

TYRONE AREA SD

701 Clay Avenue

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.).

In order to inform the public about identification process and the continuum of gifted services to meet identified students' needs, we offer the following public notices:

- A section on our district website under Student Services that narratively describes the purpose and philosophy of gifted education, the use of differentiation, and the screening process. This will be updated upon completion and acceptance of the Gifted Assurances Report. The Notice of Parental Rights is also provided. In 2022, the contact information for the district Coordinator of Gifted Education, the anecdote "Is it a Cheetah?" and a chart comparing the difference between the characteristics of a gifted student versus a high-achieving student was added. We have also posted the PDE Gifted Guidelines (2014 version) and the PDE FAQ about Gifted Services.
- Each year the budget is publicized, including a line item for gifted education.
- Moving forward, we can begin annually publishing information in our district publication, TyNotes.
- Prior to the pandemic, we had published information about gifted services annually in our local newspaper, The Daily Herald, but the district stopped providing articles for the Herald during 2020-2022. We are resuming this school year and will again include information about gifted services.
- Each year information about Chpt. 16, the district philosophy, and the purpose, identification, and services for gifted students is in each building Student/Parent Handbook. This information is reviewed annually by the Coordinator of Gifted Services to maintain accuracy.
- A letter is sent home to parents of 2nd grade students prior to administration of the CogAt test, which the district uses as a Child Find measure.

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

In Tyrone Area School District, students can be referred for potential gifted identification in three ways – by teacher/staff, by parent/guardian, by district testing. If a teacher/staff member or parent/guardian observes characteristics and/or academic/intellectual traits that lead them to believe a student may potentially be gifted, they can contact the Coordinator of Gifted Services (CGS), the child's teacher or school counselor, the building principal, the district's Special Education Director, and/or the district's School Psychologist. If they do not contact the GGS directly, the information from the referring party will be forwarded to the CGS. Results of district testing, including benchmarking, progress monitoring, classroom assessments, and diagnostics can also result in a student being referred for potential gifted identification. Assessment results are shared with the CGS at data team meetings held three times a year at the K-8th grade level. Additionally, each November the CogAt is used as a Child Find measure of all 2nd grade students. A committee comprised of the CGS, Special Education Director, School Psychologist, Elementary and Middle School Principals, and selected teachers review the results of that cognitive ability test (K-Bit2), along with all assessment data given at the beginning of the year through the mid-year point. Beginning,

middle, and end of year assessments may include, but are not limited to: Acadience (DIBELS) Math and Reading, iReady diagnostic and benchmarks, Direct Reading Assessment (for all K students and select students 1-4), DAZE, writing sample, phonological awareness and phonics screeners, letters/sounds/sight words, IXL screener, PSSA longitudinal scores, and reading and math series content specific unit tests, summative test average (in lieu of overall grade in the class). Specific to potentially gifted students, the committee looks for students who are showing skills and knowledge beyond their grade level benchmarks, as well as students whose progress from beginning of the year assessments to mid-year assessments shows an ability to learn large amounts of material to a mastery level and at a pace that exceeds the grade level pacing. Depending on the data, students may be out-of-level tested in content areas to see how far beyond their grade level they are able to achieve. Once a referral of any kind is made, the CGS begins the district's process for identifying potentially gifted students.

- 1) If not already done as part of a data team review, all current and past data is collected on the student to review for the indicators described in the above paragraph.
- 2) Within 10 days of referral, the Coordinator of Gifted Services (CGS) contacts the parents to explain the screening and evaluation process, and if not referred by the parents, the reason for referral. If the parents referred their child, they are informed that their child will complete the entire process of screening and Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) and a Permission to Evaluate is sent home; however, the CGS will contact them after the screening process to discuss the results of the screening. At that time, they have the option to rescind, in writing, their request for a full GMDE.
- 3) If the parents have not requested the referral and decline the student's participation, a waiver stating the reasons for the referral and the parent's decision to not move forward with the process is sent home for the parent's signature.
- 4) A parent input form is sent home to gather the parents' observations about developmental milestones, their concerns and goals for their child, and anecdotal information about their child's thinking.
- 5) A teacher input form is sent to every teacher who teaches the child. If the referral is prior to the first semester, the child's previous year content area teachers also receive a form. The form used is a Performance and Ability Indication Scale (adapted from Gifted Rating Scales by Pfeiffer and Jarosewich). This asks the teachers to rank the student as normed to the Top 1%, Top 10%, Top 25%, Top 50% of all the students they have taught in three areas: Intellectual, Academic, and Motivation.
- 6) The GCS meets with the student and explains the purpose of the testing to assuage any concerns the student may have before administering the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test - 2nd ed. (K-Bit2). If the student appears apprehensive, the administration is delayed until a parent can be contacted.
- 7) Once the KBIT2 has been given and scored, a committee meets to discuss all the data gathered about the student. This committee is comprised of the School Psychologist, the Special Education Director, the GCS, the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, the gifted support teacher for that grade band, and a regular education teacher who teaches the child. The committee looks for markers that the student may potentially meet the 3-prong criteria of Giftedness in PA.
- 8) If the committee sees any evidence that the student may need Specially Designed Instruction to achieve at least a year's worth of growth from their start point

