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Lauren Firestone April 2, 2018

Creation of the Educational Meritocracy: *A Comparative Analysis of Plato's "Republic" and Georgia's Gifted Education Program*

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Abstract

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The education of the guardians in Plato's *Republic* exemplifies a strong system of education that is focused on the civic, moral, and intellectual training of the elites in society. This thesis highlights Plato's system of elite education in relation to the gifted education program present in Georgia's K-12 schools: both of which segregate certain individuals on behalf of their demonstrated potential and/or abilities. While Georgia's program does not seem to have any clear ideological or philosophical objectives at its foundation, it becomes clear that the strength of Plato's curriculum comes from its origin in defined goals and thoughtful reasoning. For this reason, I argue that Georgia ought to adapt many of the eligibility and curricular aims that are presented in Plato's *Republic*, as Plato's comprehensive education strives to create the sort of morally and philosophically developed leaders that would be extremely beneficial in a liberal democracy like America.

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Introduction

Plato's *Republic* presents a comprehensive system of character education that is often only discussed as an impractical philosophical exercise. His ideas seem far-fetched, grounded in moral propaganda, and fundamentally antithetical to any society that places value on the individual. As a result of these common criticisms, the aristocratic and meritocratic regime presented in the *Republic* may seem worlds apart from America's democratic society, making it easy to minimize the importance of Plato's system by considering it a mere thought experiment. Yet, scholars such as Julia Annas argue that many existing practices of America's education system are actually comparable to the Platonic ideal. Although the model of education set out in Plato's *Republic* may seem vastly different from the education system present in America's K-12 schools, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the potential places of comparison, as well as see how one could apply additional aspects of Plato's system to America's own educational system.

One of the biggest hurdles to overcome in this comparative exploration is the political dimension of these two respective societies. While America aims to be a democratic society that treats all citizens equally, Plato's attempt at creating the most ideal society is grounded in an initial selection of an elite class to receive the exceptional system of education. The children in this Kallipolis are segregated off from their peers at a young age because Socrates believes that "sound rearing and education, when they are preserved, produce good natures… and sound natures, in their turn receiving such an education, grow up still better than those before them".[1]

While this meritocratic division may seem incompatible with America's democratic society, it is actually something that already occurs within America's public school systems. As early as kindergarten, students in American public schools have the potential to be labeled as

[1] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 424a.

"gifted". Once they have this gifted status, these students become eligible for both additional services and funding that is not accessible to the rest of the student body. Because it is most appropriate to translate the ideas in Plato's *Republic* to a similarly meritocratic system, these two approaches to gifted education will therefore be the primary point of comparison between the educational systems. Specific attention will be given to analyzing the purpose and priorities of this gifted education, as to Plato, this education system would be a top priority of the state. Specific attention will be given to a discussion of the eligibility requirements as well as the training curriculum for this group of students, addressing the ideal human nature that is conducive to receiving this form of education, as well as the desired temperament that a student could achieve after receiving this carefully formulated education. These above choices are crucial to Plato when working through the design of the Kallipolis, and so their respective counterparts in America's K-12 education will be discussed in order to see the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches. Throughout this discussion, a return to a deeper philosophical question proposed by Julia Annas will be present: could an education based in a "receptiveness to accepted moral values" actually be conducive to producing the morally and philosophically minded individuals needed for a thriving democratic society?[2] There might be positive benefits for the individual and society if education prioritizes the development of a robust class of civically and morally engaged elites. This inquiry will ground the thesis in its stated purpose: to understand two distinct approaches to the childhood education of one's character, and see whether elements of Plato's education system are advantageous even within the context of liberal democracy like America.

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[2] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 90.

Chapter I: Gifted Education in Georgia

Although there is no requirement for gifted education in United States federal law, many state level governments have written provisions into their law that mandate the identification of students for gifted education programs in their K-12 schools. These provisions vary state by state, each containing unique requirements as to whether these programs will be fully funded, partially funded, or have no additional funding provided to schools by the state. In the United States, there are only four states that both mandate and fully fund gifted education: Florida, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Georgia.[3] This makes Georgia an interesting case study in relation to Plato because it seems that Georgia places a high priority on this aspect of education in relation to other states.

Although Georgia does not disclose all of its financial figures for gifted education in a single place, one can estimate a number of these figures by combining data figures from their FTE (full time equivalent, essentially meaning individual student) counts from 2017. I approximate that in 2017, Georgia spent $4,091.44 on education for each one of its gifted students. In order to arrive at this number, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) discloses that it has assigned a certain weight for each type of student, assessing that for every $1 spent on an average high school student (grades 9-12), a gifted student would have needed approximately $1.67.[4] Likewise, non-gifted students in grades 6-8 would have received $1.02, grades 4-5 received $1.04, grades 1-3 received $1.29, and non-gifted kindergarten students would have received $1.65.[5] The amount of spending seems to decrease as a student proceeds in non-gifted education, but interestingly enough begins at a peak of $1.65: exactly one cent less

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[3] "State Policies Database," *Davidson Institute*, accessed December 9, 2017.
[4] "FY2017 FTE Data Collection Program Codes and Weights" (Georgia Department of Education, Office of Technology Services—Technology Management, 2016), 3.
[5] Ibid.

than the highest amount of funding a student in gifted education would receive at any time in their education ($1.64). This demonstrates how Georgia perceives a need to allocate more money towards its gifted students at all points in their education, since the non-gifted kindergarten student (the most expensive age group of the non-gifted students) reaches the margin for gifted student spending, but ultimately receives a dollar amount lower than the gifted kindergarten student.

On the other hand, students who are at risk of not passing their grade level can receive more funding than gifted education students while in kindergarten through grade 5, but their funding decreases below that of a gifted education student when the at-risk student reaches middle and high school.[6] It is also important to note the presence of special education students in Georgia schools, as these are a unique class of students that receive different funding based on their classification level (they can be classified anywhere between special need levels I-V). This segregated data will not be included in the below chart, but will be discussed at a later point in this chapter. The remaining student data is summarized in Table 1, and has been ranked in ascending order in terms of spending priority:

[6] FY2017 FTE Data Collection Program Codes and Weights" (Georgia Department of Education, Office of Technology Services—Technology Management, 2016), 3.

Table 1: Funding Weights (per student)

Category/Program	**FY 2017 Weight**[7]	**Total per FTE Cost**[8]
Grades 9-12	1.0000	$2,463.43
Grades 6-8	1.0281	$2,532.64
Grades 4-5	1.0358	$2,551.74
Grades 1-3	1.2859	$3,167.66
Remedial Education (6-12)	1.3099	$3,226.97
Kindergarten	1.6532	$4,072.43
Gifted Education (K-12)	1.6609	$4,091.44
Grades 4-5 Early Intervention Program	1.7892	$4,407.67
Grades 1-3 Early Intervention Program	1.7955	$4,423.15
Kindergarten Early Intervention Program	2.0382	$5,021.01

In fiscal year 2017, there were 102,954 students labeled as gifted who were enrolled in Georgia's K-12 public schools, meaning that the state of Georgia spent approximately $421,230,114 on gifted education alone.[9] Since Georgia's state government is spending more than 400 million dollars each year to fund gifted education programs, it is important to step backwards and

[7] "FY2017 FTE Data Collection Program Codes and Weights" (Georgia Department of Education, Office of Technology Services—Technology Management, 2016), 3.
[8] "Weights for FTE Funding: FY 2017 QBE Reports"(Georgia Department of Education, Office of Technology Services—Technology Management 2016).
[9] "Earnings Sheet for FY 2017" (Georgia Department of Education, Office of Technology Services—Technology Management, 2016).

explore the reasons why the state allocates additional monetary resources for these specific students.

As mentioned previously, Georgia is one of four U.S. states that both mandates gifted education as well as allocates funding to fully support this program.

As defined through State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-2-.38:

> The GaDOE describes a gifted student as one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who need special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. The abilities manifest in a collection of traits, aptitudes and behaviors that, when taken together, are indicative of gifted potential. [10]

This definition alone highlights a number of important points about the state of gifted education in Georgia. Firstly, it points to the eligibility criteria by which students will be evaluated: mental ability, creativity, motivation, and achievement. Based on this language, it can be assumed that the SBOE was looking towards the popular Renzulli model of gifted education. Joseph Renzulli calls specific attention to the importance of definition, believing that "the way in which one views giftedness will be a primary factor in both constructing a plan for identification and in providing services that are relevant to the characteristics that brought certain youngsters to our attention in the first place".[11] For this reason, it is important to try and decipher the purpose of gifted education in Georgia, as this should be intricately linked to the definition provided by the SBOE. Amongst the spectrum of definitions of giftedness, there are two primary approaches to understanding how giftedness manifests itself in students. The first approach understands

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[10] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students" (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).

