



Pittsburgh Gifted and Talented Support Office | 1400 Crucible Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15205  
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### **Gifted and Talented Education Program**

Pittsburgh Public's Gifted and Talented Education Program reflects and extends our mission statement to prepare all children to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life. The program is designed to equitably and effectively identify and support students with exceptional abilities, providing them with challenging, enriching learning experiences. We aim to foster the development of intellectual curiosity, task commitment, self-discipline, independent learning skills, respectful conduct, and social/emotional balance. This collaborative effort involves gifted learners, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Pittsburgh Public School District, ensuring a comprehensive approach to student development.

### **Gifted Evaluation Process**

To identify students who may be eligible for gifted education, a universal screening is conducted annually. This systematic screening process fulfills the district's obligation to conduct child find activities for students who may need services or instruction not ordinarily provided in the general education curriculum. The review considers information about academic and cognitive abilities. Universal screening occurs in second grade. Screening may occur for students in alternate grades via parent or team referral. It is our goal to support schools as efficiently and equitably as possible, and to service our Gifted and Talented students with high-quality, meaningful programming. To that end, we have worked to create a process that:

- Is effective in identifying gifted students from diverse backgrounds and experiences;
- Is clearly understood by parents and school staff;
- Highly values stakeholder feedback;
- Is aligned to state regulations and gifted best practices.

The Gifted Evaluation Process is an in-depth process which requires the input of multiple people and departments. Because so much time and care go into reviewing each student's profile, we ask schools and parents/ guardians to wait at least 6 weeks after the start of the school year to start a Gifted Evaluation as teacher input is highly valued during this process. It is difficult for teachers to give valid feedback on students they do not know well.



Additionally, we want to be sure we are using the most up-to-date data for students; often last year's grades and test scores are truly outdated.

### **Gifted Screening and Identification Process**

The Pittsburgh Public School District's utilizes multiple criteria to determine if a student is eligible for gifted education and is in need of specially designed instruction based on their need. The term "mentally gifted" includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher, or meets multiple criteria as set forth in Department Guidelines indicating gifted ability. Multiple criteria that are indicative of giftedness include but are not limited to: achievement, rate of acquisition and retention, early skill development, and intervening factors. Students can be evaluated at any grade level for gifted services and may be referred for a Gifted Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) through any of the following avenues:

- **Universal Screening:** The district conducts annually gifted screenings for students in grade 2. Students who score within the predetermined range will be referred for an evaluation.
- **Staff Referral:** If a teacher, counselor, or building principal feels a student may need specially designed instruction, they will refer the student for a gifted evaluation.
- **Parent Referral:** Parents can request that their child be evaluated for gifted services once per school year. Please contact your child's guidance counselor if you would like to submit a request.

The district cannot proceed with a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) without parental consent. Once a referral for a gifted evaluation is initiated by any of the avenues listed above, the district will issue a Permission to Evaluate (PTE) form to the parents within 10 calendar days. Upon return of the signed PTE, the district has 60 calendar days to conduct the gifted evaluation and issue a Gifted Written Report to the team. The GMDE uses a wide variety of data sources to determine gifted eligibility. A certified school psychologist will conduct a comprehensive GMDE that may include, but is not limited to:

- Cognitive Ability tests
- National normed individualized, standardized achievement assessment tests
- Gifted Rating Scales
- Classwork samples



- Curriculum-based assessments
- Performance-based skills as demonstrated in portfolios, products, competitions, or other demonstrations of skills
- Teacher observations
- Parent Input

Once the school psychologist has administered the appropriate assessments and collected the data listed above, they will compile all the information into a Gifted Written Report (GWR). The final report must be presented to the school team and parents within 60 calendar days of the date the Permission to Evaluate form was received by the school district. Prior to the 60-day timeline date, a GMDE meeting will take place with all team members to discuss the results of the evaluation. GMDE team members, at a minimum, must include the:

- School Psychologist
- Building Principal
- Student's Parents/Guardian
- Student's Classroom Teacher(s)
- Student (if age appropriate or the parents request their attendance)

At the GMDE meeting, the team will discuss the following two questions:

Question 1: *Is the student mentally gifted according to PA Gifted Education Law?*

1. The child has an IQ of 130 or above.
2. The child has an IQ of 130, which falls within a 90% confidence interval.
3. The child has an IQ of less than 130, where the student has evidence that strongly indicates giftedness (3 of 5 of the multiple criteria: \*achievement (required), \*demonstrated achievement (required), rates of acquisition and retention, early literacy skills, and intervening factors.)

Question 2: *If the student is identified as gifted, are they in need of Specially Designed Instruction in the identified strength areas?*

Upon conclusion of the GMDE meeting, if the student being evaluated is determined to be gifted AND in need of specially designed instruction, the school team and parents will meet within 30 calendar days to develop a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP).



Need is typically defined as demonstrated achievement a year or more above grade level. Other indicators that may require discussion of need are those who may be dual exceptional or ELDs (English Language Development). Each GMDE will determine the need for specially designed instruction based on the many factors associated with the child's academic and socio-emotional needs.

