



# A CALL TO ACTION:

Supporting Equity, Diversity, and Access for Gifted Students



## THIS DOCUMENT

Society continues to become more diverse. For that reason, it is critical that we find and develop the gifts and talents of all children and youth in our nation. Equity, diversity, access, and excellence are essential to high-level academic achievement. Diversity has been a topic of discussion in America for decades. Embedded in discussions of equity, diversity, access, and excellence are race, culture, class, ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation, linguistic differences, and learning differences. All of these can be represented within students with multiple exceptionalities as well.



This resource presents key data points, recommendations, resources to learn more, and research references in each of the six action areas. Developing the strengths of all gifted and talented and high ability learners requires purposeful actions by all stakeholders to ensure a bright future for our nation and our world.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



After earning a certificate, licensure, or endorsement in gifted education, educational professionals typically participate in annual professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and enhance results for students with gifts and talents. A major goal is to bring awareness to disparities in identification and services and actions to overcome them. Ideally, preservice teachers and all other educators would be offered similar professional learning since these students are gifted and talented all day long, every day.

## EQUITABLE ACCESS



Despite considerable academic conversation and study, underrepresentation of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically different (RCELD) students and those with multiple exceptionalities (2e) persists in gifted and talented services and advanced courses. While a few programs across the country are making strides in this area, the problem continues to be pervasive, and the performance divide is growing.

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## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION



The initials RCELD refer to students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically different – all historically underserved groups of children in the educational system of the United States (Artiles et al., 2010). They include students who are Black, Latinx, and Native American descent; English Learners; and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Their academic achievement in gifted services relies on instructional and curricular support provided by classroom teachers. RCELD students and students with multiple exceptionalities (2e) need curriculum and instruction that develop and hone their strengths. Current research, action steps, and resources can be used to incorporate culturally responsive curriculum and instructional support for diverse populations receiving gifted services.

## RESEARCH IN EQUITY AND DIVERSITY



Equity and diversity in gifted education are currently in the limelight as states are restructuring or even eliminating gifted education services altogether. Claims that services are inequitable and facilitate racial and ethnic segregation in education are the crux of the issue. Misdiagnosis and underidentification of children and youth with gifts and talents, in general, occurs for many reasons and is especially prevalent in those potential gifted learners from RCELD populations or with multiple exceptionalities. Dreilienger (2019) reported that “in addition to the 3.3 million U.S. public school children identified as gifted, there are as many as 3.6 million gifted children being overlooked in school” (para 1).

## PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Potential giftedness in racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically different (RCELD) children as well as children with multiple exceptionalities (2e) are often overlooked or misinterpreted (Henfield et al., 2014). As a parent, then, being aware of common gifted characteristics is especially important (Luckey Goudeock, 2019) as is understanding their nature and needs. Seminal research by Dr. Mary Frasier and her colleagues at the University of Georgia explain how traits and behaviors can look different in different populations (Frasier et al., 1995). Parent and community members need to understand the nature and needs of RCELD and 2e children in order to partner with schools.

## POLICY



Effective policies can make a significant impact on closing Excellence Gaps and increasing access so that students from all populations can thrive. States and districts that have implemented specific policies to address access have seen marked progress toward their goals in advancing equitable access to students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically different (RCELD) or have multiple exceptionalities (2e) (Patrick et al., 2020).

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