[11] Joseph S. Renzulli, "The Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: Its Implications for Understanding the Nature of Innovation", in *The International Handbook on Innovation*, ed. Larisa Shavinina (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2003): 79-96.

giftedness as academic achievement and ability as it is seen in the top 1% of students, while the second approach consider elements such as student performance in art, writing, and leadership.[12]

The first widespread understanding of giftedness is one that Renzulli refers to as "schoolhouse giftedness." which can be found in the kind of individual who generally succeeds in the classroom and on standardized tests. These individuals "have the ability to cover regular curricular material at advanced rates and levels of understanding," and are therefore best trained through "acceleration techniques that respect the individual differences that are clearly evident from scores yielded by cognitive ability tests".[13]

The second prevailing approach to defining giftedness is known as "creative-productive" giftedness, which involves students who are not necessarily the top performers in the classroom, but instead are those whose "[original thoughts], ideas, and work will actually have an impact on others and cause change".[14] These individuals generally possess "scarce" inventive talents that help move society forward, as well as can possess "surplus" talents that when developed, can lead to the "rare ability to elevate people's sensibility and sensitivities through the production of great art, literature, music, and philosophy".[15] These sort of talents are less quantifiable than the gifted behaviors generally exemplified in "schoolhouse gifted" individuals, since they are more subjective and cannot necessarily be measured through one's academic achievement in the classroom. While both of these approaches to defining gifted students have been seen throughout the history of gifted education, Renzulli emphasizes how the definition of giftedness that is chosen should affect the way in which the gifted program is developed and structured. For this

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[12] Joseph S. Renzulli, "The Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: Its Implications for Understanding the Nature of Innovation", in *The International Handbook on Innovation*, ed. Larisa Shavinina (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2003), 79-96.
[13] Ibid., 81.
[14] Ibid., 82.
[15] Ibid., 82.

reason, it is helpful to explore which approach Georgia might be using, as it may provide deeper insight into how its gifted curriculum was designed.

Although Georgia does not directly state which kind of gifted individual is valued in their educational system, Georgia's state law can help decipher whether they prioritize developing "schoolhouse gifted" or "creative-productive" individuals through their gifted programs. Overall, it seems that the definition that Georgia has adopted is relatively inconsistent when it comes to declaring its ideological ties, which leads one to question how deeply the SBOE thought about these procedures. This conflict can be seen though its number of eligibility categories, its eligibility cutoff scores, and in the presumed purpose of gifted education. In terms of eligibility requirements, the SBOE presents two possible ways that a child can be determined gifted eligible. The first (option A) is much closer to the "schoolhouse-gifted" approach, focusing only on mental ability and achievement. Option A requires students in grades K-2 to perform at the 99th percentile on a nationally normed mental ability test in achievement, and the 90th percentile on a nationally normed achievement test. Similarly, students in grades 3-12 must perform at the 96th percentile in mental ability, and 90th percentile in achievement: each of which are extremely stringent cutoff scores.[16] The second option (option B) allows a little more leeway, requiring students in grades K-12 to achieve three out of four performance benchmarks: the 96th percentile on a nationally normed mental ability test, 90th percentile on a nationally normed achievement test, 90th percentile on a nationally normed creativity test, or 90th percentile on a motivation scoring assessment.[17] Within Option B, there is also a non-standardized test option requiring a superior performance rating of 90/100 from a panel of three of more qualified evaluators, that

[16] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students: Evaluation and Eligibility Chart" (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).
[17] Ibid.

can be used in the achievement, creativity, or motivation categories.[18] Lastly, students under Option B can substitute a two-year average of a 3.5 GPA in a core subject for any of the other eligibility requirements present in the motivation category.[19] Option B allows students who would not necessarily be considered "schoolhouse gifted" to enter the program, as Option B decreases the necessary cutoff score so long as students can demonstrate the presence of other valuable skill-sets such as creativity and motivation. Interestingly enough, these skill sets nicely correspond with the two ways in which a student can exhibit "creative-productive" behaviors. A student who displays motivation may have the talents necessary to move society forward and make social change (what Renzulli classified as "scarce talents"), while a student who displays creativity is likely exhibiting the "surplus talent" which Renzulli thought could be seen in creative actions through art, literature, music, or philosophy.[20]

Since Georgia has essentially presented both "schoolhouse gifted" and "creative-productive" students with processes to be accepted into the same gifted curriculum, this creates an initial place of ideological confusion. One therefore cannot simply assume whether Georgia values the "schoolhouse giftedness," "creative-productive," or some sort of fusion approach to gifted education, and so it becomes important to look towards other aspects of the program to determine its intended purpose. When looking at the intended outcome of Georgia's gifted education, state law requires that the local boards of education develop a differentiated gifted curriculum that incorporates the current SBOE curriculum while adjusting the "content, teaching

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[18] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students: Evaluation and Eligibility Chart" (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).
[19] Ibid.
[20] Joseph S. Renzulli, "The Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: Its Implications for Understanding the Nature of Innovation", in *The International Handbook on Innovation*, ed. Larisa Shavinina (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2003), 79-96.

strategies, and expectations of student mastery" to the level appropriate for a gifted student.[21] The resource manual provided by the GaDOE suggests that Georgia's schools most often use the differentiation technique of acceleration, referring to the "compacting and reorganizing [of] curriculum by unit or year, grade skipping, telescoping two years into one, dual enrollment in high school, as well as more personalized approaches such as tutorials and mentorships that would also be sensitive to the advanced starting level of these learners".[22] This curriculum compacting is exactly the sort of curriculum modification that Renzulli recommends for programs that strive to develop "schoolhouse gifted" individuals.[23]

There are a few places where one can draw similarities between Georgia's gifted program and the language that Renzulli uses to describe "schoolhouse-gifted" individuals. According to Renzulli, research on schoolhouse giftedness suggests that "it exists in varying degrees; it can be identified through standardized assessment techniques; and [schools] should do everything in [their] power to make appropriate modifications for students who have [this] ability to cover regular curriculum material at advanced rates and levels of understanding".[24]

Firstly, just as the schoolhouse giftedness approach believes in the validity of standardized testing, the GaDOE's primary means of assessing gifted eligibility categories is through a standardized test. Additionally, both approaches suggest that gifted education is something necessary based on learning capacity, as Georgia defines gifted students as "needing special instruction and/or ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with [their]

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[21] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students" (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).
[22] "Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services 2017-18" (Georgia Department of Education, 2017), 19.
[23] Joseph S. Renzulli, "The Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: Its Implications for Understanding the Nature of Innovation", in *The International Handbook on Innovation*, ed. Larisa Shavinina (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2003), 79-96.
[24] Ibid., 81.

abilities."[25] This program is not portrayed as something beneficial for the development of society (as would be a necessary component for a program developing the "creative-productive" individuals). Instead, it contains language to suggest that Georgia's gifted program is designed in a way almost analogous to special needs education, as both programs are justified on the basis of the individual's perceived ability needs.

Historically, the connections between special education and gifted education have also been a point of scholarly research. James Borland argues that there has been a "evolution of a group of professionals who propose a taxonomy of giftedness that parallels the disability categories of mild, moderate, severe, and profound mental retardation: clearly an extension of the IQ based definition [of a child's abilities]" in a way similar to the "schoolhouse giftedness" approach.[26] Interestingly enough, in the GaDOE's earning sheets for FY 2017, the special education program is categorized into "students with disabilities category I, II, III, IV, and V".[27] Right below that is "gifted student category VI": interestingly, the only other category on the earning sheet that is listed with a roman numeral.[28]

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[25] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students" (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).
[26] James Borland, "Rethinking Gifted Education," *Education and Psychology of the Gifted Series,* (2003), 78.
[27] "Earnings Sheet for FY 2017" (Georgia Department of Education, FY 2017 QBE Reports, 2016).
[28] Ibid.

