

LOWER MERION SD

301 E Montgomery Ave

Gifted Education Plan Assurances (Chapter 16) | 2022 - 2025

CHAPTER 16

Chapter 16 of the PA Code specifies how Pennsylvania will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. Gifted students are to be provided with quality gifted education services and programs. Requirements for Gifted Education Plans can be found in the Pennsylvania Code (22 Pa Code §16.32).

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.13(e) (relating to strategic plans) and 22 Pa. Code § 16.4, each school district shall develop and implement a gifted education plan every 6 years.

- a. The plan shall include the process for identifying children who are gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, as well as the gifted special education programs offered.
- b. The school districts shall make its gifted education plan available for public inspection and comment for a minimum of 28 days prior to approval of the plan by the school district's board of directors.
- c. Each school district shall provide, as the Department may require, reports of students, personnel and program elements, including the costs of the elements, which are relevant to the delivery of gifted education. (22 Pa. Code § 16.4)

1. Describe your district's public notice procedures conducted annually to inform the public of the gifted education services AND programs offered (newspaper, student handbooks, school website, etc.).

The Lower Merion School District employs a systematic approach to identifying and providing supports and services to students in need of gifted education specially designed instruction. Steps are taken annually to inform the public of the gifted education services and programs offered. An Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Gifted Students, and Services for Protected Handicapped Students is made available to the public through the District's website and notifications. Informational sessions and trainings are offered for parents and guardians. The Lower Merion School District collaborates closely with parent organizations, including the Committee for Special Education and InterSchool Council to host informational sessions, guest speakers, and opportunities for training.

2. Describe your district's process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction.

Screening is the systematic determination of whether or not a student should be evaluated for gifted education services. All students in second grade are screened for gifted education, and thereafter, upon request. In addition to universal screening in the second grade, all students in grades K-8 have the opportunity to participate in gifted screening within their school at various points throughout the school year. Multiple sources of information, including, but not limited to, cognitive assessment, achievement assessments, curriculum-based assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics, and anecdotal observations, inform the process. Criteria on the assessments referred to above are flexible when intervening factors such as English as a second language, disability, gender or race bias or socio/cultural deprivation may be masking gifted abilities. Screening data is reviewed by the school-based Achievement Team. The purpose of the review is to determine if a student's performance over time strongly indicates a need for evaluation for gifted supports and services. If the Achievement Team indicated a need, a Gifted Written Report will be conducted by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (GMDT).

3. Describe your district's procedures for determining ELIGIBILITY (through MULTIPLE CRITERIA) and NEED (based on ACADEMIC STRENGTH) for potentially mentally gifted students (EVALUATION).

When a student is recommended for evaluation for gifted services, the Gifted MultiDisciplinary Team (GMDT) will evaluate the data collected, and the GMDT shall determine eligibility. A School Psychologist will complete a Gifted Written Report (GWR), and eligibility determinations must include an assessment by a certified School Psychologist. The GWR report must indicate if the student is gifted and is in need of specially designed instruction. The GMDT will determine whether there are intervening factors masking gifted abilities and take this into consideration when making recommendations. A student will be determined mentally gifted if the criteria established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the District are met. The term "mentally gifted" includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or

when multiple criteria as set forth in PA School Code Chapter 16 indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. Deficits in memory or processing speed, as indicated by testing, cannot be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted special education. A student with an IQ score lower than 130 may be found eligible for gifted education supports and services when other educational criteria in the profile of the student strongly indicates gifted ability. Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include: 1. A year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects as measured by nationally normed and validated achievement tests able to accurately reflect gifted performance. Subject results shall yield academic instruction levels in all academic subject areas. 2. An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability. 3. Demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by excellence of products, portfolio or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment. 4. Early and measured use of high level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communications skills, foreign language aptitude or technology expertise. 5. Documented, observed, validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, disabilities, gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities.

4. Describe the gifted programs* that are offered to provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment, or both. *The word "programs" refers to the CONTINUUM OF SERVICES, not one particular option.

If an evaluation determines a student is mentally gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, then a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) is developed to meet that student's identified areas of strength. The GIEP is created by a team, including family/legal guardian(s) of the child, the child's teacher(s), a designated representative from the District and any other person who is requested to be present by either the family/legal guardian(s) or the District. The GIEP identifies present levels of academic achievement, annual goals, specially designed instruction and supports required by the student in developing individual strengths. The content and design of each student's GIEP depends on the individual's strength areas identified for enrichment, acceleration or a combination of both. Supports and services for students identified as gifted align to Pennsylvania standards and encompass a high level of cognitive and metacognitive concepts and processes. These may be provided both in and out of the general education setting, depending on the degree of need. Instruction for gifted students deepens and broadens their thinking. Broad themes, appropriate to several disciplines, are used to help students connect ideas among and between various disciplines and to apply them in meaningful ways. Learning environments incorporate cognitive and metacognitive experiences to support the development of innovation, exploration, self-monitoring, creativity, decision-making, openness to new ideas, and academic risk taking. The diversity and uniqueness of individuals and cultures is honored and

integrated into substantive curricular content.

Chief School Administrator

Date