

Whitehall-Coplay School District



Gifted Education Plan

Ms. Brooke Clary - Director of Special Education

Gifted Support Teachers - Amanda Kusko
Elisabeth Long

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Table of Contents

I.	PURPOSE	3
II.	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	4
III.	IDENTIFICATION and SCREENING.....	6
IV.	GIFTED INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN	15
V.	GIFTED SUPPORT DELIVERY OPTIONS	17

I. PURPOSE

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education has defined the purpose of its regulations governing special education for gifted students (22 Pa. Code Chapter 16) as follows:

§16.2. Purpose

- a) This chapter specifies how the Commonwealth will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. It is the intent of the Board that gifted students are provided with quality gifted education services and programs.
- (b) The Commonwealth, through the Department, will provide general supervision of services and programs provided under this chapter.
- (c) The Department will disseminate information about and promote the use of promising practices and innovative programs to meet the needs of gifted students.
- (d) To provide services and programs efficiently, the Commonwealth will delegate operational responsibility to its school districts. Each school district shall, by direct service or through arrangement with other agencies, provide the following:
 - (1) Services and programs planned, developed and operated for the identification and evaluation of each gifted student.
 - (2) Gifted education for each gifted student which is based on the unique needs of the student, not solely on the student's classification.
 - (3) Gifted education for gifted students which enables them to participate in acceleration or enrichment, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to their intellectual and academic abilities and needs.

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist local education agencies in meeting the requirements of the State Board's regulations set forth at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16 - Special Education for Gifted Students. The regulations recognize that gifted students are considered to be "children with exceptionalities" under the Public School Code of 1949 and in need of specially designed instruction.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Programs for gifted children fit into the array of special programs available for all exceptional children. These programs reflect individual differences, equal educational opportunity, and desire for the optimal development of each child. Programs that are based on sound philosophical, theoretical, and empirical foundations are those most likely to benefit gifted students.

The guiding principles for planning and implementing programs for the gifted include the following:

The local school district is primarily responsible for identifying all “children with exceptionalities,” which means “children of school age who have a disability or who are gifted and who, by reason thereof, need specially designed instruction exceptional children and developing educational programs to meet their needs.” (24 P.S. §13-1371(1))

Like all exceptional children, the gifted student possesses special characteristics that significantly affect that student’s ability to learn. In order to provide a meaningful benefit, the gifted student’s curriculum must be appropriately modified on an individual basis.

Enable the provision of appropriate specially designed instruction based on the student’s need and ability. (22 Pa. Code §16.41(b) (2))

The key to challenging the gifted student is the connection between instruction and individual cognitive and affective behaviors. The emphasis in special programs for these students should be on the stimulation of the cognitive processes of creativity, originality, problem solving and complexity (increasing content depth and sophistication).

The student is thought to be gifted because the school district’s screening of the student indicates high potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted or a performance level which exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom. (22 Pa. Code §16.22)

A Gifted Individualized Education Plan is a written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student. The initial Gifted Individualized Education Plan must be based on and be responsive to the results of the evaluation and be developed and implemented in accordance with this chapter. (22 Pa. Code §16.22 and §16.32)

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Present Levels of Educational Performance must be sufficient in depth and breadth (scope) to provide the framework for a comprehensive gifted individualized education plan. Student

assessment and performance data should be reflected in the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan. The gifted student may be involved in the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan at the parent's discretion.

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan team shall base educational placement decisions on the gifted student's needs to enable the provision of appropriate specially designed instruction based on the student's need and ability and to ensure that the student is able to benefit meaningfully from the rate, level, and manner of instruction. (22 Pa. Code §16.41) and provide opportunities to participate in acceleration or enrichment, or both, as appropriate for the student's needs. These opportunities must go beyond the program that the student would receive as part of a general education. (22 Pa. Code §16.41)

III. IDENTIFICATION and SCREENING

Definition of Mentally Gifted

Mentally gifted is defined as outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. (22 Pa. Code §16.1) Intellectual ability is not equated with an IQ score alone. Intellectual ability is and should be a reflection of a range of assessments including a student's performance and potential.

IQ 130 or more

The term "mentally gifted" includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher, when multiple criteria as set forth in Department Guidelines indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. The determination shall include an assessment by a certified school psychologist. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))

No one test or measure is sufficient to determine giftedness, and the evaluation and testing literature recognizes that there is a margin for error in any standardized testing. The standard error of measurement also applies when reporting IQ.