### **Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP)**

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) is the framework of a student's program and should consist of information that is useful in providing appropriate programming and support services. The GIEP is a yearly summary document that includes all curricular areas in which a gifted child is to receive education that is adapted and modified to provide opportunities to participate in acceleration or enrichment, or both, as appropriate for the student's individual needs. The options must enable them to learn at different rates, to learn difficult material earlier, and to think at a level different from their classmates.

A GIEP meeting must be held at least annually. In addition, a GIEP meeting must be held when a parent(s)/guardian(s) or teacher requests a meeting to develop, review, or revise a student's individualized education plan. The GIEP Team includes the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student if 16 years of age or older (or younger if the parent(s)/guardian(s) chooses to have the student participate), a representative of the District who serves as the chairperson of the GIEP Team who 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, and/or other individuals at the discretion of either the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the District.

The district will take steps to ensure that one or both parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student attend the GIEP meeting or have the opportunity to participate. An invitation to the GIEP meeting must be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) at least 10 calendar days before. The meeting will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

Components of the GIEP include:

- **Present Levels of Educational Performance** which establish the extent of gifted potential, academic functioning levels, the child's rates of acquisition/retention, and performance levels. Information would include Academic/Cognitive Strengths, Achievement Results (aligned to grade/course level standards to indicate instructional level), Progress on Goals (for annual review only), Aptitudes, interests,

specialized skills, products, and evidence of effectiveness in other academic areas, and Grades/Classroom Performance as Indicated by Subject Area Teachers.

- **Annual Goals** are to be developed from the present levels of educational performance and be reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress within one year's time.
- **Short-term Learning Outcomes** are the actions and activities that will help the child reach the annual goals, evaluation criteria to determine when the child has achieved the annual goals, and the timelines. They should include what the student will produce, how the student will apply the skills, or what real outcome will be achieved as a result of their engaging in a study, activity, or subject.
- **Specially Designed Instruction** are the adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum. Specially designed instruction consists of planning and implementing varied approaches to content, process and product modification in response to the student's interests, ability levels, readiness, and learning needs.
- **Support Services** could include, but are not limited to career guidance, counseling, affective education, transportation, technology education, and flexible grouping.
- **Dates** indicate when the services will begin and the anticipated duration, based on one year, of the services.

### **Gifted and Talented Programming**

Acceleration in gifted education refers to a wide variety of educational and instructional strategies that allow students to progress through educational material at a faster pace than their peers. It aims to match the pace of learning to the students' advanced abilities, providing them with appropriately challenging material. The Pittsburgh Public School District Gifted Program provides opportunities for students from grades K-12 to accelerate through grade skipping (whole-grade acceleration), continuous progress, self-paced instruction, subject-based acceleration, combined classes, curriculum compacting, telescoping curriculum, mentoring, extracurricular programs, online learning courses, and on-site gifted model schools. Specific to elementary acceleration, gifted students may qualify for early admission to kindergarten. At the secondary level, gifted students may qualify for dual enrollment, advanced placement, early entrance, and early graduation.

Enrichment in the context of gifted programs refers to educational and instructional strategies designed to deepen and expand students learning experiences beyond the



standard curriculum. It aims to provide intellectually stimulating opportunities that challenge and engage gifted students catering to their advanced abilities and interests. The Pittsburgh Public School District Gifted Program provides enrichment opportunities for students from grades K-12 via enhanced curriculum, project-based learning, advanced problem-solving tasks, independent research projects, specialized workshops, such as, engaging in advanced coursework, extended learning opportunities, competitions, contests, challenges, or experiences.

The gifted support program, for students at the K-8 level, provides opportunities for students to enhance their individual strengths and interests with specifically designed activities and enrichment experiences. Students meet weekly at the Pittsburgh Gifted Center at Greenway where they participate in accelerated, hands-on courses. When not attending the Center, the needs of gifted students are met at their home schools. Students attending the Gifted Center enroll in various courses in the humanities, math, and/or science content areas. All courses focus on process skills which include problem solving, self-directed learning, interaction, creative thinking, higher-level thinking, and decision making. Technology instruction is a major focus at the Center and is infused in all curricula. The Gifted Center curriculum allows students the opportunity to complete hands-on, independent projects that match their interests. Students are enrolled in one course that lasts all year and two additional semester-long courses.

The district has also implemented an on-site gifted support program, which offers Dillworth and Grandview elementary students differentiated, accelerated instruction at their home school five days a week. The on-site gifted teacher provides pull-out instruction and push-in services to the regular classroom to offer differentiated instruction to gifted students. A true inclusion model, the on-site gifted teacher works closely with school personnel, parents, and community members to identify students with a profile that strongly indicates gifted ability.

Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy implements an on-site gifted model that is school-wide. The on-site gifted program offers students differentiated instruction which includes enriched and accelerated service delivery models for gifted and high ability performing students. The model is a true inclusion model where students receive differentiated instruction on a daily basis and access to interest topics through the activity periods.



