

Lower Merion School District

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

No.: 114-3
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: GIFTED EDUCATION
Date Last Revised: 5/6/22; 5/8/15; 6/6/14

**R114-3 INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT SUPPORTS AND SERVICES
GIFTED EDUCATION**

Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania Code (hereinafter referred to as “Chapter 16”) addresses a school district’s obligation to identify and provide services to students who require gifted education supports and services. Pursuant to Chapter 16, receipt of gifted education supports and services will be based upon the following procedures:

A. Definitions

1. **Gifted Student** - shall mean a student of school age who meets the definition of mentally gifted and requires specially designed supports or services not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.
2. **Mentally Gifted** - 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.
3. **GIEP** - shall mean a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP). A GIEP is a written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student.
4. **GIEP Team** – shall mean a Gifted Individualized Education Plan Team. The GIEP team develops an initial GIEP and arrives at a determination of educational placement. Each GIEP team must include persons who meet the following qualifications:
 - (1) One or both of the student’s parents.
 - (2) The student if the parents choose to have the student participate.
 - (3) A representative of the District, who will serve as the chairperson of the GIEP team, who is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the District, and who is authorized by the District to commit those resources.
 - (4) One or more of the student’s recent teachers.
 - (5) Other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or the District.
 - (6) A teacher of the gifted.
5. **GMDT** - shall mean a Gifted Multidisciplinary Team. The GMDT shall be formed on the basis of the student's strengths and shall be comprised of the student's parents/guardians; a certified school psychologist; persons familiar with the student's

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educational experience and performance; one or more of the student's recent teachers; persons trained in the appropriate evaluation techniques; and, when possible, persons familiar with the student's cultural background. A single member of the GMDT may meet two or more of the specified qualifications.

B. Awareness Activities

The Superintendent or designee shall conduct 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/guardians of students enrolled in the public schools and the parents/guardians 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 website.

C. Referrals

1. Referrals of students to be screened for gifted education supports and services (grades K-12) may be made by classroom teachers, specialists, school counselors, principals, psychologists, or parents/guardians. Supporting documentation for recommendation is to be submitted to the Achievement Team.
2. Students can be recommended for and participate in screening only once in 12 months unless the Student Services Administration authorizes additional screenings.

D. Screening

1. Screening is a systematic determination of whether or not a student should be evaluated for gifted education. The screening components and guiding criteria are detailed within Attachment A. The components consist of multiple factors, including results of an ability test, achievement tests and curriculum-based assessments in core academic areas, when available. Other educational and intervening factors, which may mask gifted ability, are considered as well. Students are to be screened for gifted education universally during the first grade and by referral, from either the school-based team or by parents/guardians, thereafter.

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2. All data related to screening are recorded and reviewed by the Achievement Team. The purpose of the review by the Achievement Team is to determine if the data in the profile of the student strongly indicate need for evaluation for gifted supports and services. A gifted multidisciplinary evaluation will be recommended if the team determines that need for an evaluation is indicated. If this is not indicated, no further process will occur.
3. The criteria established by the Achievement Team are to be flexible when intervening factors such as English as a Second Language, disability, gender, or race bias or social/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities.

E. Evaluation and Placement

1. Parents/guardians who suspect that their child is gifted may request a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation of their child at any time, with a limit of one request within 12 months unless Student Services Administration authorizes additional evaluations. The request must be in writing, which could be an email, and should be directed to the Student Services Administration. If an oral request is made to an administrator or professional employee, they shall provide the request form to the parents/guardians within ten (10) calendar days of the oral request.

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 multiple criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability.

2. The GMDT will include a District Representative, at least one of the student's teachers, the parents/guardians, the school psychologist, and other appropriate staff members (counselors, etc.) including persons familiar with the student's educational experience and performance, persons trained in the appropriate evaluation techniques and when possible, persons familiar with the student's cultural background. The GMDT will evaluate the multiple sources of data collected and the school psychologist will complete a Gifted Written Report ("GWR"). The GWR report must indicate if the student is gifted and 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.

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3. 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 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 person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be found eligible for gifted education supports and services when other multiple criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability.
4. Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include:
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.
 - (c) 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.
 - (d) 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.
 - (e) Documented, observed, validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability), gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities.
5. The GMDT shall determine eligibility and eligibility determinations must include an assessment by a certified school psychologist.
6. If a student is found eligible for gifted education supports and services, a GIEP Team will be convened. The GIEP Team may include a District Representative, the parents/guardians, and a teacher of the gifted, one or more of the student’s teachers, a school psychologist and/or counselor, and the student when appropriate. A GIEP will be

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developed by the GIEP Team.

7. The appropriate educational placement for the student must be determined at the GIEP Team meeting. The GIEP and the Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) must reflect the placement option decision.
8. If a parent/guardian decides to arrange for a private evaluation at the parent/guardian's expense, the parent/guardian is to be advised of the following by the principal or the school psychologist or counselor:
 - (a) Testing must be conducted by a private evaluator who is a certified school psychologist.
 - (b) A valid and reliable standardized cognitive assessment must be administered. Examples include the Stanford-Binet, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Differential Abilities Scale, or Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability. Alternative assessments may be used if there are intervening factors masking gifted abilities.
 - (c) The parent/guardian must provide the school with a copy of the private evaluator's report.
 - (d) The results of the private evaluation will be considered by the GMDT.
 - (e) The GMDT may still conduct a comprehensive school-based GWR even if a private evaluation is provided by the parent/guardian.

Since the results of the private evaluation are to be considered by the GMDT, if the parent/guardian has a private evaluation completed at the parent/guardian's expense prior to contacting the relevant District personnel, the parent/guardian shall be requested to provide a copy of the evaluation to the principal.

F. Re-evaluation

Gifted students shall be reevaluated before a change in placement is recommended for the student. Reevaluations must include a review of the student's GWR, GIEP, a determination of which instructional activities have been successful, and recommendations for the revision of the GIEP.

G. Change in Placement

Students who wish to revoke gifted education supports and services may do so with parental

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consent. A request for revocation of gifted services should be made in writing to the gifted education teacher, counselor or to the principal. A student who wishes to reinstate services after revocation must follow the procedures outlined above in E.

H. Confidentiality

All personally identifiable information regarding a gifted student shall be treated as confidential and disclosed only as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implementing regulations, State Board of Education Regulations and Board policy.

I. Gifted Teacher Caseload and Class Size

The total number of gifted students which can be on an individual gifted support teacher's caseload should not exceed the maximum number of 65 students. Additionally, the maximum number of gifted students that can be on an individual gifted teacher's class roster should not exceed the maximum number of 20 students. Caseload and class size maximums may be waived by the PA Secretary of Education upon written request by the district for extenuating circumstances.