IQ Lower than 130

The Whitehall-Coplay School District has established procedures to determine whether a student is mentally gifted. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria 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 person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted must include an assessment by a certified school psychologist. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))

If a student's IQ is less than 130, other factors, such as academic performance, demonstrated achievement or other observed skills must strongly indicate gifted ability in order for that student to be identified as gifted and admitted to a gifted program. Because disabilities and bias factors may mask gifted abilities, the district will examine discrepancies between ability assessment results and academic achievement or demonstrated skills, and discrepancies among ability subtests.

Multiple Criteria

Criteria, other than IQ score, which indicate gifted ability include but are not limited to: Achievement, Rate of Acquisition/Retention, Demonstrated Achievement, Early Skill Development, and Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness.

Achievement

Achievement is defined as 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. The assessment instruments should have high enough ceilings to reflect accurately academic performance in the gifted range.

Assessment should yield performance and achievement data beyond basic skills and should be used for appropriate instructional placement. The assessments should show not only what the student knows, but also where there is a need for instruction. These data form the basis for decisions as to where, in specific content areas, specific courses or curriculum, a student should begin the learning experiences for the year. The results of the testing must provide instructional levels in all academic subject areas for use in determining educational placement.

Rate of Acquisition, Rate of Retention

Rate of acquisition is the rapidity or speed at which the student is able to acquire, understand and demonstrate competency or mastery of new learning. Rate of acquisition and rate of retention of new materials/skills can be defined as how many repetitions the student needs before the student masters new information/skills and can use the information/skills appropriately any time thereafter. This data can be obtained by simple procedures such as Curriculum Based Assessment, direct observation and reporting from parents, teachers, or supervisors. An example of acquisition/retention: the gifted student with approximately one to three repetitions of new knowledge/skills is able to achieve mastery at a faster rate than a student who requires four to eight repetitions. Rate of acquisition/retention is used to adjust the pace of learning for the gifted student.

Demonstrated Achievement

Another criterion is the student's demonstrated achievement, performance-based skills or expertise that shows a high-level of accomplishment, and indicates exceptional interest and motivation in specific areas. These may be documented in permanent products, portfolios, demonstration of skills, awards, community involvements of others. Example: a student is a member of the high school debate team and has qualified for the state finals in grades 9, 10 and 11; a student loves to write poetry and has a folder of many unpublished works.

Early Skill Development

Assessment of early and measured use of high level thinking skills could include checklists or inventories such as Guilford's or Bloom's Taxonomy. It could also include anecdotal notes that document developmental milestones that are reached earlier than average students reach the milestone, or that a student has mastered skills beyond that child's age level. Skills charts often accompany grade level texts. Examples of a skills list:

- The average kindergarten student uses symbols and letters to represent words.
- The average third grade student uses a variety of sentence structures.
- The average sixth grade student writes effectively using standard grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in a final draft.

Using the above skills chart a kindergarten student who spells common words correctly, makes appropriate and varied word choices, and/or understands common capitalization and end punctuation would demonstrate achievements that are a result of early and measured use of high level thinking skills.

Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness

Some students may have their gifted abilities masked by such factors as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability. Data specifically tied to the student's learning environment is used to make decisions on remedial/coping strategies and specially designed instruction. For example: An economically disadvantaged household where educational resources and opportunities are lacking, a household in which English is not the first language, or a household including parental problems such as alcoholism, divorce, spouse/child abuse, or incarceration may have a masking effect on the student's identification as gifted.

The following are the matrixes used by the Whitehall-Coplay School District

WHITEHALL-COPLAY SCHOOL DISTRICT
IDENTIFICATION MATRIX FOR KINDERGARTEN
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
VCI WPPSI-IV	130+	124-129	121-123	116-120	107-115	
VSI WPPSI-IV	130+	124-129	121-123	116-120	107-115	
FRI WPPSI-IV	130+	124-129	121-123	116-120	107-115	

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT/BEHAVIORAL RATINGS

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
WIAT 4 Word Reading Subtest	117+	114 to 116	112 to 113	110 to 111	105 to 109	
WIAT 4 Reading Comprehension	121+	115 to 120	113 to 114	110 to 112	105 to 109	
WIAT 4 Math Problem Solving Subtest	121+	118 to 121	116 to 117	112 to 115	107 to 111	
GRS-P Scales Teacher Ratings					T-Score	
Intellectual					63	
Academic					63	
Creativity					63	
Artistic					63	
Motivation					63	

A student must score a minimum of 8 points on Part I AND a minimum of 13 points on Part II to be considered for classification. Exceptions will be considered for culturally different or exceptional children.

