

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1999 SESSION

## CHAPTER 501

*An Act to establish the Virginia Gifted Education Consortium.*

[S 1200]

Approved March 27, 1999

Whereas, the federal Gifted and Talented Children's Act, P.L. 95-561, as amended, and state law and regulations governing gifted education in Virginia require the early identification of gifted students and also require that an appropriate and differentiated instructional program be provided such students; and

Whereas, there are many concerns and needs in gifted education, such as adequate funding, the program's governing structure, appropriate measures and tools used to identify gifted and talented students, professional staff development, equity with other educational programs, and diversity among students, teachers, and staff; and

Whereas, representatives of school divisions and professional associations in gifted education, parents, teachers, and students expressed to the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Educational Needs of Certain Underserved Students concerns regarding these issues and the necessity for improved inter-division collaboration, cooperation, and communication to address these issues collegially and to discuss matters of mutual interest; and

Whereas, the joint subcommittee believes that essential improvements in gifted education can be made, and problems are resolved best when persons of a common mission and purpose are allowed and encouraged to deliberate and explore their interests together; now, therefore,

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. § 1. Virginia Gifted Education Consortium established; members; duties; convening of consortium by Superintendent of Public Instruction; staff support.**

*A. With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, there is hereby established the Virginia Gifted Education Consortium to facilitate collaboration, cooperation, and communication among school divisions to address issues of mutual concern regarding gifted education. The consortium shall be composed of no more than twenty-six citizens, who shall serve on a voluntary basis, representative of participating school divisions, institutions of higher education, private schools, local gifted advisory boards, governor's schools, local gifted education programs, parents, educational research, professional organizations and associations for the gifted, and advocates for gifted education. Membership of the consortium shall consist of the following: three representatives of participating local school divisions; two representatives of institutions of higher education; one representative of the Virginia Council on Private Education; two representatives of professional organizations and associations for the gifted; two professionals conducting research related to gifted and talented students and staff development; three licensed teachers, one of whom shall be an early childhood or elementary school teacher and one of whom shall be a secondary school teacher; two school administrators, one of whom shall be an elementary school administrator; two guidance counselors, one of whom shall be a secondary school guidance counselor assigned to a gifted education program or a regional academic year governor's school; four parents, one of whom shall be the parent of a gifted or talented elementary school student, one of whom shall be the parent of a gifted or talented secondary school student, one of whom shall be the parent of a special-needs gifted or talented student, and one of whom shall be the parent of a gifted or talented minority student traditionally unidentified for gifted education programs; three representatives of local gifted advisory committees; and two representatives each of the summer residential governor's schools and the regional academic year governor's schools.*

*Such volunteer representatives shall be selected from among nominations by teachers, administrators, parents, professional organizations and associations for the gifted, local gifted advisory committees, counselors, institutions of higher education, and other advocates of gifted education to the division superintendent of the local school division. Upon receipt of such nominations, the division superintendent shall submit no more than ten recommendations and the qualifications of such persons to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall select twenty-six volunteer representatives, in accordance with this section. The Superintendent shall make such selections in a manner to ensure geographic and demographic representation.*

*B. The consortium shall:*

- 1. Encourage the early identification of gifted and talented students;*
- 2. Promote networking and the sharing of best practices among educators and school divisions;*
- 3. Monitor gifted education programs to ensure the delivery of an appropriate and differentiated instructional program that is in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing gifted education;*
- 4. Observe gifted education programs to ensure appropriate levels of qualified professional staff and*

*adequate funding to maintain facilities and a high-quality gifted education program;*

*5. Monitor the effect of the Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation on the statutory requirement for the early identification of gifted students and the delivery of an appropriate and differentiated instructional program;*

*6. Address the educational and support needs of all gifted students under federal law, particularly the needs of minority, poor, and special-needs students and those who demonstrate exceptional artistic, mechanical, technological, and other recognized abilities, to the same extent as the needs of students with exceptional cognitive abilities who are traditionally identified for gifted education programs;*

*7. Encourage, promote, and support full inclusion in gifted education programs to increase the representation of special-needs students and of racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse students, teachers, counselors, and administrators in such programs;*

*8. Encourage parental involvement in and generate community support for gifted education programs;*

*9. Develop and engage in joint ventures and research projects designed to address mutual problems shared by participating school divisions, and assist in the implementation of best practices, when appropriate;*

*10. Advocate for the needs of gifted and talented students, and the programs which serve them; and*

*11. Propose such changes as may be needed to ensure program quality, effectiveness, and diversity.*

*C. For the purpose of convening the consortium, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall issue a call for volunteer representatives to serve on the consortium, as provided in subsection A of this section. Upon the selection of the volunteer representatives, the Superintendent shall convene the initial meeting of the consortium, preside over the election of a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary for the consortium, and determine a meeting schedule for the consortium. The Superintendent shall designate staff of the Department of Education to observe the consortium's proceedings.*

**2. That this act shall expire on July 1, 2001.**