

NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



GIFTED SERVICES PLAN **July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2031**

Revised October 2024

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NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Northern Lehigh School District is to provide a safe school climate where everyone is valued, respected, and included. Our community promotes a collaborative and supportive learning culture that meets students at their level and challenges all to learn and grow. We prepare and motivate our students for their future endeavors by teaching them essential skills, civic responsibility, and an appreciation for life-long learning. We encourage pride in ourselves, schools, and community. We strive for excellence in all we do.

OUR SCHOOLS



Peters Elementary School (K-2)



Slatington Elementary School (3-6)



Northern Leigh Middle School (7-8)



Northern Lehigh High School (9-12)

MOTTO

Living, learning, and leading to make every story better.

OVERVIEW OF GIFTED PROGRAM

The Northern Lehigh School District strives to inform stakeholders about gifted services annually, describe the process for identifying students who are thought to be eligible and in need of specially designed instruction, explain the process for determining eligibility for gifted services, and provide high-quality, meaningful programming for gifted students at each level.

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEDURES

In compliance with the law, the Northern Lehigh School District posts the Gifted Services Annual Notice. This information is included in our school handbooks and is posted on the Northern Lehigh School District webpage. A copy of the Gifted Services Annual Notice can be found in Appendix A of this plan.

SCREENING AND REFERRAL PROCESS

Chapter 16 requires each school district to adopt and use a system to locate and identify all students within that district who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(a))

School District Screening

At least annually, the Northern Lehigh School District reviews student information to identify students who may be mentally gifted and should be considered for a gifted evaluation using established procedures. This screening process fulfills the District's responsibility to identify students who may need services or instruction that typically are not provided in general education.

The school team reviews existing information about all students' abilities and performance, which includes but is not limited to the following:

- DIBELS 8th Edition
- PSSA (3-8)
- IXL – Language Arts / Math (1-12)
- Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT)

- Keystone Exams (8-12)
- Course/Class Grades
- Other assessment data

The district may initiate a referral for a gifted evaluation based on the data collected for screening. The special education office will send a Permission to Evaluate form to the parent along with a parent input form. The Permission to Evaluate form must be signed and returned for the evaluation to proceed.

Staff Referral

Staff referrals for gifted multidisciplinary evaluation are made when a student demonstrates characteristics consistent with giftedness and/or academic performance that far exceeds that of other students in the general classroom. When it is determined that a teacher referral should proceed, the district will send a Permission to Evaluate form to the parent along with a parent input form. The Permission to Evaluate form must be signed and returned for the evaluation to proceed.

Parent/Guardian Referral

Parent referrals for an evaluation for gifted services, in verbal or written form, can be communicated to any professional staff member. We encourage parents to submit their request in writing to the school principal. The district will then send a packet to the parent containing a Permission to Evaluate along with a parent input form. The Permission to Evaluate form must be completed and returned to the special education office to begin the evaluation process. Parents may request an evaluation for gifted education at any time. A sample parent request form is included in Appendix B of this plan.

EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY FOR 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) “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. 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 admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted includes an assessment by a certified school psychologist. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))

The multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include: (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e))

- (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 judgement.
- (4) Early and measured use of high level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication 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 (defined in 34CFR 300.8), gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) will be completed and a copy of the Gifted Written Report (GWR) presented to parents/guardians within 60 calendar days from the date that the Permission to Evaluate (PTE) was received.

The evaluation will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Data Review from Universal Screeners
- Intelligence Test
- Achievement Test

- Curriculum Based Assessments
- Gifted Rating Scales
- Report Cards
- Academic Performance (acquisition and retention)
- Input from Teachers, Parents/Guardians, School Counselor, Principal
- Other factors

The 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.

An invitation to participate in the GIEP meeting will be sent to parents at least 10 calendar days in advance of the GIEP meeting and a GIEP shall be developed within 30 calendar days after issuance of the GWR.

GIFTED SERVICES

School districts must, by direct service or through arrangement with other agencies, provide gifted education for gifted students which enables them to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to their intellectual and academic abilities and needs.

In each of our schools gifted support services adjust with the developmental level of the student. Student strength-based opportunities are developed through the GIEP team meeting. Below is a summary of the continuum of gifted programs in the Northern Lehigh School District at each level.

Elementary School

In both Peters Elementary School (K-2) and Slatington Elementary School (3-6), students receive academic extensions and enrichment opportunities according to their individualized gifted education plan. These experiences help students to explore areas of strength while being

challenged through academic rigor. For students who have a need for specially designed instruction that goes beyond the grade level courses available to them, students may be accelerated.

Middle School

In the middle school, students have the opportunity for enrichment through their courses, and in 8th grade, may take Algebra I. For students who have a need for specially designed instruction that goes beyond the grade level courses available to them in the NLMS curriculum guide, students may be accelerated. This is done through enrollment in upper level middle school courses or high school courses. Independent study options are also available through Bulldog Academy (our in-district cyber option).

High School

At the high school level, GIEP goals are developed if students have a need for specially designed instruction that goes beyond the courses available in the NLHS Program of Study. In many cases, student needs are met through honors or advanced placement (AP) courses, independent study, the scholars or emerging health programs, dual enrollment, or career and technical education options. For students who have a need for specially designed instruction that goes beyond the grade level courses available to them in the NLHS Program of Study, students may be accelerated.

GIFTED SUPPORT CONTACTS

If you have any questions about gifted services or the information contained in this Gifted Services Plan, please reach out to one of the contacts below and they will be happy to speak to you further.

Mrs. Kathleen O'Donnell, Gifted Facilitator (Grades K-6), kaodonnell@nlsd.org

Mr. Charles George, Gifted Facilitator, (Grades 7-12), cgeorge@nlsd.org

Mr. Gene Marks, School Psychologist – gmarks@nlsd.org

Mr. Sidney Snyder, School Psychologist – ssnyder@nlsd.org

Mrs. Michele Dotta, Director of Special Education – mdotta@nlsd.org

Dr. Tania Stoker, Assistant Superintendent – tstoker@nlsd.org

Public Review

APPENDIX

Appendix A - Gifted Services Annual Notice

In Pennsylvania, students qualify as exceptional if they are 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.

School districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services under 22 PA Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding gifted services, parents/guardians may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

Parent/Guardians of identified students are afforded specific rights by law. These rights are not limited to annual program review and specific procedural rights in matters of dispute over educational programs and/or placements.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Tania Stoker, Assistant Superintendent
Northern Lehigh School District
1201 Shadow Oaks Lane
Slatington, PA 18080
Phone: 610-767-9800 opt 3
E-Mail: tstoker@nlsd.org

Appendix B – Gifted Education Referral Form

NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



Gifted Education Referral Form

Student's Name: _____
School: _____
Person Referring: _____
Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____
Grade Level: _____
Referral Date: _____

The student above has a referral for possible gifted identification in (check areas):

- Superior Cognitive Ability
- Specific Academic Ability (Please indicate subject area)
 - Reading/Writing Mathematics Science Social Studies
- Creative Thinking Ability

Reason(s) for Referral:

- Report card reflects consistent high performance in content area/across all subjects
- Asks/Answers questions above and beyond same age peers
- Enjoys independent study or research / Seeks to know more beyond curriculum
- Writes/Creates using detail and originality

Please add any additional information describing your reason(s) for referring this student:

Signature of Person Referring: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C – Gifted Process Timelines