**WHITEHALL-COPLAY SCHOOL DISTRICT
IDENTIFICATION MATRIX FOR GRADES 1-3
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

STUDENT _____

DATE _____

I. INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
VCI WISC-V	130+	125-129	121-124	116-120	110-115	
VSI WISC-V	130+	125-129	121-124	116-120	110-115	
FRI WISC-V	130+	125-129	121-124	116-120	110-115	



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT/BEHAVIORAL RATINGS

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
WIAT-IV Word Reading Subtest	123+	120 to 122	117 to 119	114 to 116	110 to 113	
WIAT-IV Reading Comp. Subtest	123+	120 to 122	117 to 119	114 to 116	110 to 113	
WIAT-IV Math Problem Solving Subtest	123+	120 to 122	117 to 119	114 to 116	110 to 113	
GRS-S Subscales					T-Score	
Intellectual					60	
Academic					60	
Creativity					60	
Artistic					60	
Leadership					60	
Motivation					60	

A student must score a minimum of 8 points on Part I AND a minimum of 13 points on Part II to be considered for classification. Exceptions will be considered for culturally different or exceptional children.

WHITEHALL-COPLAY SCHOOL DISTRICT
IDENTIFICATION MATRIX
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
 Grades 4 and Above

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
VCI WISC-V	133+	127-132	124-126	119-123	110-118	
VSI WISC-V	135+	126-134	124-125	119-123	110-118	
FRI WISC-V	132+	126-131	124-125	119-123	110-118	

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT/BEHAVIORAL RATINGS

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	Value
WIAT-IV Word Reading Subtest	118+	115-117	113-114	110-112	106-109	
WIAT-IV Reading Comp. Subtest	118+	115-117	113-114	110-112	106-109	
WIAT-IV Math Problem Solving Subtest	125	120-124	118-119	114-117	108-113	
SIGS TEACHER RATING					120+	
General Intellectual Ability					120+	
Language Arts					120+	
Mathematics					120+	
Science					120+	
Social Studies					120+	
Creativity					120+	
Leadership					120+	

A student must score a minimum of 8 points on Part I **AND** a minimum of 13 points on Part II to be considered for classification. Exceptions will be considered for culturally different or exceptional children.

Public Awareness

The Whitehall-Coplay School District shall conduct public awareness activities to inform the public of gifted education services and programs and the manner by which to request these services and programs. These awareness activities shall be designed to reach parents of students enrolled in the public schools and the parents of school age children not enrolled in the public schools. Awareness activities shall be conducted annually and include providing information in local newspapers, other media, student handbooks and on the school district web site. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(b))

The Whitehall-Coplay School District provides annual notification in the information section of the district-published activities calendar.

Screening

The Whitehall-Coplay School District, in an effort to meet the needs of its gifted students and comply with 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16 [§16.21(1)], has developed this process for the screening of “thought to be gifted” students.

Level I Screening “Systematic First Look”

The Building Guidance Counselor(s) shall, at least annually, review existing information about all students’ abilities and performance including but not limited to:

- AIMSweb
- Math CBM
- Study Island Benchmark Assessments
- PSSA
- Report Cards

This information will be recorded on a Student Data Sheet.

Criteria: Students who achieve above grade level benchmarks status on the AIMSweb assessment or Math CBM and the top 2% of performers on the PSSA will be referred for Level II Screening “Intense Review.”

For students who meet the above criteria, classroom teachers will observe student performance compared with the normal peer population and keep anecdotal records. A Characteristics of Gifted Learners evidence sheet is available for this purpose and needs to be returned to the guidance counselor.

Any student thought to be gifted with this “Systematic First Look” should be referred for Level II Screening.

Level II Screening “Intense Review”

Any teacher, guidance counselor, or principal may refer a student for Level II screening.

The referring professional must complete a Teacher Input Form for Gifted Screening. These forms are available in the school psychologist’s office and must be given to the school psychologist when completed.

The screening team (classroom teacher, guidance counselor, and school psychologist) will review the information gathered in Level I and Level II and achieve consensus as to whether the student is a reasonable candidate to be referred for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation.

