



*Illinois Association
for Gifted Children*

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Aurora, Illinois

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Dear Senate Executive Committee,

The Illinois Association for Gifted Children agrees with the overall objectives of HB2170 to promote equity in education, accountability, early learning, social and emotional development and quality preparation of educators. However, we do have concerns regarding the section of the bill dealing with accelerated placement, gifted students and dual credit courses. As it is the mission of our organization to support children with advanced learning needs from all cultures and backgrounds, we welcome any opportunity to assist in addressing the concerns stated below:

Addressing Barriers and Gaps in Advanced Programming, 14-A Gifted Definition, 105 ILCS 5/14A-10(4), p. 282; 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(5)

- IAGC would be pleased to work with Leader Lightford, the Legislative Black Caucus and the General Assembly regarding the use of evidence-based practices to support equity and inclusion in advanced and gifted services. Examples of statutory provisions to be developed include the following:
 - 105 ILCS 5/14A-10(4) mentions "more" must be done to eliminate the barriers to access. Districts will need specific directions on how this should be accomplished.
 - 105 ILCS 5/14-A-32(b)(5) refers to a "process for the school district to review and utilize disaggregated data on participation in an accelerated program to address gaps among demographic groups..." Strategies to address gaps are undefined but could include preparatory programs in K-8 to prepare students to be successful in advanced coursework, early enrichment to address gaps at school entry, early and continuous universal screening, professional learning for educators to identify and support advanced learners in all classrooms.

Accelerated Placement Act, 105 ILCS 5/14A-32 (a-5), p.283

- This section provides for automatic enrollment into the "next level of advanced coursework" if students meet or exceed State standards in English language arts, mathematics, or science..." With respect to automatic enrollment, especially with respect to students who "meet," but do not "exceed" state standards, our concerns include:
 - "Advanced Coursework" is undefined, making it difficult for schools to implement. "Acceleration" refers to placement of children in educational settings "with a curriculum that

is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the child.” Some advanced courses may be rigorous, but not accelerated. Many children meet grade level state standards and may be ready for rigorous coursework, but may not be prepared to accelerate beyond the grade level content. (For example, math requires mastery of sequential skills.)

- Courses should be assigned based upon a child’s learning needs. This statute does not take into account that many students who have “met” state grade level standards may not have mastered prerequisites needed for success in a given course.
- In some high schools, placement in advanced programming based on state test scores might work well for providing access to advanced coursework and appropriate challenge. However, this may not be the case in all school environments. The use of local norms, multiple measures and pathways to identification, and universal screening should be explored to address barriers.
- The bill states students entering grade 12 who test at the meets and exceeds levels **shall** be enrolled in dual credit courses. Some districts, including many rural districts, may not have the staffing or resources to provide dual credit on their own. Specific provisions need to be in place as to how dual credit should be provided. Also, there are multiple options for advanced programming in addition to dual credit (such as AP courses).

Evidence Based Funding 105 ILCS 5/18-8.15 (b)(2)(M), p.236.

- We note that “gifted program investments” allocated under the EBF model through the adequacy target calculation are not specified as they are for all other groups listed. There is also no accountability for schools/districts to use these funds to serve advanced learners as exists for other groups. In a bill intended to promote equity and access in advanced programming, we suggest that this be examined and adjusted.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback and suggestions regarding HB 2170. Our comments and recommendations apply to Senate Amendments 1 and 2, which contain the same language on this subject matter.

For questions or comments, please contact Patricia Steinmeyer, Executive Director, IAGC at director@iagcgifted.org or 630-907-5047, or Phil Milsk, IAGC’s lobbyist, at philmilsk@hotmail.com, or 217-899-1566.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Association for Gifted Children

Submitted by:

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