

# **A Culturally Responsive Equity-Based Bill of Rights for Gifted Students of Color**

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The authors of this **Bill of Rights for Gifted Students of Color** have extensive experience and expertise in gifted education and multicultural education. We are leading Black scholars in gifted education with an individual and collective mission that is equity-oriented and multicultural/culturally responsive. We have written and provided mentoring, teaching, advising, leadership, and professional development in gifted education on behalf of gifted students of color at professional organizations around the world, such as the National Association for Gifted Children and Council for Exceptional Children - the leading U.S. organizations in both gifted education and special education, specifically subgroups devoted to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We have authored and published in gifted education and multicultural journals, books, and a host of other scholarly, grassroots, and social media outlets. The sections are not mutually exclusive but, instead, represent a culturally and equity grounded holistic approach to do what is necessary to desegregate gifted education and advanced learner programs to support and advocate for students of color. We are honored to present this culturally responsive and equity driven Bill of Rights for gifted students of color.

NOTE: The term ‘educator’ is used in the broadest and most comprehensive sense, which includes teachers, administrators, coordinators, counselors, and school psychologists.

## **I. ADVOCACY and ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to all gifted education policies and procedures grounded in equity and inclusion
- The right to an administrative structure committed to hiring and retaining gifted teachers of color

(Ford, Dickson, Lawson Davis, Trotman Scott, Grantham)

- The right to be served by educators devoted to recruiting and retaining students of color in gifted education programs
- The right to be served by educators committed to removing barriers to accessing gifted education services
- The right to state and district policies that require educators to be formally prepared/trained in gifted education
- The right to state and district policies that require educators to be formally trained in culturally relevant and rigorous curriculum and pedagogy
- The right to have gifted students of color communities fully engaged with educators in collaborative advocacy processes
- The right to a family and community advocacy group that represents their culture, background, and experiences
- The right to an administrative structure that seeks funding for gifted programs and services in all federally funded programs - particularly Title I, II, III and IV
- The right to a guarantee that all equity data are inclusive of opportunities, access and support within Consolidated States' plans. This includes the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plans (and future legislation), as well as state level equity plans

## **II. ACCESS to PROGRAMMING and SERVICES**

### **Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to participate in gifted education programs and services, including Advanced Placement, accelerated, magnet, early college, and other programs for advanced students/learners
- The right to equitable access to gifted education programs and services
- The right to access all district, regional and state level services that nurture their giftedness across all domains and content areas
- The right to be served in their area(s) of gifts and talents
- The right to access gifted and talented before school, after school, Saturday morning, and summer programs
- The right to participate in college awareness and career development programs at institutions of higher education, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- The right to the development and implementation of general and gifted program policies that are equity-based
- The right to be assessed with tools and practices that reduce and/or eliminate bias in traditional assessment tools and practices

- The right to be assessed for gifted education potential even if they have been referred for and served in special education (i.e., thrice exceptional - students of color who have gifted and special education needs)
- The right to free or reduced fee gifted education programs and services

### **III. GIFTED PROGRAM EVALUATION and ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to district, regional, and state program assessments conducted every 3-5 years by external and culturally competent program evaluators with gifted education expertise
- The right to annual reports to the community that reveal the “equity goal” for gifted education and all advanced programs and services
- The right to annual equity goals and objectives for district, regional, and state programs.
- The right to teachers who engage in continuous and systematic professional learning experiences in cultural competency and multicultural education
- The right to a program philosophy/mission/belief statement that explicitly addresses the needs of gifted students of color

### **IV. GIFTED EDUCATION EVALUATION and ASSESSMENT**

**Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to a culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse/different gifted education assessment committee
- The right to general education, special education, pre-service, and current professionals trained and dedicated to recognizing and valuing their expressions of gifts and talents
- The right to be evaluated and identified using multiple criteria
- The right to be evaluated in multimodal and multi-dimensional ways
- The right to be assessed with non-biased tests and instruments for screening and identification
- The right to be assessed with non-verbal tests for screening and identification
- The right to be evaluated by bilingual test examiners (e.g., school psychologists)
- The right to be assessed by tests and instruments in their predominant or preferred language
- The right to be assessed by tests and instruments translated into their primary or preferred language
- The right to be assessed with culturally normed checklists
- The right to be evaluated with tools re-normed to represent their cultural experiences and realities

- The right to be evaluated by tests and instruments normed on students of color for screening and identification
- The right to be assessed by tests and instructions normed locally
- The right to educators who adhere to official testing and assessment policies and procedures

## **V. EDUCATORS**

### **Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to pre-service and current educators who are unbiased and hold culturally responsive philosophies
- The right to pre-service and current educators who are committed to becoming culturally competent
- The right to pre-service and current educators who are committed to gifted education
- The right for pre-service and current educators to be trained in multicultural education *and* gifted education
- The right to a racially diverse/different pre-service and current gifted education teaching force
- The right to have access to pre-service and current educators of color and members of their community who represent and can advocate for their interests, needs, and potential
- The right to pre-service and current educators who have bilingual training and credentials

## **VI. CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION**

### **Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to culturally relevant curriculum and instruction
- The right to authentic and multicultural content in all content areas
- The right to rigorous multicultural curriculum and materials that reflect their cultural, racial, and linguistic background and heritage
- The right to rigorous and authentic multicultural literature reflective of all cultures
- The right to curricula that promotes cultural, racial, and linguistic pride
- The right to their views being encouraged and honored rather than silenced
- The right to curricula that will prepare them to be globally competitive and knowledgeable of world cultures
- The right to program experiences that allow international travel and virtual engagement with their peers around the world

## **VII. SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL**

### **Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to supportive services and programs by school counselors trained in multicultural counseling (theories, methods, strategies)
- The right to counselors familiar with and skilled in racial identity theories
- The right to counselors who understand and promote racial identity development
- The right to counselors and teachers who understand the unique challenges of being a gifted student of color
- The right to pre-service educators, current educators and counselors formally trained in the socio-emotional needs of gifted children of color
- The right to counselors who understand the relationship between racial identity and achievement
- The right to interact and be educated with peers from similar cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds
- The right to academic support when they underachieve, fail, and/or make mistakes
- The right to understand the area(s) in which they are gifted and talented
- The right to be taught how to self-advocate to increase their access to appropriate instructional and support services

## **VIII. FAMILIES and COMMUNITIES**

### **Gifted students of color have:**

- The right to educators who value the importance of their families feeling welcome in schools
- The right to educators who collaborate with their families and communities
- The right to educators who provide professional development to families to strengthen advocacy for their children
- The right to have community leaders (e.g., faith leaders, community center leaders) who know and understand them in different contexts involved in the referral, identification and service delivery process
- The right to have their families assist others in the community with understanding the benefits of gifted education programs and services
- The right to have their families serve as 'cultural agents' to inform educators and mediate the cultural mismatch that exists between their communities and dominant culture school personnel

(Ford, Dickson, Lawson Davis, Trotman Scott, Grantham)

- The right for schools to recruit and engage members of their communities who have been successful to serve in the critical role of mentoring
- The right for administrative structures to respect the norms, traditions and culture of communities of color when planning and conducting events



## RESOURCES

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