

## Equitable Supports for Gifted and Talented Children Living in Poverty

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Children living in poverty are the most underrepresented group in gifted and talented programs. Nationally, “gifted and talented students who are living in poverty are 58% less likely to be formally identified by their schools... gifted and talented students of color are more than 250% less likely to be identified as gifted in school”. (Novak, 2023)

According to LEA reported data, economically disadvantaged and students who receive Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) continue to be two underserved groups in the state. The Maryland State Board of Education adopted a definition of “economically disadvantaged” for use in the accountability system at the [May 2018](#) meeting. For the accountability system, Maryland defines “economically disadvantaged” as any student identified as directly certified. Direct certification, synonymous with economically disadvantaged status, allows school systems to certify students as eligible for free meal benefits using participant data from other means-tested programs (as permitted), eliminating the need for an application.

All directly certified students are FARMS students. However, not all FARMS students are directly certified. FARMS reporting includes students who are eligible for free and/or reduced meals (whether or not they are directly certified).

### MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DIRECT CERTIFICATION

#### Categorical Eligibility by Direct Certification

Report a student as *categorically* eligible, by direct certification, and eligible to receive free school meals for categories 1.a-c noted below. In the case of 1.d. (Medicaid matching), the student may be determined as eligible for either free or reduced-price meals. This information is used when reporting “economically disadvantaged” as adopted by the State Board of Education.

Specifically, in Maryland, a school would identify a student under the direct certification process if the student meets at least one of the following criteria:

Confirmed participation in:

1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) -- offers nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families for the purchase of groceries;
2. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) -- a program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency through providing income support (Note: in Maryland this program is known as Temporary Cash Assistance or TCA);
3. Foster Child; or
4. Medicaid (new in 2022-2023)

#### Other Eligibility Categories

Students may also be identified as categorically eligible to receive free school meals for the following reasons.

1. Experiencing homelessness and on the local Homeless Liaison's List;
2. Migrant youth;
3. Runaway;
4. Head Start/Early Head Start/Even Start;
5. In a Residential Childcare Institution (ward of the State); or
6. Nonapplicant approved by local officials

"There are barriers to selection into gifted programs for students who are diverse, poor, or have other conditions masking their education needs." (Reynen et al., 2023)

When identifying advanced potential in students, teachers and leaders must take into consideration a child's environmental opportunities, in addition to their abilities, potential, and academic outcomes.

Possible identifying characteristics of gifted children living in poverty may include and are not limited to:

- Advanced language (casual register and non-verbal)
- Unusual and unexpected perspective
- Increased maturity and independence, due to responsibilities at home
- Sensitivity to justice and fairness issues
- Heightened sense of humor, may present as class clown or other attention seeking behavior
- Use of storytelling in causal and colorful ways
- Analytical thinking – ability to discern patterns in human behavior
- Independent and curious
- Asks questions focused on relationship
- Has extensive memory about people and conversations

Preferences and Inclinations:

- Visual-spatial learning
- Artistic, creative
- Leadership, hands-on, deeply concerned about family and community, kinesthetic learning, creative

It is essential that gifted students experiencing poverty, be taught by teachers who are trained in Gifted and Talented pedagogy and committed to confronting and disrupting the systems and structures that stand as a barrier to student growth and development. Those barriers include culturally biased perspectives, assessment measures, and deficit-based approaches to teaching and learning (Reynen et al., 2023).

Support children by explicitly developing their knowledge and practice of:

- Formal register/academic language
- Creative and critical thinking
- Asset-based pedagogy
- Cognitive processes
- Problem-solving skills and inquiry-based learning
- Social and emotional management skills

Essential strategies for honoring and developing giftedness in students experiencing poverty include and are not limited to:

- Planning experiential lessons, that include field trips, related opportunities for enrichment, extension, and expansion of learning
- Specialized Enrichment Programs
  - [All About Learning](#)
  - [Envision – Leadership, Scholarship and Career Programs](#)
  - [Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics \(EYH\)](#)
  - [Play-Well TEKnologies](#)
  - [Smithsonian Associate Programs](#)
  - [Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center \(SEEC\)](#)
  - [Envision – National Youth Leadership Forums \(NYLF\)](#)
  - [SuperCamp – Quantum Learning \(Multiple Locations\)](#)
  - [SIG Online Learning Program](#)
  - [Art of Problem Solving Academy](#)
  - [PCS Edventures Online](#)
  - [Center for Talented Youth \(CTY\) Discovery Series – Johns Hopkins \(Baltimore, MD\)](#)
- Accessing, honoring, and building on current funds of knowledge
- Participation in a mentorship program

### **Expert videos**

[The Culture of Poverty](#)

[Learning Styles and Preferences](#)

### **Alternative assessments/Identification tools**

[Student Portfolios](#)

[HOPE Teacher Rating Scale](#)

Gifted Evaluation Scale, 3rd Edition (GES-3)

Gifted Rating Scales (GRS)

Sources:

[Webinar: What is 'Removing the Mask: Identifying and Serving Gifted Students from Poverty?'](#)

<https://educationaladvancement.org/grc/removing-the-mask-how-to-identify-and-develop-giftedness-in-students-from-poverty/>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kandice\\_sumner\\_how\\_america\\_s\\_public\\_schools\\_keep\\_kids\\_in\\_poverty?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kandice_sumner_how_america_s_public_schools_keep_kids_in_poverty?language=en)

Reynen, K., Round, P., & Subban, P. (2023). Gifted, disadvantaged, unseen: A scoping study of giftedness, disadvantage and cultural difference in young adult learners. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 7(1), 100477. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100477>

Novak, A. M. (2023). *Income, Inequity, and Intersectionality: Reaching Students that are Gifted and Talented and Living in Poverty*. <https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/3ckua>

Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Clarenbach, J. (n.d.). *Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537321.pdf>

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