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New Report Finds States Underprepared to Support Talent Development of Disadvantaged Students

Recommendations Mirror NAGC Policies & Provisions of TALENT Act

WASHINGTON (March 31, 2015) – The [National Association for Gifted Children](#) (NAGC), the nation’s leading advocate for high-achieving and high-potential students, applauded a new report issued today by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation that awards dismal grades to most states for their policies to support high-potential students from disadvantaged settings.

[*Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students*](#) is the latest study of the chasm between high-achieving students from disadvantaged settings and their more affluent peers, a gulf that has been dubbed the Excellence Gap. Following an analysis of nearly 20 indicators, the report’s authors provided letter grades to each state on its policies to support advanced learners and the outcomes for those students.

On state policies to support advanced students, six states – Texas, Minnesota, Colorado, Ohio, North Carolina and Alabama – earned the top letter grade of a B-. About a quarter of the states earned Ds and about 20 pulled Cs when it comes to policies in place to support low-income, advanced learners. Results for the performance of these students were nearly as dismal with a half-dozen states earning Bs and the rest receiving Cs and Ds.

“Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities quantifies in blunt language all educators can understand the extent of our neglect when it comes to supporting high-achieving and high-potential students, particularly those students from disadvantaged backgrounds.” NAGC President Tracy L. Cross, Executive Director of the [Center for Gifted Education at William & Mary](#), said.

“The findings provide state leaders with the opportunity to take a comprehensive approach to developing high levels of talent across all populations of students, particularly those from disadvantaged settings. I urge state legislators, school chiefs, board of education members and others to move with all speed to knock down impediments and create opportunities to maximize our academic talent,” Cross added.

The report complements NAGC’s work, notably the biannual *State of the States* review of gifted education policies and funding and echoes the organization’s recommendations for greater public transparency and accountability of states and districts when it comes to the performance of our top students as well as for better preparation and training for teachers working with such learners.

The recommendations also include a call to remove impediments, such as barriers to early entrance into Kindergarten, dual enrollment in middle school and high school and early graduation, actions NAGC has urged state legislators to take.

“As Congress works to rewrite and update the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, NAGC urges them to keep these findings top of mind and to include recommendations from the TALENT Act about increased public transparency and accountability reforms, along with improved teacher training, to make sure we stop overlooking this critically important student population,” Cross said.