At the high school level, The Centers for Advanced Studies (CAS) program includes enriched and accelerated courses for gifted students. CAS courses are enriched, high-level, and accelerated honors courses that follow the Purdue Three-Stage model and create opportunities for student-led inquiry, deep investigation of interest-based topics, and collaborative long-term projects. CAS courses are awarded an additional .5 weight to account for the added rigor that is infused into the curriculum. The CAS program provides for enriched and specially designed instruction in the following ways: an inquiry/problem solving approach to learning, advanced media and computer technology support, independent studies, Long Term Projects supported by a teacher, community and/or university mentors, and program facilitator(s) at each site.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**My child attends a private/parochial school, can my child receive services at the Gifted Center?**

We are not able to offer any “dual enrollment” opportunities for non-PPS students at the Gifted Center.

**My child was tested and identified as mentally gifted but chose to attend a private school instead. Does my child need to be retested to receive gifted services when they enroll in a Pittsburgh Public School in the future?**

This depends on how long ago your child was tested, and if your child has a current GIEP. Typically, a re-evaluation should take place every two years for students without an active GIEP. This decision tree may help you determine whether your child needs to be re-evaluated.

**1. Does the student have a previous GIEP?**

- Yes (if yes, move to step 2)
- No (if no, move to step 3)

**2. End Date of the most recent GIEP \_\_\_\_\_**

More than 2 years old on December 15th of the current school year?


- Yes (if yes, move to step 3)



- No (if no, no new evaluation is needed if your student is enrolling for gifted services during the current or next school year)

**3. Date of most recent psychological exam \_\_\_\_\_**

More than 3 years old?

- Yes (if yes, your student needs to be re-evaluated) 
- No (if no, please submit a supporting portfolio)

**If I move from out of state and my child was identified as gifted, do I need to have my child retested?**

All non-military, out of state transfers are required to complete a new evaluation and Gifted Written Report.

**If I move from another school district in Pennsylvania will my child receive gifted services?**

If a student moves from one school district in Pennsylvania to another, the new district must implement the existing GIEP to the extent possible and must provide the services and programs specified in an interim GIEP agreed to by the parents until a new GIEP is developed and implemented. A reevaluation may be necessary prior to developing a new GIEP.

**I am not sure when my psychological evaluation is—who should I contact?**

Please contact psychological services at: 412-529-3132.

**When and where can I get the results of the evaluation?**

The psychologist evaluating your child will contact you to share the psychological assessments results. It is important to keep in mind that the psychological results are only a part of the total Gifted Evaluation. The determination of whether there is a need for gifted services is made by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team and the final recommendation will be issued by the Gifted Support Office. After your child is tested and all necessary forms compiled, a team reviews the information and makes a recommendation. If your child attends Dilworth and Grandview, the Gifted Resource teacher at your child's school will contact you regarding the recommendation. If your son or daughter is in grades K- 8 at any other school, you will be contacted by the Gifted Center staff regarding the recommendation. If your child is in grades 9- 12, the Gifted Support Office will contact you regarding the recommendation. Summer testing results will typically be available in September of the same year; however, summer days do not count against the deadline for conducting an evaluation.





### **What happens if my child does not qualify for gifted services?**

Your child will continue to receive regular education services. If you disagree with the recommendation, you should consult the procedural safeguards notice issued with the NORA, which sets forth your procedural rights.

### **How often can my child get tested if they do not qualify?**

One time per school year.

### **What happens if my child qualifies for gifted educational services?**

If a child is identified as requiring gifted services, the parents are contacted and invited to attend the Gifted Individual Educational Plan (GIEP) meeting. At this meeting, the results of the testing are shared and a GIEP is written. Also, a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is signed by the parent. This establishes, by law, the student's right to gifted educational services and the District's obligation to provide those services.

### **What requirements do students need to meet to earn the CAS seal on their diploma?**

Gifted and Talented students who take eight CAS, AP, or IB courses (or any combination) and complete three Long Term Projects are eligible to receive the CAS seal on their diploma.

### **Contact Us**

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**District Office** (412) 529-4357



## **Directory of Organizations and Resources**

### **Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE)**

PAGE, Inc.  
P.O. Box 452  
Natrona Heights, PA 15065  
PAGE Help line: 1-888-736-6443  
[giftedpage.org](http://giftedpage.org)

### **Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3 (Gifted Education contacts)**

Amy Davis: [amy.davis@aiu3.net](mailto:amy.davis@aiu3.net)

### **Council for Exceptional Children**

[cec.sped.org](http://cec.sped.org)

### **Neag Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development**

University of Connecticut  
2131 Hillside Road, Unit 3007  
Storrs, CT 06269-3007  
860-486-4826  
[gifted.uconn.edu](http://gifted.uconn.edu)

### **Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN)**

[pattan.net](http://pattan.net)

### **Pennsylvania Department of Education**

[Pde.state.pa.us](http://Pde.state.pa.us)

### **Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)**

[sengifted.org](http://sengifted.org)