Table 2: Screen capture from the GaDOE's 2017 Earnings Sheets

School System: State

DIRECT INSTRUCTIONAL COST	FTE	SALARY
Kindergarten Pgm	103,418	91,308,801
Kindergarten Early Intr Pgm	18,298	21,075,810
Primary Grade(1-3) Pgm	318,407	225,604,694
Primary Grd Early Intrv(1-3) Pgm	47,593	50,692,904
Upper Elementary Grd(4-5) Pgm	198,634	107,349,737
UppElem Grd Early Intrv(4-5)	31,063	33,097,689
Middle Grade(6-8) Pgm	0	0
Middle School(6-8) Pgm	311,527	190,617,967
High School Gen Educ(9-12)	349,270	177,327,217
CTAE(9-12) PGM	76,694	44,726,740
Students with Disab Cat I	23,116	31,426,074
Students with Disab Cat II	10,050	17,063,349
Students with Disab Cat III	59,346	130,199,570
Students with Disab Cat IV	11,236	41,233,248
Students with Disab Cat V	15,040	20,874,519
Gifted Student Category VI	105,701	96,871,261
Remedial Education Pgm	25,005	18,474,369
Alternate Education Pgm	20,105	15,133,506
Eng.Spkrs.of Other Lang.(ESOL)	20,211	31,401,548
Spec Ed. Itinerant		
Spec Ed. Supplemental Speech		
TOTAL DIRECT INSTRUC.	1,744,714	1,344,479,003

The above chart from the GaDOE suggests that the gifted and special education programs must be tied together in some facet of Georgia's educational structure. This is likely because of their presumed relationships to IQ and ability, in a way that would be entirely consistent with the "schoolhouse gifted" approach to gifted education. As a result of all the above reasons, it may seem that the curricular design of Georgia's program places a primary focus on the development of "schoolhouse gifted" individuals. Yet, the program still seems to be selecting for a number of "creative-productive" individuals through the Option B eligibility criteria of "motivation" and "creativity." Similarly, it seems that it would be in the state's economic interest to privilege these

"creative-productive" individuals, as this sort of gifted education would "increase society's supply of persons who [would] help to solve the problems of contemporary civilization by becoming innovators and producers of knowledge and art rather than mere consumers of existing information."[29] There is no discernable reason why Georgia seems to have an eligibility process that fuses together these two approaches while simultaneously possessing a curriculum that seems to fit many of the requirements of a strictly "schoolhouse gifted" approach to gifted education.

It is ultimately not clear why this ideological confusion arises. It is possible that Georgia's law came from a poorly researched compilation of ideas that were subsequently put into law by politicians who were not deeply committed to one of these two ideologies, as evidenced by this lack of clear statement of purpose. Georgia is allocating additional resources to segregate certain students because of their demonstrated promise, but it is never made clear why these students deserve this additional attention. This approach to gifted education is fundamentally different from the one taken in Plato's *Republic,* where Socrates and his interlocutors devote substantial effort towards designating the purpose and structure of the elite class's education. For this reason, it is worth examining the *Republic* as a means of reflecting on whether Georgia uses appropriate criteria when selecting and training their own educational elites.

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[29] Joseph S. Renzulli, "The Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: Its Implications for Understanding the Nature of Innovation", in *The International Handbook on Innovation*, ed. Larisa Shavinina (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2003): 82.

Chapter II: Plato's Eligibility Requirements for the Gifted Class

When working through the central question of the *Republic*, 'what is justice,' education and the elite gifted class quickly become a central part of this inquiry. In a way almost opposite from Georgia's gifted education system, it is almost impossible to understand the system of Plato's gifted education system without understanding its philosophical purpose and intended goals. For this reason, it is helpful to keep in mind the model of justice that Plato proposes at the end of Book IV, as this model is the intellectual mooring point that ultimately drives the creation of Plato's Kallipolis. This model will be a reference point throughout the essay, and will be explained in detail as the thesis progresses:

Table 3: Plato's Model for Justice

Parts of the Just City	**Parts of the Just Soul (Plato's Tripartite Theory of Soul)**	**Eligibility Traits**	**Corresponding Virtue**
Producers	Appetitive, Desiring	Appetitive	Moderation
Warrior Guardians	Spirited (Thumos)	Spiritedness	Courage
Ruler Guardians	Rational, Reasoning	Lover of knowledge (philosophic nature)	Wisdom

When first discussing what justice in the city might look like, an elite class of warriors quickly comes to the center of the discussion. This class, known as the guardians, is tasked with defending the people of this city, and should they demonstrate enough promise at the end of their

education, are slated to become the rulers of society. Regarding the qualities for the nature of the proper guardian, Iakovos Vasiliou argues that:

> The emphasis is importantly on the future: these are the qualities a person must have who aims at being "fine and good" down the road. Thus they are necessary but not sufficient conditions for acquiring excellence; no one is simply born fine and good. It will be the task of a proper education and upbringing, a task that occupies a significant portion of the *Republic,* to instill such excellence in individuals with the appropriate nature.[30]

An individual's "nature" therefore becomes immensely important during the initial stages of eligibility, as Plato understands that the outcome of a task will become "more plentiful, finer, and easier, when one man, exempt from other tasks, does one thing according to [his] nature."[31] When seeing the positive advantages of aligning an individual's duty with his or her natural abilities, specialization based on class logically arises in the progressive development of Plato's just society. This specialization based on nature becomes of unique importance for the guardian class, since their natures must somehow be aligned with their assigned task of wholehearted defense and devotion to the city.[32] Plato is essentially working backwards from what he sees as the ultimate aim for these individuals before beginning the design of the curriculum. He understands that these individuals do not yet possess the qualities for true guardianship, but Plato is instead looking for qualities that indicate potential for later guardianship. Plato therefore proceeds to discuss what sort of nature this is that is best suited to complete the tasks of the elite guardian class.

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[30] Iakovos Vasiliou, *Aiming at Virtue in Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 215.
[31] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 370c.
[32] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 62.

In a way unique from the lower moneymaking producer classes, the warrior-guardians do not merely possess an "appetitive" nature, but also demonstrate a "spirited" nature.[33] In order to defend the city, the guardians must have the capacity to be strong both physically as well as mentally. Plato likens this nature to that of a "noble dog": possessing an "irresistible and unbeatable spirit [that's] presence makes every soul fearless and invincible in the face of everything".[34] This warrior spirit is desired in the guardian class, as the city needs individuals like this who are naturally inclined to defend their citizens against any and all outsiders.

While guardians must possess a nature capable of attacking against all strangers, they must also possess this same quality in reverse. The noble dog is not simply cruel to strangers, but is simultaneously well disposed to people it is familiar with. In both cases, the noble dog does not consider the character of the citizens it is attacking or defending. At first glance, one may find this quality unappealing, and believe it a sort of "blind following" of orders.[35] Interestingly enough, Plato considers it a trait indicating the presence of a "philosophic nature": "distinguishing friendly from hostile by nothing other than having learned the one and being ignorant of the other… a lover of learning since it defines what's its own and what's alien by knowledge and ignorance."[36] If these true guardians are ever to take up the eventual roles of ruler and philosopher, they must possess this quality in its ultimate form. Just like the noble dog, the guardian class must have a 'dogged' nature that is undeterred by the unpleasant and is adverse to ignorance, as these are the qualities necessary for an individual who is to be become a philosopher king.

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[33] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 67.
[34] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 375b.
[35] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 81
[36] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 376b.

These eligibility traits for guardian status are one of the first places where the model of justice can start to be dissected. As Iakovos Vasiliou points out, "a person who intends to be a fine and good guard of the city must be a lover of wisdom, spirited, and quick and strong."[37] These three traits each have a corresponding philosophical virtue that the guardian education will attempt to inculcate. These three virtues (wisdom, courage, and moderation, respectively) are three of Plato's four cardinal virtues. They are also uniquely tied to how Plato will later define justice in both the city and the soul, rounding out the complex puzzle of where Plato's fourth cardinal virtue (justice) seems to exist within the city. This puzzle will be described in greater detail in the following chapters, but it is important to keep this initial place of comparison in mind going forward.

