

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Article 14A as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/Art. 14A heading new)

ARTICLE 14A. GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

(105 ILCS 5/14A-5 new)

Sec. 14A-5. Applicability. This Article applies beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-10 new)

Sec. 14A-10. Legislative findings. The General Assembly finds the following:

(1) that gifted and talented children (i) exhibit high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas, (ii) possess an exceptional leadership potential, (iii) excel in specific academic fields, and (iv) have the potential to be influential in business, government, health care, the arts, and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment;

(2) that gifted and talented children require services and activities that are not ordinarily provided by schools; and

(3) that outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-15 new)

Sec. 14A-15. Purpose. The purpose of this Article is to provide encouragement, assistance, and guidance to school

districts in the development and improvement of educational programs for gifted and talented children as defined in Section 14A-20 of this Code. School districts shall continue to have the authority and flexibility to design education programs for gifted and talented children in response to community needs, but these programs must comply with the requirements established in Section 14A-30 of this Code by no later than September 1, 2006 in order to merit approval by the State Board of Education in order to qualify for State funding for the education of gifted and talented children, should such funding become available.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-20 new)

Sec. 14A-20. Gifted and talented children. For purposes of this Article, "gifted and talented children" means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-25 new)

Sec. 14A-25. Non-discrimination. Eligibility for participation in programs established pursuant to this Article shall be determined solely through identification of a child as gifted or talented. No program shall condition participation upon race, religion, sex, disability, or any factor other than the identification of the child as gifted or talented.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-30 new)

Sec. 14A-30. Local programs; requirements. In order for a local program for the education of gifted and talented children to be approved by the State Board of Education in order to qualify for State funding, if available, as of the beginning of

the 2006-2007 academic year, the local program must meet the following minimum requirements and demonstrate the fulfillment of these requirements in a written program description submitted to the State Board of Education by the local educational agency operating the program and modified if the program is substantively altered:

(1) The use of a minimum of 3 assessment measures used to identify gifted and talented children in each area in which a program for gifted and talented children is established, which may include without limitation scores on standardized achievement tests, observation checklists, portfolios, and currently-used district assessments.

(2) A priority emphasis on language arts and mathematics.

(3) An identification method that uses the definition of gifted and talented children as defined in Section 14A-20 of this Code.

(4) Assessment instruments sensitive to the inclusion of underrepresented groups, including low-income students, minority students, and English language learners.

(5) A process of identification of gifted and talented children that is of equal rigor in each area of aptitude addressed by the program.

(6) The use of identification procedures that appropriately correspond with the planned programs, curricula, and services.

(7) A fair and equitable decision-making process.

(8) The availability of a fair and impartial appeal process within the school, school district, or cooperative of school districts operating a program for parents or guardians whose children are aggrieved by a decision of the school, school district, or cooperative of school districts regarding eligibility for participation in a program.

(9) Procedures for annually informing the community at-large, including parents, about the program and the

methods used for the identification of gifted and talented children.

(10) Procedures for notifying parents or guardians of a child of a decision affecting that child's participation in a program.

(11) A description of how gifted and talented children will be grouped and instructed in order to maximize the educational benefits the children derive from participation in the program, including curriculum modifications and options that accelerate and add depth and complexity to the curriculum content.

(12) An explanation of how the program emphasizes higher-level skills attainment, including problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, and research skills, as embedded within relevant content areas.

(13) A methodology for measuring academic growth for gifted and talented children and a procedure for communicating a child's progress to his or her parents or guardian, including but not limited to, a report card.

(14) The collection of data on growth in learning for children in a program for gifted and talented children and the reporting of the data to the State Board of Education.

(15) The designation of a supervisor responsible for overseeing the educational program for gifted and talented children.

(16) A showing that the certified teachers who are assigned to teach gifted and talented children understand the characteristics and educational needs of children and are able to differentiate the curriculum and apply instructional methods to meet the needs of the children.

(17) Plans for the continuation of professional development for staff assigned to the program serving gifted and talented children.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-35 new)

Sec. 14A-35. Administrative functions of the State Board of

Education.