and/or displays cognitive, affective, or behavioral gifted characteristics, the parents are notified by phone call or letter that the student needs a GMDE, who will issue a Permission to Evaluate. 9) If the committee does not see evidence of potential giftedness from the data gathered, the CGS contacts the parents to describe the findings, including next steps to meet the student's needs in the classroom (regardless of identification). If the parents have already requested an evaluation or request an evaluation at that time, the CGS explains the rights of the parents to continue with the process. The CGS then informs the School Psychologist's office to issue a Permission to Evaluate. 10) All steps of the process, and dates completed are tracked by the CGS. A note about equity of identification – Because different factors can mask giftedness, special consideration is given to the district's EL, minority, low socio-economic, and SPED population in regard to screening and identification. These populations may require testing accommodations, re-testing in the event appropriate accommodations were not provided at the time of district academic testing, classroom observation by the CGS, translated materials, multiple testing sessions, and/or any other provision necessary to get an accurate, unbiased look at the student's needs.

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

Once the Permission to Evaluate is returned, the School Psychologist administers a comprehensive battery of assessments, including individual achievement and cognitive assessments, to assess students via nationally normed, standardized assessments. Our School Psychologist uses the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test | Fourth Edition (WIAT-4) and the WISC-V Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Fifth Ed. She also uses the Gifted Rating Scales (standardized rating scales). Once the School Psychologist-administered assessments are complete, the School Psychologist contacts the participants to of the Gifted Multi-Disciplinary Team to complete the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE). In Tyrone Area School District, much of the data that is part of the GMDE is collected during the screening step, as described in the above section. Additional input is received from parents and teachers, along with a review of records and the student's curriculum-based scores. The GMDT participants include the School Psychologist, the Director of Special Education (LEA rep), the gifted support teacher for the grade band, the CGE, grade level teachers, the parents, and the student. The GMDT considers all parts of the GMDE and completes a Gifted Written Report to determine whether the student is gifted and in need of SDI. If the student is identified as gifted, the GIEP team writes the initial Gifted Individualized Educational Plan (GIEP), using academic strengths and instructional levels shown in the data collected to write goals. Once the GIEP has been drafted, reviewed, and accepted by all parties, a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is signed and implemented within five days (if the meeting was in-person, otherwise within ten days).

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.

A TASD is committed to providing gifted education services that are designed and implemented in order for gifted students to demonstrate growth and progress. We believe that gifted programming must be integrated into the regular school program so that there is challenge throughout the school day, not just during a few hours a week. To best serve our gifted population, our district:

- Provides an appropriately differentiated instructional program responsive to student ability and learning needs.
- Assists students in achieving maximum use of potential to achieve personal success.
- Provides a continuum of program service options.
- Addresses the social and emotional needs of diverse gifted students.
- Supports an educational environment that challenges gifted learners and enables students to perform at levels of excellence.
- Facilitates the development of self-directed learners.

Program Goals We believe that our best chance to provide instruction that challenges all students to perform at individual levels of excellence will come from cultivating the common ground between gifted education and general education.

1. To integrate gifted education into the total school program through service options that are flexible, dynamic, and inclusive.
2. To create a learning environment that values and nurtures intellectual ability, creativity, and decision making by providing an array of service options which supports individual growth at varying levels of abilities, needs, and interests.
3. To develop an identification procedure using multiple criteria to appraise student need for differentiated services and the kind of services needed.
4. To provide a comprehensive staff development program to enable teachers to more appropriately serve the needs of advanced learners.
5. To involve parents and other community members in the effort to enrich and extend the learning opportunities for advanced learners inside and outside the school.
6. To differentiate and enrich the core curriculum to challenge the advanced learner. We endorse the following working definition of differentiation (Carol Tomlinson, 1995): "...consistently using a variety of instructional approaches to modify content, process, and/or products in response to learning readiness and interest of academically diverse students."
7. To provide opportunities for acceleration to allow high ability students to move through material at the pace appropriate for their abilities.
8. To use flexible grouping options to give advanced learners peer support and chances to work together without separating them from the rest of their classmates.
9. To progress-monitor student growth as a means of both student and district accountability.
10. To encourage collaboration among teachers in the same and different schools through flexible schedules, staff development, and administrative support.