Many scholars debate why Plato focuses so much attention on the virtue and education of the elite guardian class, while leaving the status of the producer classes virtually unmentioned. One of the most compelling arguments for this comes from Nickolas Pappas, who argues that "Plato addresses only the class of guardians because only they need special attention".[38] This becomes clearer when looking at other elements of the guardian's natural condition, particularly as they contrast with the condition of the producer classes. As described earlier, Plato ensures that this sort of class division and specialization occurs by acknowledging the power of the appetite and self-interest in a way different than other more conventional theories of justice. Instead of the guardians being forced to subordinate their self-interest as an act of self-sacrifice to the city, the guardians are chosen because their naturally self-interested motivations can be aligned with the best interest of the city. Plato helps ensure this happens by altering which

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[37] Iakovos Vasiliou, *Aiming at Virtue in Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 215.
[38] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 70.

motivations even arise in the different classes. Nickolas Pappas argues that "Plato wants to base class distinctions on ability instead of wealth or birth": individuals in this city have "no concern for social mobility," since one's role in society is based on one's natural abilities.[39] This firstly affects the motivations of the money-making producer class because there is no possibility for them to gain political power. They can instead find "sufficient incentive for their labors in the [economic] profit they earn" through production of goods and services.[40]

This also affects the guardian class, who is separated from any and all economic motivation. Plato understands how one's education and rearing reaches much further than his or her formal time in the classroom. Plato therefore finds it necessary to alter the living conditions of the guardians since this will formally affect how their natures develop. The guardians will own no private property of their own, living in common in the homes "of soldiers, not moneymakers," as this will prevent the guardians from ever acting for the sake of their own personal monetary gain.[41] Since the guardians are not conditioned to be motivated by any sort of economic profit, Pappas believes that they need another incentive, which their education provides by "molding them into obedient patriots".[42]

Plato puts one final safeguard in place to ensure that this hierarchy by law appears natural. He invents something called the "Noble Lie," which describes how all citizens are born of the earth. Naturally, all citizens will be taught that they contain different kinds of metals in their soul, whether gold, silver, or bronze, and that these metals represent the roles that they are meant to hold in society. According to the Noble Lie, the true guardians are to possess gold

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[39] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 72.
[40] Ibid., 70.
[41] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 415e.
[42] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 70.

blood, the most valuable, as well as malleable metal. This represents both their inherent worth as the future rulers of society, and more importantly the malleability of their natures that are to be shaped according to their education. The auxiliary and laboring classes are of fundamentally different natures than the guardians, possessing silver and bronze blood respectively, creating another means of establishing hierarchy and a sense that naturally there is no other role which they are more fit to hold. This is yet another method of ensuring that the self-interest of these classes aligns with the duty they are to complete, and that their natural condition informs the qualities that they are to eventually possess. Plato therefore sets out to create a curriculum for the gifted class that helps further their natural devoted, spirited, and eventual philosophic tendencies, in the hopes that these individuals will eventually become model guardians possessing true moderation, courageousness, and wisdom.

Chapter III: Plato's Training of the Gifted Class

Julia Annas argues that the curriculum for Plato's gifted class is not merely "the content of what [is] learned, but the forms in which what is learnt is presented—the kind of music [guardians] listen to, the sort of exercise [the guardians] take, and the type of objects that surround [them]".[43] Plato understands that no person is born a philosopher, and that children must instead be given an education from youth that will allow them to be receptive to philosophy once they are of the proper intellectual mindset and maturity. For this reason, Plato inquires into what this early childhood education might look like. He comes to the conclusion that this sort of education combines both a training of the body and soul: the training of the body coming through

[43] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 82.

"gymnastics," while the training of the soul will come through what Plato refers to as "music".[44] He discusses the importance of harmonizing these two trainings, as if the warrior class was to just focus on the training of the body, they would turn out "more savage [and hard] than they ought" because the spirited part of their nature was imbalanced.[45] Plato therefore instructs that gifted children are to begin their training in music before "turning their mind" towards gymnastics, as musical training (including music, poetry, and speeches) is particularly critical for developing the guardians into the moral beings necessary for developing philosophically-driven guardian leaders.[46]

The discussion of the guardian class' musical education is initially driven by a discussion of stories that these children will hear in their youth. Plato understands how these children are still highly malleable, because "at that stage [of childhood, children are] most plastic, and each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give to it".[47] For this reason, Plato wants to take great care to ensure that children are being shaped by only the best stories and art: approving that which is "fine" while rejecting that which is not.[48] The importance is in this "fine-ness" over truth for the early education of the guardians, as Plato believes that "fine stories yield fine souls."[49] In this way, a sort of moral censorship of stories is occurring for the guardian class (and indirectly for the entire city), as Plato believes that the proper exposure (and concealment) of stories will directly shape the way in which the children develop.

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[44] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 410c.
[45] Ibid., 410c-e.
[46] Ibid., 410c.
[47] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 377b.
[48] Ibid., 377c.
[49] Iakovos Vasiliou, *Aiming at Virtue in Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 219.

This conversation begins with a version of artistic censorship and a discussion of the impact of traditional Greek classics on society. Scholars such as Nickolas Pappas and Julia Annas believe that Plato must have understood the great influence that Homer and Hesiod's epics and poetry held on Greek society, as the poems of Homer and Hesiod "transmitted the essential elements of Greek religion. These tragedians were considered moral teachers to the city" of Athens.[50] Scholars believe that Plato wanted to challenge this notion, arguing that the citizens of Athens held "faulty and limited beliefs picked up from the poetry and literature they knew."[51] Plato wanted to prevent this problem from ever occurring for the guardian class, and so Socrates and Adeimantus have a critical dialogue about the stories written by Homer and Hesiod. Socrates points out how these epic dramas contain heroes and gods that possess less than virtuous traits, including scenes of gods fighting amongst one another, which Socrates finds as unsuitable behavior for models that are supposed to represent unchanging perfection. These are improper role models for the guardians and Socrates feels they should therefore be censored from this city. Pappas asserts that Plato finds it improper to "[show] gods [and] human heroes as weak [and] undignified, [while] the guardians ought to have no share in such traits."[52] For this reason, Plato wants to censor these immoral stories from children, and instead find stories that contain positive role models who demonstrate the traits that Plato is trying to inculcate in the guardian class.

This task of censorship is clearly difficult, as Pappas argues that "any history book can supply stories of tyrants who live into successful old age, dubious moral examples for all the verity of their existence. Plato [and presumably most individuals concerned with virtue] would

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[50] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 67.
[51] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 94.
[52] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 66.

never praise such tales merely on account of their truth."[53] Yet, Plato takes this one step further, and is willing to completely conceal the existence of these individuals, instead of simply framing them as negative role models. He advocates for those lies that would benefit the city, finding "greater importance of psychological effect over factual truth" in these early stages of the guardian's education.[54] Plato worries that if the guardians are exposed to these different sorts of characters, the guardians will be naturally tempted to identify with them, which becomes unnecessary and potentially dangerous for a society that is based on specialization of duty.

Julia Annas interprets this proposal as Plato's preoccupation that exposure to negative role models "may lead people to have conflicting personal ideals, and so a confused life instead of a well-organized one, because even without leading to action it may encourage our imaginative capacities to frustrate a single rational answer to moral problems."[55] This once again connects to the model of justice put forth earlier in this thesis, with the restrictive guardian education corresponding to the virtue of moderation. The guardians will find it much easier to exhibit self-control if they are not exposed to the bad temptations and moral dilemmas of the world, and instead will find greater success in their duties if they believe it is the single truth about the best way to live. Adeimantus believes that there is not a natural temptation for badness present in man, but instead these bad temptations are a product of a bad education.[56] This is why Socrates and his interlocutors discuss the removal and correction of the stories that the young guardians are exposed to, as Plato believes that censorship will prevent the young guardians from being introduced to immoral behaviors at such a formative age in their development. This poetic

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[53] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 67.
[54] Ibid., 69.
[55] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 98.
[56] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 491e.

approach to moral education is fundamentally different from the way which American gifted education (and American education in general) approaches the introduction of stories to young children. A discussion of this difference will be taken up in Chapter IV, where one will begin to see the difference between Plato's content-based and America's skills-based approaches to musical education, respectively.