Level III Screening “Multidisciplinary Evaluation”

Referral for the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation should be made when:

1. Teacher or school professional believes the student to be gifted;
2. Student is not receiving appropriate education under Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment); and
3. One of the following applies:
 - The student’s parents request an evaluation. [22 Pa. Code §16.22(c)];
 - The school district’s screening of the student indicates high potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted or a performance level that exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom. [22 Pa. Code §16.22(b)(2)];
 - A hearing officer or judicial decision orders an evaluation.

Parent Referrals

Parents may, in writing, request a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) once per school year. When a parent’s request for a GMDE is received by the school district, regardless of the school’s screening policy, the evaluation must be completed within regulatory timelines. The timeline begins from the date the school district receives the signed Permission to Evaluate from the parent. As per §16.22(c), if a parent makes the request for an evaluation verbally, the school district must tell parents to put their request in writing and must provide a form for that purpose within 10 days of the request.

The following forms will be mailed to the student’s parents/guardians to begin a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation:

- Permission to Evaluate (Gifted Students)
- Parent Input Form
- Notice of Parental Rights (Procedural Safeguards)

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) will be conducted within 60 calendar days from the date of parent signature on the Permission to Evaluate form. The Gifted Written Report must be given to the parent within the 60 calendar day timeline.

The Gifted Written Report (GWR) will summarize the findings from the evaluation concerning the student's educational strengths and needs. The report will make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. If the GWR recommends that the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, the Gifted Individual Education Plan (GIEP) will be completed by the Gifted Support Teacher within 30 calendar days of the date of the GWR.

Parent permission to assess is not required, but a parent should be notified prior to testing (phone call or personal contact).

Dual Exceptionalities

If a student is both gifted and eligible for special education, the procedures in Chapter 14 shall take precedence. For these students identified with dual exceptionalities, the needs established under gifted status must be fully addressed in the procedures required in Chapter 14. (22 Pa. Code §14.101 et seq., 22 Pa. Code §16.7(b)) Revised August 2014 15

A single Individualized Education Plan shall be developed and implemented, revised and modified in accordance with this chapter and Chapter 14. (22 Pa. Code §16.7(d))

For students who are gifted and eligible for special education, it is not necessary for school districts to conduct separate screening and evaluations or use separate procedural safeguards processes to provide for a student's needs as both a gifted and eligible student. (22 Pa. Code §16.7(c))

For students who are thought to be both gifted and disabled, care must be taken by the school district to assure that both the giftedness and the disability are fully addressed as part of the student's public education.

IV. Gifted Individualized Education Plan

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan is a written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student. The initial Gifted Individualized Education Plan shall be based on and responsive to the results of the evaluation and shall be developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 16 (22 Pa. Code §16.31(a))

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan team must include persons who meet the following qualifications:

- One or both of the student's parents
- The student, if the parent chooses to have the student participate
- A representative of the district who:
 - Serves as the chairperson of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan team;
 - Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district; and
 - Is authorized by the district to commit those resources
- One or more of the student's current teachers
- Other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or the district
- A teacher of the gifted (22 Pa. Code §16.32(c)(1-6))

The school district must establish and implement procedures to ensure that parents of the gifted student are offered the opportunity to be present at each Gifted Individualized Education Plan team meeting. The procedures must include one or a combination of the following: documented phone calls, letters, and certified letters with return receipts. Documentation of efforts to encourage parents to attend must be maintained. (22 Pa. Code §16.32(c))

The following shall be included when inviting parents to attend a Gifted Individualized Education Plan meeting:

- Purpose, time, and location of the meeting
- The names of the people expected to attend
- The procedural rights available to protect the student and parent, in language which is clear and fully explains all rights
- Explanation of how eligibility determination was made by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team
- Explanation that a Gifted Individualized Education Plan will be developed at the Gifted Individualized Education Plan meeting

Notice of the meeting must be provided at least 10 calendar days in advance of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan meeting. (22 Pa. Code §16.32 (c) (1)-(6)) along with a copy of the Notice of Parental Rights. The original signed Invitation shall be placed in the student's gifted folder.

A Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) documents the decisions and is presented to the parent at the Gifted Team meeting or sent by mail within five calendar days after completion of the Gifted Team meeting. (22 Pa. Code §16.62 (4)) S. The original signed NORA shall be placed in the student's gifted folder.

