Citizens Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education was created in 1990 to advise the Board of Education in the development and implementation of gifted education in Harford County Public Schools (HCPS).

The charge of the Board sponsored Citizens Advisory Committee on Gifted Education for the 2012-2013 school year was to create a parent guide and a pamphlet for parents of elementary gifted learners. The purpose of the guide and the pamphlet was to inform parents of gifted learners about the identification process and service options in HCPS.

The charge supports the second goal of the HCPS Board of Education's Master Plan, "To encourage and monitor engagement between the school system and the community to support student achievement." Furthermore, the goal's description states, "When all stakeholders have access to information and can support student learning, student academic progress and personal development improves, and the community becomes stronger. The school system must engage families and other community partners to ensure that they have multiple opportunities to support shared goals and provide feedback."

To accomplish this charge, the committee reviewed feedback from the online 2011-2012 HCPS Parent and Community Survey of Gifted and Talented Education Services and community forums to create a list of frequently asked questions. These were categorized into topics and information was included to address each topic.

The charge for the 2013-2014 school year was to begin to research and propose cost-effective gifted and talented identification and service model delivery options for students in grades 6-12 for a continuum of services. The rationale behind this charge stemmed from the results of the 2011-2012 community forums and community survey which highlighted two main concerns in HCPS gifted and talented programs: (1) communication; and (2) secondary program options. The area of communication was addressed in part with the current year's charge and the elementary parent guides.

As part of committee's current role to evaluate PreK-12 gifted and talented programs, the committee respectfully requests that the Board of Education allow them to investigate the middle school and high school services during the 2014-2015 school year.

Discussion:

The Citizens Advisory Committee on Gifted Education created a “Parent Guide to Elementary School Gifted and Talented Education.” The parent guide has been brought to the General Curriculum Committee (GCC) as a document ready for parent dissemination in October of 2014. The guide was approved for general distribution by GCC at its meeting on October 14, 2014.

The committee recommends several cost-effective avenues for distribution to the community at large:

1. Post the Parent Guide to the Harford County Public Schools’ website (hcps.org), noting its presence there through various social media venues.
2. Provide elementary school principals the link to the Parent Guide on the hcps.org website, and make them aware of its presence on the website so that they can share with parents as a resource.
3. Principals can provide elementary school teachers with the link to the website so that they can share it with parents. November conferences would be a preferable venue for sharing this item.
4. Schools can link the resource to their individual school Edline pages as a community and parent resource.

Committee Recommendations:

The Committee offers the following recommendations:

- 1. Continue the charge from 2013-2014 into 2014-2015 to research and propose cost-effective gifted and talented service delivery options in grades 6-12 for continuum of services.**

The Board of Education issued this charge during the previous year. It is the Committee’s recommendation to continue this charge during the 2014-2015 school year. First steps taken in this process have included surveys of schools on scheduling structures and conversations with teachers regarding how they work with highly capable, advanced or gifted students.

Rationale: The CAC for Gifted and Talented Education completed the “*Parent Guide to Elementary school Gifted and Talented Education Guide*” during the 2013-2014 School Year. Additionally, the Office for Accelerated Learning and Intervention Programs acquired new leadership. The Committee would like to begin to investigate and research cost-effective gifted and talented service delivery options in grades 6-12 during this coming school year.

Plan: The CAC for Gifted and Talented Education will meet the charge by:

1. Creating a set of essential questions that we would like to know about gifted education in the secondary schools and categorizing those questions by content;
2. Reviewing a number of recent materials on gifted and talented education in middle and high schools and selecting resource(s) to study (mainly, books and other periodicals);
3. Reviewing the current academic program in our middle and high schools; noting those programs that currently meet the needs of gifted and highly capable students;

4. Reviewing other successful cost-effective programs in Maryland and across the nation;
5. Considering those options that may be feasible for implementation for Harford County Public Schools; and
6. Proposing cost-effective gifted and talented service delivery options in grades 6-12 for a continuum of services from the body of research.