As will continue to become apparent throughout this thesis, Plato is by no means censoring these stories for the sake of stifling the guardian's capacity for critical thinking. Julia Annas believes that "Plato stresses the aesthetic terms here because he is thinking of young children to whom 'reason has not yet come', that is, who do not fully understand the reason they are given for commands and prohibitions, or the whole practice of giving and asking for reasons."[57] As this is an education of the arts, aesthetics are of extreme importance for the guardian education. More than anything else, an initial response of attraction and repulsion are being trained in these children: an extension and refinement of their demonstrated noble-dog natures. Children are naturally going to develop instinctual reactions of attraction and repulsion towards various matters based on their early education, and Annas argues that Plato is simply integrating a moral component to this natural process:

> If this process is successful, then instead of having a baffled and resentful attitude to morality, they will 'greet reason as a friend': morality will be to them a comprehensible extension and reinforcement of the attitudes that are familiar to them already. Morality will thus be a natural and comfortable part of everyday life, not something that people forget about most of the time, or respect but have problems living up to. Plato is concerned that morality should have a hold on the feelings and attitudes in a way that is integrated with the whole of one's life, and should make sense in terms of the basic attachments that children make. We are familiar with the problems of a white who thinks it is wrong to discriminate against blacks, or a man who thinks it is wrong to discriminate

[57] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 83-84.

> against women, but who have trouble living by these beliefs because their education was so conditioned by racist and sexist stereotypes that they have tendencies which they disapprove of, tendencies for example to think that it is somehow objectionable or absurd for blacks or women to have positions of authority. Plato would have seen this as a fault in education: these people have been brought up to find the wrong things attractive and repulsive, and the result is a chronic conflict in the moral personality. Many of Plato's educational suggestions (including some which seem absurd to us) are designed precisely to avoid such a conflict.[58]

Julia Annas' presentation of this process shows the positive benefits of Plato's aesthetic approach to early education. As this chapter continues, it will become increasingly clear that this is just the beginning of the guardian's education: these students will eventually venture towards developing wisdom. But, for now, Plato holds the assumption that "not all experience is worth having, even vicariously," as he avoids the introduction of any negative moral tales into the childhood education. [59]

Contrarily, Plato does leave plenty of room for the development of moral traits that are useful for individuals who are to be whole heartedly devoted to the city. Piety is one of the first elements that is brought into the discussion of poetry. The guardian class should never be exposed to a god that is anything but perfect: the gods "are neither wizards that transform themselves, nor do they mislead us by lies in speech or in deed" as the tales of Homer often describe.[60] The young guardians must learn to be pious, and understand these gods to exist in the most perfect form. With the introduction of the virtue of courage, Socrates wants to eliminate any rhetoric around the frightful realm of Hades. Nickolas Pappas believes that Socrates is ensuring "the protagonists [of such stories] especially should not fear death or lament it, and

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[58] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 84.
[59] Ibid., 97.
[60] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 382e.

should master their ignoble appetites rather than yield to them."[61] It is important that the guardian warriors are fearless, and that they would not cower in battle when the threat of death is near. Kenneth Dorter argues that these myths must instill a sort of "mental steadfastness," so that the guardians are not vulnerable to dramatic fluctuations in their emotional states.[62] This begins to extend into the sphere of another virtue, self-control. Socrates argues that that the "speeches and deeds of endurance by famous men in the face of everything must be seen and heard": there is no need for the myths that involve heroes and gods succumbing to their natural appetites. [63]

Another virtue, justice, plays a unique role in Socrates' analysis of virtue in stories. It is only briefly mentioned, and is placed in a sort of contrast with the other virtues. While piety deals with the gods above, courage connects to the gods below, and self-control connects to the heroes on land, Socrates believes that justice must relate to the human beings since they are the earthly domain that still remains not discussed.[64] Socrates believes that justice is the one virtue "that is directed only toward other beings, and makes no reference to god or daemons—either in our representation of them (piety) or respect for them (self-control) or our fear of death (courage).[65] Kenneth Dorter believes that this represents an important transition in the *Republic*: moving from more divinely conceived of virtues towards that of the human. This is paralleled by the move from the "mythological conception of virtue generally, to a philosophical conception that makes no reference to mythology, and in which piety will be replaced by wisdom" when the

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[61] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 66.
[62] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 77.
[63] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 390d.
[64] Ibid., 392a.
[65] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 81.

philosopher replaces the warrior guardian.[66] The useful mythology and censorship the guardian's youth was simply a means of instilling aesthetic attraction towards this second education: the philosophic education that aims towards truth.[67] Plato believes that "the free man ought not to learn any study slavishly," and so by finding students who are natural lovers of wisdom and further developing these natural aesthetic attractions, Plato is able to create a class of guardian students who are naturally capable of transitioning from warrior, to rulers, to the philosopher king.[68]

Nickolas Pappas suggests a proposed timeline for the guardian's education, with the initial period of music education being followed by gymnastics (age 17-20), a study of all subjects (age 20-30), the introduction to dialectic (age 30-35), service to the city through military service and lower government administration (age 35-50), and finally to philosophy and the highest level of government (age 50).[69] The transition into the philosophic education represents the final refinement of the guardian class. Just as some children did not demonstrate the proper natures and were therefore not selected for the initial guardian education, there is yet another stage of selection for those guardians who are able to continue on to the philosophic education. Although all the remaining guardians up to this point have been able to demonstrate control of their desires (moderation) and a warrior spirit for defense (courage), only a select group will be able to demonstrate the wisdom necessary to become the philosopher king. Those individuals "who are able to grasp what is always the same in all respects" will establish themselves as the

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[66] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 81.
[67] Bernard Bosanquet. *The Education of the Young in The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

[68] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 536e.
[69] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 120.

philosopher class, "while those who are not able to do so but wander among what is many and varies in all ways are not philosophers."[70] Plato characterizes this difference as the "sharp-sighted" versus the "blind" guardians, believing that these blind men "are really deprived of the knowledge of what each king is; [having] no clear pattern in the soul, and are hence unable…to give laws about what is fine, just, and good, if any need to be given, and as guardians to preserve those that are already established."[71] Yet, these sharp sighted guardians may not necessarily appear this way to the many, as the philosopher's desire to contemplate nature in private can make them appear useless (and potentially even vicious) amongst a crowd of those who are quarreling for power. Yet, it is exactly this tendency that makes these guardians the most appropriate candidates for rule. The final education of the guardians, the education in philosophy and in "the *idea* of the good, is the greatest study, and by availing oneself of it along with just things and the rest, [these guardians will] become useful and beneficial" as is needed for rule.[72]

There is a sense of tension that exists between this philosophic education and the education that the guardians received in their youth. These students were initially exposed to non-truths and a single-minded sense of morality in their youth through the censorship of myths as well as the noble lie. Although this restrictive education was a critical aspect of the guardian's development, Nickolas Pappas argues that "Plato would never populate his ideal city with obedient citizens who never interrogate the received wisdom": this would simply need to be a separate part of the education.[73] The higher subjects of mathematics, astronomy, and dialectic can only introduced to guardians at a later age in life, as these subjects can be corrupting and

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[70] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 484b.
[71] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 484c-d.
[72] Ibid., 505a.
[73] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 120-121.

dangerous for a young soul who does not know what the good is, and therefore cannot orient his or her teachings towards this good. Without a grounding in deeper values, the philosophic education can un-moor individuals and corrupt the youth. If a student is exposed to dialectic without the proper basis for aesthetic attraction to morals, they will become "filled full with lawlessness, trained and refuting tradition but not stable enough to remain good people in the face of moral uncertainty."[74] Students with a nature like the guardians can easily become corrupted if their education is not properly designed, as "the most gifted, when exposed to a bad education, turn out the worst."[75] Only the guardian who is a true lover of wisdom can be exposed to this philosophic education, confronting the tensions between the myths of his childhood and the truths revealed only once he looks beyond the cave that is his political community.

Once these true guardians have been exposed to the philosophic education, Kenneth Dorter believes that "what started out as a guardian class of soldiers will by imperceptible degrees turn into a guardian class of philosophers whose decisions are enforced by soldiers."[76] The guardians who have been exposed to the realm of philosophy, truth, and the forms will not want to return to their duties as warrior guardians: no longer finding the noble lie as something attractive. These philosophers must instead be compelled to return to their role as ruler, as they no longer find happiness when governing this human-made shadow-world. Allan Bloom argues that Plato was very careful in Book V when saying that "political power and philosophy [will] coincide" in the philosopher king.[77] He argues that "the meeting of philosophy and political power is precisely coincidental or accidental: …there is no necessary connection between a

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[74] Nickolas Pappas, *Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 121-122.
[75] Plato, *The* Republic, trans. Sterling and Scott (New York: Norton and Company, 1985), 491e.
[76] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 68.
[77] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 473d.

man's being born a ruler and his having philosophic talent of passion… [as] the philosopher has neither the desire to be a ruler nor would he do what is necessary to impose his rule on unwilling people."[78]

This shift from the duties and desires of the philosopher and king may seem dramatic, but I argue that it actually occurs along the parallel definitions of justice presented in the *Republic*. When the guardian is compelled to rule, he is achieving that which is good for the city: his actions are entirely devoted to the common good. This parallels Plato's understanding of justice in the city, which has to do with the "minding of one's business" as defined by a citizen's respective role in society. For this reason, the guardians needed an education focused on the morals and the laws of the city at the outset of their education. When a warrior guardian fully dedicates himself to his role in the city, he aids in the quest for the just city.