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan of each gifted student must be based on the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team's evaluation report and recommendations and are expected to contain the following:

- The Gifted Individualized Education Plan should reflect the needs of the student. The needs of culturally diverse, disadvantaged, underachieving, female, English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities who are gifted may require different assessment and attention to their multiple special needs in the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan.
- There should be a description of the student's present instructional levels and other information necessary to develop appropriate goals and outcomes by subject area to provide acceleration, enrichment or both, as needed.
 - Parent in-put forms shall be sent annually to garner information from the parent for the present levels of educational performance.
 - Teacher in-put forms shall be sent annually to garner information from the student's teacher(s) for the present levels of educational performance.
- The student's placement must provide an instructional environment that can meet the accelerated learning needs and enrichment needs of the gifted student and must be documented in the Gifted Individualized Education Plan.

Names and positions of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan team participants and the date of the meeting are required on the Gifted Individualized Education Plan. (22 Pa. Code §16.32(d) (6)). Signatures are not required.

A copy of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan shall be provided to the parents, along with a Notice of Parental Rights under §§16.61—16.65 (relating to procedural safeguards). (22 Pa. Code §16.32(e)). The original GIEP shall be placed in the student's gifted folder.

The school district must convene a Gifted Individual Education Plan team:

- Following an evaluation if the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team recommends eligibility for specially designed instruction.
- At least annually (more frequently if necessary) to review the Gifted Individualized Education Plan of each gifted student. (22 Pa. Code §16.32 (g)(3))
- Following a reevaluation if the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team recommends eligibility for specially designed instruction.
- At the request of Gifted Individualized Education Plan team member, parent, student or the school district. (22 Pa. Code §16.32(g)(4))

Conducting a Re-evaluation

A gifted student must be reevaluated before a change in educational placement is recommended for the student and when the conditions under 22 Pa. Code §16.22(b) (1) or (3) are met.

- For a student whose parent requests that the child no longer receive gifted support,
 - A Permission to Reevaluate must be issued by the psychologist to the parent.
 - Once the parent signs the Permission to Reevaluate, the psychologist will do a review of records and issue a report indicating that the parent, as part of the GMD team, has indicated that the student is no longer in need of specially designed instruction because the general education curriculum will meet the child's educational needs.
 - Please also note that, should the parent want the child to again receive gifted support, the parent would need to request a reevaluation.
 - The report will be provided to the gifted support teacher who will, in turn, issue an Invitation to Attend a GIEP meeting.
 - At the meeting, the gifted support teacher will issue a Notice of Recommended Assignment for parent signature.
 - The gifted support teacher will forward all original documentation to District Office to include in the student's folder.

V. Gifted Support Delivery Options

The service delivery options chosen for each gifted student are developed based on the strengths and needs identified within the Gifted Individualized Education Plan and must be agreed to by the Gifted Individualized Education Plan team. The service delivery will include enrichment, acceleration, or both based upon each student's Gifted Individualized Education Plan.

Curriculum

The following key principles provide a guide for program development for the gifted:

- Curricula for the gifted should focus on and be organized to include more elaborate complex and in-depth study of major ideas, key concepts, and themes that integrate knowledge within and across disciplines. Present comprehensive, reinforcing, related experiences within an area of study.
- Curricula for the gifted should have a strong foundation based on demonstrated abilities, strengths, and interests of the group and individual.
- Curricula for the gifted should be an extension of core learning, using both acceleration and enrichment strategies. Streamline curriculum that the student is able to master quickly.

- Curricula for the gifted should encourage exposure to, selection, and use of varied, challenging, and specialized resources.
- Curricula and instruction should provide opportunities for students to recognize complex relationships and arrive at sound generalizations.
- Curricula for the gifted should stress higher-level thinking, creativity and problem solving skills.
- Curricula for the gifted should set high standards that demand rigorous expectations for student work and performance demonstration.
- The gifted support teacher(s) will work collaboratively with the gifted coordinator and building principals regarding program elements and costs.

Instruction

- Instruction for the gifted should promote in-depth learning and investigation that deal with real life problems and issues. Select concepts and content that promote the students' involvement as practitioners of the discipline.
- Instruction for the gifted should allow for the development and application of productive thinking skills to enable students to re-conceptualize existing knowledge and/or generate new understanding.
- Instruction for the gifted shall be provided by classroom teachers and/or the gifted support teacher who will work collaboratively to provide enrichment, acceleration, or both.
- The gifted support teacher(s) shall be included in district and building professional development to promote best instructional practices.

AP and Honors Courses

Honors courses or Advanced Placement (AP) courses provide options to meet the needs of some gifted learners. For other gifted students, modifications such as availability at earlier age, adjustment in pace or depth or another adaptation may be needed for AP or honors courses to be considered "specially designed" instruction for gifted students.