

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 90

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the educational needs of certain underserved gifted students to continue the work on the status and needs of gifted education for minority and low-income students begun by the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status of and Need for Academic Preparation, Financial Assistance, and Incentive Programs to Encourage Minorities to Pursue Postsecondary Education and Training, House Joint Resolution No. 199 (1994).

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1996

WHEREAS, federal and state laws require an appropriate and differentiated educational program for gifted students; and

WHEREAS, society prizes high academic achievement and creativity, particularly if such abilities lead to practical accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, students with high academic, creative, leadership, artistic, and psychosocial abilities whose unique abilities are motivated and nurtured rank among the world's most distinguished achievers in every aspect of society; and

WHEREAS, although American society has shown ambivalence towards devoting special attention to these students, the contributions of these remarkable people enrich the quality and productivity of life for mankind; and

WHEREAS, many gifted and talented youth who languish in classrooms without attention to their educational needs may often demonstrate poor academic performance, boredom, inattentiveness, and disciplinary problems; and

WHEREAS, this problem is exacerbated for gifted and talented minority and low-income students whose potential and abilities lie dormant due to neglect, underidentification, lack of stimulation, and unequal educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status of and Need for Academic Preparation, Financial Assistance, and Incentive Programs to Encourage Minorities to Pursue Postsecondary Education and Training, pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 199 (1994), was directed to determine the educational needs of gifted minority and low-income students in Virginia, including barriers to the identification of such students, and factors related to their underrepresentation in advanced level courses, higher education, and gifted education programs; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance and cooperation of professionals with expertise in all aspects of gifted education, especially underserved gifted students, the joint subcommittee has found that gifted minority and low-income students are underrepresented in gifted education programs across the Commonwealth due, in part, to the use of certain criteria to identify them; low teacher expectations; stereotypical labels; tracking; lack of parental awareness of such children's right to an appropriate education and the availability of gifted education programs; and the current structure of gifted education programs; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee has determined that a more detailed examination of the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of such students is needed in order that appropriate strategies and alternatives may be developed and recommended in order to provide equity in the accessibility to gifted education programs by such students and to address the problems which have been identified; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the joint subcommittee to study the educational needs of certain underserved gifted students be established to continue the work on the status and needs of gifted education for minority and low-income students begun by the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status of and Need for Academic Preparation, Financial Assistance, and Incentive Programs to Encourage Minorities to Pursue Postsecondary Education and Training, HJR No. 199 (1994). The joint subcommittee shall be composed of 9 members to be appointed as follows: 5 members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and 4 members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. The joint subcommittee may also seek the participation of persons with expertise in gifted education, including the identification of underserved gifted students; research in gifted education, teacher education, program evaluation and administration, counseling, and higher education; parents and representatives of public school divisions; and such other persons with knowledge and skills to assist the joint subcommittee in its work. In its deliberations, the joint subcommittee shall:

1. Review the findings and recommendations of the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status of and Need for Academic Preparation, Financial Assistance, and Incentive Programs to Encourage Minorities

to Pursue Postsecondary Education and Training, pursuant to HJR No. 199 (1994).

2. Continue, as appropriate, a detailed examination of the issues and study objectives related to gifted education for minority and low-income students pursuant to HJR No. 199 (1994).

3. Determine the effects of tracking and the use of current assessment tools and criteria on the underrepresentation of such students in advanced level and gifted education programs.

4. Examine the funding mechanism for gifted education programs, giving particular attention to the need for accountability in the use of state funds for gifted education.

5. Identify areas of the state in which gifted minority and low-income students are underserved and the reasons therefor.

6. Determine appropriate alternatives for the follow-up of such students after they leave high school.

7. Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the current administrative and organizational structure for gifted education programs, including the state and local advisory boards.

8. Identify and recommend ways to remove barriers to identifying and serving more underserved gifted students.

9. Review and recommend such other related matters as the joint subcommittee may deem appropriate.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The Department of Education shall provide technical assistance for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance in the manner deemed appropriate by the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$7,250. An estimated \$500 is allocated for materials. Such expenses shall be funded from the operational budget of the Clerk of the House of Delegates.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1997 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.