The Tyrone Area High School Gifted Program is based on the following tenets:

- Students should be enrolled in rigorous courses that reflect authentic and genuine advancement.
- Students should be active, thinking participants in the world around them.
- Students should be exposed to ideas that challenge and affirm their own beliefs.
- Students should engage in thinking and activities at a level that challenges and expands their limits.
- Because most gifted students come equipped with the tools to fluently read, write, and speak the materials they encounter, the pursuit of these activities must be engaging, while encouraging higher order thinking and value judgments.
- Coursework and activities

should focus mainly on the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, while always reinforcing and assessing the basics. • Learning activities should reach across curriculums and subject areas to allow students to make meaningful connections in their learning. • Students should encounter a wide range of reading, writing, and speaking activities similar to those they will encounter after high school. • Classes should be taught in an environment that encourages expression, creativity, discussion, and debate. All students who are identified as gifted are assigned to a gifted support case manager. This professional educator is trained by the CGS, attends state-approved trainings at our Intermediate Unit (or others, if not offered at ours), and attends the Gifted Network meetings at our IU when possible. The gifted support teacher is responsible for working with GIEP team to annually (and as needed) review and revise GIEP, collaborate with regular education teacher(s), arrange career exploration (High School) with local businesses, and be an advocate for the students' needs. At all grade levels, GIEP goals are written to the PA standards at the students' instructional levels, with measurable progress objectives. Gifted services are all integrated into a student's classes/coursework and school day, unless the GIEP team determines that pull-out enrichment is necessary to meet the student's needs (this is rare). In grades K-6, all gifted students are cluster-grouped for content area classes with students who are either identified as being gifted with strengths in that area or non-identified peers who demonstrate significant strengths, similar retention and acquisition rates, and high motivation to learn. Within those classes and groups, students are taught skills, concepts, and knowledge that is aligned to the same learning outcome as other groups but at a higher grade level or standard. Beyond this differentiation, gifted students' Specially Designed Instruction is individualized to the student. Examples of SDI previously used with students include unit/skill/topic pre-testing to compact curriculum, blended learning, or independent/paired inquiry-based learning projects to allow a student to dive deeper into a topic or skill when they can demonstrate skills/knowledge at their instructional level, individualized direct instruction specific to gaps resulting from acceleration, and reduction of practice when mastery is demonstrated. In grades 7-12, gifted students are served much the same as in grades K-6, with the primary differences being the career exploration (beyond the state-required artifact completion), being grouped for their advisory class (with the gifted support teacher in grades 9-12), and focused long-term schedule mapping to ensure time in the late high school years is available for Dual Enrollment (DE), Concurrent Enrollment (CE), and online advanced coursework. The GIEP is not written to dictate curriculum or scope and sequence options, as Honors, DE, CE, and online advanced coursework are available to all students. Neither does the GIEP team overrule requirements to permit a gifted student to be scheduled into a course they have not met the requirements for; however, if a gifted student is not demonstrating expected academic performance and/or motivation, the GIEP team explores root causes and may refer the student for intervening services. Regardless of placement in any particular course, differentiation, acceleration, and enrichment through SDI continue similarly to the K-6 grade band. Clubs, competitions, and participation in special events/activities are offered to all students, regardless of identification. The Coordinator of Gifted Services

received over 100 hours of training in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System by professional educators and researchers, including Carol Ann Tomlinson, and has worked with gifted populations throughout her 25-year teaching and administrative career. She continues to research best practices and participate in trainings outside of the district to remain knowledgeable about gifted students and differentiating instruction. Annually, she provides training about gifted students, the district philosophy, services, and framework for all professional teaching staff and paraprofessionals. This training includes a focus on differentiation in product, process, and content as well as the equalizer metaphor developed by Carol Ann Tomlinson. Conceptual understanding, critical thinking, high-level questioning by students, problem-solving, stimulating intellectual curiosity, and synthesis of information are all emphasized. Misconceptions, myths, and unacceptable practices are also explored and explained.

Leslie A Estep
Chief School Administrator

07/14/2022
Date