The guardian's other role is as philosopher, devoted to "minding [his] own business" by properly ordering his soul through contemplation.[79] By seeking the comprehensive truth about the natural world, the philosopher guardian is able to accomplish justice in the soul by maintaining a well-ordered soul that is oriented towards the truth. When these two roles of the guardian are seen side by side, it becomes evident that the fundamental connection between the two exists through "rule." Although the two duties are not the exactly the same, the guardian is the expert at rule of both the well-ordered city and rule of the well-ordered soul. He must alternate between these two separate yet related roles, just as he had to experience two separate yet related approaches to education.

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[78] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*: Interpretive Essay, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 460.
[79] Ibid., 496d.

It therefore becomes clear that this development in the guardian is an intentional product of this education that he was given from his youth. The initial focus of the guardian's moral education was on the relationship of the guardian to outside forces, as he received a civic education that focused on morals and aligning one's good with the good of the city. After honing this group down even further, the education began to move towards something more internal as the guardian approached the philosophic education. This true guardian will "always [be] in love with that learning which discloses to them something of the being that *is* always and does not wander around": .[80] This man will also be "moderate, and in no way a lover of money," as well as courageous in his "belief that death is not something terrible."[81] Finally, Plato believes that there is no way "in which the orderly man, who isn't a lover of money, or illiberal, or a boaster, or a coward, could become a hard-bargainer or unjust": the final piece of the guardian's soul, as this true guardian will have demonstrated mastery of the calculating, spirited, and appetitive parts of his soul.[82] Each of these parts stemmed from an eligibility trait that the initial guardian education sorted for, as even from their youth, Plato was able to decipher the kinds of gifted natures that were conducive to developing these philosophic souls.

Chapter IV- Analysis of Plato's Character Training as it relates to Georgia's Gifted Education Program

Looking back at the account of the early education of the guardians, it has become clear that the eventual philosophic training was an underlying factor in the design of the early guardian education. Plato understood how individuals whose souls were harmonious would possess the

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[80] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 385b.
[81] Ibid., 385e, 486b.
[82] Ibid., 486b.

happiest life, having a clear aim and purpose for their life and actions. This entire dialogue can be understood as an exercise in Platonic educational theory, demonstrating a method of training gifted individuals that is focused on training both the intellect and character of such students. This is a goal that is extremely similar to goals in American education, as evident through the major *No Child Left Behind* reform whose mission statement was to "build the mind and character of every child." [83] Yet, we see such dramatic departures from the methods in which Plato and American education have worked to realize these goals, in a way that leads one to ask why there are not more apparent similarities in their practices. It is therefore important to analyze the strategic goals of both programs in relation to one another, as there might be gaps in achieving these stated goals of American education that could be filled by evaluating Plato's proposed system of education.

In order to develop intellectually adventurous guardians at the completion of their education, Plato placed a large emphasis on moral education at the outset of their training. Initially, the goal of the guardians was not true wisdom, but simply developing wholehearted citizenship. The guardians were taught to bring the good of the city together with their own good, forming pious and law-abiding citizens in a fundamentally moral manner. No information that is harmful to society would be introduced to the guardians in early childhood, as in this stage of education, the truth about the world was less important than what was useful to developing society. But, according to Julia Annas:

> It would be wrong to think that Plato intends education to be a process of brainwashing that will instill the right beliefs and ensure that they are held, whatever the intellectual state of the person holding them. If all Plato cared about was bringing it about that the right beliefs be held, he would not have thought of education as a training of people's

[83] George W. Bush, "Executive Summary of *No Child Left Behind*", (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

> characters, for this would be unnecessary; all that would matter would be the effective implanting of the right moral beliefs in the young, and there are more direct and effective ways to that than the character training Plato recommends.[84]

One has to constantly remember where this method of education is heading, as Plato genuinely believes that this approach of early conformity to the laws will be perfectly conducive to developing gifted guardians who can safely be exposed to the intellectual rigor of the true philosophic education.[85] It is incorrect to label Plato's education simply a form of brainwashing, as Annas argues that Plato not only "[stresses] the importance of commitment to the truth and following the argument where it leads, [but he also puts] faith in the powers of reason in general."[86] Plato constantly emphasizes the need for balance between the virtues so that the gifted class will most clearly see how to rule wisely once exposed to the negative aspects of nature. In this Kallipolis, reason and wisdom will guide life, and so these true guardians are logically left as the rulers of society.

This is one of the first places that we are clearly able to see the differences in the education of Plato's guardians and the education of the gifted students in America. Plato is working to create an education that is both civic and philosophic above all else, desiring a class of individuals who will understand what the good for the city and themselves is. This education arose out of necessity, with a clear statement of purpose: a division of labor to benefit the Kallipolis. The statement of purpose in Georgia's gifted education is much less clear. There are no stated strategic goals for gifted education in Georgia, despite this being a state which both mandates and fully funds gifted education. This ideological confusion was highlighted in Chapter I, where it was concluded that no clear statement of purpose exists. When looking at the

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[84] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 89.
[85] Ibid., 87.
[86] Ibid., 88.

GaDOE's definition of gifted students, it seemed to be focused on the individual student's perceived "need [for] special instruction and/or ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or he abilities."[87] There is no mention of any sort of benefit to the state from these individuals, but that this education is simply intended to benefit the individual in a way that is not explicitly stated.

One can see these thematic differences in goals even before the gifted classes begin their education. While Georgia's gifted programs search for students that have already demonstrated exceptional skills in various areas, Plato simply sorts gifted individuals based on their promise. Plato seeks out individuals who are of a certain sort of nature, possessing "gold blood," and demonstrating certain characteristics like that of the "noble dog." Georgia, on the other hand, deems students eligible for gifted education based on a combination of measurable various test scores. Students must demonstrate that they possess academic achievement, mental ability, creativity, and/or motivation that is *already* above the 90th percentile. Although Georgia's gifted students will presumably continue to develop and grow if selected for the gifted program, students must already demonstrate skills at levels beyond their peers to be deemed eligible, instead of simply demonstrate promise that they *could* gain these skills if accepted into the program (as in Plato's approach). Similarly, there is no stated purpose about the ways that Georgia expect students to grow if selected for the gifted program.

It is also interesting to look at ways in which Plato's curriculum could easily supplement the curriculum already present in Georgia's gifted education program. One of the first major elements of Plato's education is the musical education that he provides to the guardians. For

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[87] State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, "Education Program for Gifted Students" (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).

Plato, the importance of this education is the specific stories and myths which guardians are exposed to, through an intentional censorship of materials in order to begin forming the character of the children. Upon review of the English Language Arts standards for all of Georgia's students (since there is no differentiated curriculum for the gifted students), it becomes clear that the focus of their learning is skills based. Nearly every reading standard begins with an action verb, requiring students to 'read on level-text', 'ask and answer questions', and 'demonstrate command' of the books and materials presented to them.[88] There is not a single mention of any specific required learning instrument that should be used in the classroom, or even guidelines about what these materials should look like. The entire purpose of Georgia's language arts education is to build skills of reading, for no stated reason other than to learn to read. Any development of a student's morals through exposure to fables or other stories is simply an un-assessed and unintentional byproduct of the education process. This is an important difference between Plato's guardian education, since in Georgia there is no thought given to the sort of stories a child ought to be exposed to during their formal schooling. One would hope that the gifted individuals who are likely to become leaders of society would possess a strong moral character, but this form of moral education through stories is unfortunately left up to unintentional byproducts of schooling, and the types of books that parents independently provide to their children in the home.