(a) The State Board of Education must designate a staff person who shall be in charge of educational programs for gifted and talented children. This staff person shall, at a minimum, (i) be responsible for developing an approval process for educational programs for gifted and talented children by no later than September 1, 2006, (ii) receive and maintain the written descriptions of all programs for gifted and talented children in the State, (iii) collect and maintain the annual growth in learning data submitted by a school, school district, or cooperative of school districts, (iv) identify potential funding sources for the education of gifted and talented children, and (v) serve as the main contact person at the State Board of Education for program supervisors and other school officials, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the education of gifted and talented children.

(b) Subject to the availability of funds for these purposes, the State Board of Education may perform a variety of additional administrative functions with respect to the education of gifted and talented children, including, but not limited to, supervision, quality assurance, compliance monitoring, and oversight of local programs, analysis of performance outcome data submitted by local educational agencies, the establishment of personnel standards, and a program of personnel development for teachers and administrative personnel in the education of gifted and talented children.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-40 new)

Sec. 14A-40. Advisory Council. There is hereby created an Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children to consist of 7 members appointed by the State Superintendent of Education. Upon initial appointment, 4 members of the Advisory Council shall serve terms through January 1, 2007 and 3 members shall serve terms through January 1, 2009. Thereafter, members shall serve 4-year terms. Upon the

expiration of the term of a member, that member shall continue to serve until a replacement is appointed. The Council shall meet at least 3 times each year. The Council shall organize with a chairperson selected by the State Superintendent of Education. Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for their travel to and from meetings and other reasonable expenses in connection with meetings if approved by the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education shall consider recommendations for membership on the Council from organizations of educators and parents of gifted and talented children and other groups with an interest in the education of gifted and talented children. The members appointed shall be residents of the State and be selected on the basis of their knowledge of, or experience in, programs and problems of the education of gifted and talented children.

The State Superintendent of Education shall seek the advice of the Council regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board relating to the education of gifted and talented children. The staff person designated pursuant to subsection (a) of Section 14A-35 of this Code shall serve as the State Board of Education's liaison to the Council. The State Board of Education shall provide necessary clerical support and assistance in order to facilitate meetings of the Council.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-45 new)

Sec. 14A-45. Grants for services and materials. Subject to the availability of categorical grant funding or other funding appropriated for such purposes, the State Board of Education shall make grants available to fund educational programs for gifted and talented children. A request-for-proposal process shall be used in awarding grants for services and materials, with carry over to the next fiscal year, under this Section. A proposal may be submitted to the State Board of Education by a school district, 2 or more cooperating school districts, a

county, 2 or more cooperating counties, or a regional office of education. The proposals shall include a statement of the qualifications and duties of the personnel required in the field of diagnostic, counseling, and consultative services and the educational materials necessary. Upon receipt, the State Board of Education shall evaluate the proposals in accordance with criteria developed by the State Board of Education that is consistent with this Article and shall award grants to the extent funding is available. Educational programs for gifted and talented children may be offered during the regular school term and may include optional summer programs. As a condition for State funding, a grantee must comply with the requirements of this Article.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-50 new)

Sec. 14A-50. Contracts for experimental projects and institutes. Subject to the availability of funds, the State Board of Education shall have the authority to enter into and monitor contracts with school districts, regional offices of education, colleges, universities, and professional organizations for the conduct of experimental projects and institutes, including summer institutes, in the field of education of gifted and talented children as defined in Section 14A-20 of this Code. These projects and institutes shall be established in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education. Prior to entering into a contract, the State Board of Education shall evaluate the proposal as to the soundness of the design of the project or institute, the probability of obtaining productive outcomes, the adequacy of resources to conduct the proposed project or institute, and the relationship of the project or institute to other projects and institutes already completed or in progress. The contents of these projects and institutes must be designed based on standards adopted by professional organizations for gifted and talented children.

(105 ILCS 5/14A-55 new)

Sec. 14A-55. Rulemaking. The State Board of Education shall have the authority to adopt all rules necessary to implement and regulate the provisions of this Article.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.