Another important aspect of Plato's education is the civic focus of learning. Although some guardians will eventually become independent philosopher kings, they each went through an intensive military training that allowed them to serve as warrior guardians for the city. Their goal was full-hearted devotion to the city: an undeniably civic goal. Plato believed that this

[88] "English Language Arts: Georgia Standards of Excellence" (Georgia Department of Education, 2015).

public servant training focused on the wellbeing of the city was an important precursor for becoming a philosopher who is primarily concerned with the wellbeing of his own soul, as the combination of these two trainings would create the most complete individuals. This approach to civic education is largely different from the sort of civic training found in Georgia's schools. Upon review of Georgia's current curricular standards, the closest matches to Plato's civic education came in the Social Studies standards. There does appear to be an attempt to infuse some aspects of civics into the social studies education, as amongst the six categories that teachers are to instruct on, there is one labeled "government/civil understandings" (as contrasted with "historical understandings, geographic understandings, economic understandings, map and globe skills, and information processing skills"). The following information comes from the current K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), as has been modified into chart form for simplicity:[89]

Table 4: Grades K-3 Social Studies Standards within the Government/Civil Understandings Category

Grade Level	Summary of Government/Civil Understandings Standard	Specific Learning Standard
Kindergarten: Foundations of America	Civics provides students with an introduction to rules and character traits of good citizens	SSKCG1: Demonstrate an understanding of good citizenship. . Explain how rules are made and why. b. Explain why rules should be followed. SSKCG2 Describe examples of positive

[89] "Social Studies: Georgia Standards of Excellence" (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).

		character traits exhibited by good citizens such as honesty, patriotism, courtesy, respect, pride, and self-control.
First Grade: Our American Heritage	The civics strand provides a study of the positive character traits exhibited by these important historical figures.	SS1CG1 Describe how the historical figures in SS1H1a display positive character traits such as: fairness, respect for others, respect for the environment, courage, equality, tolerance, perseverance, and commitment. SS1CG2 Explore the concept of patriotism through the words in the songs *America (My Country 'Tis of Thee*) and *America the Beautiful* (for example: brotherhood, liberty, freedom, pride, etc.).
Second Grade: Georgia, My State	In second grade, the various social studies strands become interwoven with the historical strand. In addition to the positive character traits of the individuals and groups in the historical strand, the basic concept of government is also introduced	SS2CG1 Define the concept of government and the need for rules and laws. SS2CG2 Identify the following elected officials of the executive branch and where they work: 1. President (leader of our nation) and Washington, D.C. – White House 2. Governor (leader of our state) and Atlanta, GA – State Capitol Building 3. Mayor (leader of a city) and city hall SS2CG3 Give examples of how the historical figures in SS2H1 demonstrate positive citizenship traits such as: honesty, dependability, trustworthiness, honor, civility, good sportsmanship, patience, and compassion.
Third Grade: United States History	In the civics/government strand, students learn about the elements of our representative democracy and their rights and responsibilities as good citizens	SS3CG1 Describe the elements of representative democracy/republic in the United States. 1. Describe the three branches of national government: executive (president), legislative (Congress), and judicial (Supreme Court of the United States). 2. Describe the three branches of state government: executive (governor), legislative (Georgia General

		Assembly), and judicial (Supreme Court of Georgia). 3. State the main responsibility of each branch: executive (enforcing laws), legislative (making laws), judicial (determining if laws are fair). SS3CG2 Explain the importance of Americans sharing certain central democratic beliefs and principles, both personal and civic. 1. Explain the necessity of respecting the rights of others and promoting the common good. 2. Explain the necessity of obeying reasonable laws/rules voluntarily, and explain why it is important for citizens in a democratic society to participate in public (civic) life (staying informed, voting, volunteering, and communicating with public officials).

In kindergarten and first grade, the relationship between character and civic education is clearly evident, in a way much closer to how Plato would advocate it be structured. But, once students reach second grade, the civics standards begin orienting around the structures of government. This trend continues as gifted students continue in their education, to the point where very few standards exist beyond the third grade that are not directly related to the various structures, processes, and forms of government. Below, these remaining standards are presented:

Table 5: Grades 4-12 Social Studies Standards within the Government/Civil Understandings Category

Fourth Grade: US History, Year 2	In fourth grade, students continue with year two of a three year study of United States history in which all four strands (history, geography, civics/government, and economics) are integrated. In the civics/government strand, students learn about concepts and rights contained within our founding documents.	Government/Civic Understandings SS4CG1 Describe the meaning of: a. Natural rights as found in the Declaration of Independence (the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) b. "We the People" from the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution as a reflection of consent of the governed or popular sovereignty c. The federal system of government in the U.S. (federal powers, state powers, and shared powers) d. Representative democracy/republic SS4CG2 Explain the importance of freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
Fifth Grade: US History, Year 3	In the civics/government strand, students learn about the rights of citizens contained within the Constitution, and how	SS5CG1 Explain how a citizen's rights are protected under the U.S. Constitution. a. Explain the

	changes have been made over time to the Constitution to protect the rights of citizens.	responsibilities of a citizen. b. Explain the concept of due process of law and describe how the U.S. Constitution protects a citizen's rights by due process.
Sixth Grade: World Studies, Year 1	The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas so that students begin to understand the variety of governments in the world.	SS6CG1 Compare and contrast various forms of government (Canada, Europe, Australia) SS6CG2 Explain citizen participation in the Canadian government.
Seventh Grade—World Area Studies Year 2	The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas in order to help students begin to understand the variety of governments in the world.	SS7CG1 Compare and contrast different forms of citizen participation in government (Africa, Middle East, South and Eastern Asia)
Eighth Grade, Georgia Studies	N/A	SS8CG1 Describe the foundations of Georgia's government. **c.** Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens according to the Georgia Constitution. e. Identify wisdom, justice, and moderation as the three principles in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Georgia Flag.

High School-American Government/Civics	The government course provides students with a background in the philosophy, functions, and structure of the United States government. Students examine the philosophical foundations of the United States government and how that philosophy developed. Students also examine the structure and function of the United States government and its relationship to states and citizens.	SSCG16 Analyze the difference between involuntary and voluntary participation in civic life. a. Describe how and why citizens are required by law to pay taxes, serve on a jury, and register for military duty. b. Describe how citizens voluntarily and responsibly participate in the political process by voting, performing public service, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions. c. Explain the meaning and history of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Out of a total of 165 pages of social studies curriculum, only these above standards remain as the one's which Georgia classifies as a civic education. Even more limited are the standards that Plato might classify as a truly civic or moral education, as very few of them remain related to character or would inspire any sort of actions that would be to the benefit of the city. This curriculum does not seem to be promoting active citizenry in the way that Plato would advocate beyond a superficial mention of voting and performing public service, which in many

ways conflicts with the expected duties of a citizen in a democracy like America. A more detailed discussion of the role of democracy in this education will be present later in this chapter.

Upon review of the entire curriculum of all subjects for K-12 students, these other standards also came forward as the only ones with any direct relation to character or civic education in general. Interestingly enough, many of them come into direct conflict with the ideas of Plato, advocating for exposure to conflicting motivations at a young age. They also do not specify any sort of specific requirements for the stories that students will read, even when it comes curricular standards directly related to moral lessons. The philosophical aspect of education seems to be entirely lacking, on both this curricular and ideological level. [90] [91]

Table 6: Grades K-12, Other Standards related to Moral, Civic, or Philosophic Education

High School- Economics:	SSEPF6 Describe how the earnings of workers are determined in the marketplace. a. Identify skills that are required to be successful in the workplace, including positive work, ethics, punctuality, time management, teamwork, communication skills, and good character.
Grade 2- English Language Arts	ELAGSE2RL2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
Grade 3- English Language Arts	ELAGSE3RL2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

[90] "Social Studies: Georgia Standards of Excellence" (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).
[91] "English Language Arts: Georgia Standards of Excellence" (Georgia Department of Education, 2015).

	ELAGSE3RL3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. ELAGSE3RL6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
Grade 9-10- English Language Arts	ELAGSE9-10RL3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

This entire conversation lays the foundation for the largest difference between the education of Plato and the education more commonly found in America. Plato is training his gifted class to be able to turn their soul around to the truth of nature, as Julia Annas argues that "the well-educated person is not a prodigy in any subject, or a range of subjects; the criterion of a successful education is a morally mature, and as we say, 'healthy' outlook on the world."[92] This is nearly contrary to the form of education seen in the evaluation of Georgia's gifted program, which places a large emphasis on academic achievement and packing information into students. Similarly, the primary curriculum adjustment for gifted education in Georgia is acceleration of the pace of generally learned content: a notion that is antithetical to Plato's education. Academic achievement is not even a component of the Plato's guardian education, possessing no examinations or grades throughout the duration of their formal schooling. "Education [to Plato] is not thought of as a process of absorbing information or skills which can be periodically

[92] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 83.

tested," particularly when done at such a rapid pace, as Plato's training of character is much more thorough and deliberate.[93]

In Georgia, all concepts that are taught in the classroom must be defined by a testable curricular standard. These curricular standards are present for all children, with no clear sense of differentiation for gifted individuals. Even though they are thought to have different abilities from other students, it does not seem that Georgia's state curriculum put any thought into how gifted students were to exercise these abilities any differently than other students in the future, since they are often just being exposed to the same curriculum but at an accelerated pace. The fact that there is no statement of purpose seems to loom over the entire of Georgia's gifted program, as because there is no differentiation of learning expectations from the average student, the funnel from gifted individual to leader in society is by no means as well-defined as it is for Plato. As discussed in Chapter I, perhaps America is attempting to create creative-productive individuals, or perhaps they are attempting to create schoolhouse-gifted individuals: the fact is, it is not truly clear. There does not seem to be any ideal product of what a gifted education will produce in Georgia, and so individuals are not as deliberately formed as they could be in an education like Plato's. The outcome of this education is likely un-related to the specific curricular standards that students are exposed to, which is why students from the same K-12 education end up with various roles and positions in society.

Julia Annas interestingly argues that "in America, children's education is run on Platonic lines…moral and social values are crucial in secondary schooling, and only in college does

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[93] Ibid.

academic and intellectual development arrive."[94] Based on my comparison of America's gifted education and Plato's gifted education, I believe that America attempts to inculcate many of the Platonic values of civic and moral awareness in their gifted youth, but simply does not do so as strongly as they could. I argue that a set of clear goals and coherent pedagogy would greatly benefit students in Georgia's gifted programs. While there might be a hidden expectation that students come out of these programs go into public service or become leaders of society, I believe that a stronger focus on their moral and civic duties during their early childhood education would provide great benefits to all of society. I also agree with Plato that these stated goals should go beyond citizenship and public service once students reach a certain age. An education in the higher sciences and philosophy would help to round out these gifted students, creating the ideal citizen and student similar to what Plato advocated for in his true guardians. This approach to education could create the clear minded and happiness-striving individuals that Plato attempts to inculcate. But, before fully recommending these reforms to a system of education like America, it is important to first temper them, as there are many potential pitfalls that scholars in the field would quickly point to as problematic.

Firstly, there is much discussion about the effects of this segregation based on class ability in Plato's Kallipolis. While this might seem fundamentally in contradiction to the ideals of American liberal democracy, this thesis attempts to show that America's education system is just as meritocratic and aristocratic as Plato's Kallipolis. In reality, America's gifted education does segregate students off from their peers based on their demonstrated capacity in a way that is just as restrictive as Plato. As discussed previously, while Plato's educational eligibility requires demonstrated promise, American gifted education requires demonstrated skill level. As well, I

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[94] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 86.

argue that the characteristics that Plato requires for this class division are much more positive, seeking moral leaders with positive character traits to receive this unique education. Georgia, on the other hand, places an emphasis on academic achievement and test scores, placing value on a student's demonstrated "mental ability," "creativity," and "motivation." These traits seem less relevant for gifted individuals to display if the eventual goal is to create the model citizens and thriving individuals that mission statements such as the one found in *No Child Left Behind* (to "build the mind and character of every child") claim to desire in their students. [95]

There is an inherent difficulty of creating an education that can be both civic (involving censorship and restrictive moral ideas on behalf of the community) and philosophic (involving liberating questioning and free-thinking on behalf of the individual). This is a difficulty that parallels one of the struggles of democracy, in that democratic citizens have a strong duty to part of a civic body while simultaneously possessing such strong individual freedoms. Democratic scholars such as John Dewey puzzle over this difficulty, asking what democracy might look like in relation to such a just society.[96] He argues that the social function of education is increasingly important for democracy, and that individuals do want to take part in a common community.[97] Yet, as evident through the curricular analysis of Georgia's standards, this civic element of gifted education seems to be largely lacking and extremely underdeveloped. In contrast, perhaps Plato's approach to education does strike the proper balance of balancing the common good and private good. Although at first glance the complete guardian education seems extremely radical, I argue that it represents a comprehensive liberal arts education that comes much closer to striking the extremely difficult balance that is demanded by democracy.

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[95] George W. Bush, "Executive Summary of *No Child Left Behind*", (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).
[96] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916).
[97] Ibid., 26-28.

One of the reasons why the guardian education appears so radical is because of how its implications extend far beyond the classroom in a way different than in America. Yet, perhaps this is exactly why it is so successful. John Dewey points to one of the facts so crucial to Platonic educational philosophy, in that "education proceeds ultimately from the patterns furnished by institutions, customs, and laws…[and] only in a just state will these be such as to give the right education."[98] This is a problem that is commonly debated in educational theory, with scholars such as Thomas and Lorraine Pangle seeing the thematic concern amongst even the American founders regarding the extent to which "character formation [might be] the essential presupposition of even the best legal institutions and regulations"[99] If one believes that this answer is yes, then it is increasingly important that Georgia revisit its curricular standards related to character formation in order to make these more explicit, even if they are not necessarily "testable" or "measurable" curricular standards. I argue that Plato's guardian education does an exceptional job at developing the character of its individuals in a way that leads them to respect the laws and customs of society, and that it would therefore be a great starting model for developing a new curriculum in Georgia that has a more robust civic focus. Or, at minimum, Plato's *Republic* represents a perfect model for developing an educational program that works backwards from its goals when developing the details of the curriculum. I personally believe that Plato's goal of creating well-rounded civic and moral leaders is an entirely appropriate goal for American gifted education, but if this specific goal goes too far beyond "building the mind and character" of American children, then educational theorists could at minimum use the *Republic*

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[98] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 89.
[99] Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas L. Pangle. *The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 2.

as a model for goal-based curriculum development while working to achieve their own educational goals.[100]

I would also like to go one step further than the recommendations of Plato himself, as I believe that elements of the guardian curriculum would be appropriate even for students not selected for the gifted program. This opinion is in line with that of Kenneth Dorter, who believes that Plato's initial guardian education is something that all individuals could have potentially received in the Kallipolis. When the young guardians are receiving their civic education in morals and myths, this "training [of] the children's character [would] obviate the need for many laws, since the correct inclinations [would] already have been inculcated into them by their education. It would be strange if [Plato] did not extend this principle throughout the population, given his constant emphasis on creating a unified city."[101] I agree with this sentiment, and argue that the benefits described in Chapter III presented by Julia Annas (i.e. elimination of discrimination, finding the wrong things attractive/repulsive) would be beneficial for all of society's individuals. John Dewey also states that it would be fundamentally democratic for all children to "exercise and practice the faculties of the mind till they become thoroughly established habitudes, like the gymnast, training [their] original impulse activities."[102] It would therefore be beneficial for all children to develop these positive habits, not simply the gifted individuals in society, in order for all children to learn which sorts of moral behaviors to emulate so that they become a natural way of civic life. Until children are given their proper vocation and need to begin specific training for this, Dorter agrees that it would be fitting for all children to be

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[100] George W. Bush, "Executive Summary of *No Child Left Behind*", (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).
[101] Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 73.
[102] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 61.

directly exposed to the initial guardian education. This would help create the most socially just society even in a democracy like America, where all of its members would have a strong foundation in morals and their civic duty before continuing on towards additional education or training based on their future roles in society. Having a strong civic education for all youth would be extremely beneficial for American education in general, but I also believe it is important to pay special attention to raising the next generation of leaders. For this reason, I advocate for reforming the gifted education program in Georgia to mandate more than a mere acceleration of usual content. This sort of program should be modeled after that of Plato's complete guardian education, containing an extensive civics and ethics program as well as a more well rounded intellectual curriculum later in the education. Students that are civically, morally, and intellectually engaged are the kinds of individuals that I believe should be emerging from a gifted education program, as they are well disposed towards achieving both the best life for themselves as well as society as a whole.

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