

Pittsburgh Public School District's
Gifted Education Plan Assurances (Chapter 16)

2024 - 2027

1. Describe your district's Child Find public notice procedures conducted annually to inform the public of the gifted education services AND programs offered (newspaper, student handbooks, school website, etc.). *

To effectively inform the public about the gifted services and programs available, Pittsburgh Public School District employs a range of strategies, including public announcements, direct communication, informational sessions, collaboration with local agencies, website updates, and school counseling services. Public announcements are made through various media channels such as the district website and social media platforms to highlight the availability of gifted education services, ensuring broad community reach and visibility. Additionally, schools send notices and informational brochures directly to parents and guardians, either via email or during school meetings and events. The district also hosts informational meetings for parents, educators, and community members, where the gifted education programs, eligibility criteria, and application process are explained in detail. Furthermore, the district collaborates with local community organizations and agencies to help disseminate information about gifted programs to a wider audience. The district's website features a comprehensive page about gifted education, with resources for parents, eligibility details, and instructions for initiating the referral process. These procedures are designed to ensure that all families are well-informed about the gifted education opportunities available and have easy access to the necessary information to apply or get involved.

2. Describe your district's screening process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction. Use district specific details including the data sources used in the process as well as the titles for those staff who have an active role in screening. If the district uses a matrix/rubric, include the matrix in this section. *

The Pittsburgh Public School District utilizes a multi-criteria screening and identification process of gifted students. To identify students who may be eligible for gifted education, various screening activities are conducted annually. This systematic screening process

fulfills the district's obligations 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 is conducted in the second grade at Pittsburgh Public School District. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) will be administered to all 2nd grade students. Screening may occur for students in alternative grades via parent or team referral. Specific data available for each grade level varies, but typically includes information such as academic performance and ability assessments, including, but not limited to the following:

Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keystone Exams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math Grade Acceleration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above-level Academic Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Based Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Grades

Moreover, if parents and/or guardians suspect their child is gifted they may request an evaluation in writing at any time, with a limit of one request per school year. As per 22 PA. Code § 16.22 (c), if a parent makes the request for an evaluation. The school district must inform them to put the request in writing. When the district receives the written request, the parents will receive a Permission to Evaluate form within 10 calendar days of the written request. The district must receive a parent signature on the form permitting the evaluation in order to continue with the evaluation process. Parents will also be asked to provide information that will be included in the evaluation.

3. Describe your district specific process for determining ELIGIBILITY (through MULTIPLE CRITERIA) and NEED (based on ACADEMIC STRENGTH) for potentially mentally gifted students (EVALUATION). Use district specific details including the data sources used in the process as well as the titles for those staff who have an active role in the evaluation process. If the district uses a matrix/rubric for evaluation that is different from the one described in Question 2, include the different matrix in this section.

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. 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 in the predetermined range will be referred for an evaluation.
- Staff Referral: If a teacher, counselor, or building principal feels that a student may be in need of 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.

The district can't 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 of 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 ELLs (English Language Learners). Each GMDE will determine "need" based on the many factors associated with the child's academic and socio-emotional needs.

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. Describe what acceleration means and how it is applied in each of the grade spans (EL, MS,HS). Describe what enrichment means and how it is applied in EL,MS,HS. (i.e. there are 20 forms of acceleration- which ones are offered in the district and at which grade spans are they offered). *

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 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 elementary and middle school gifted support programs provide 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, that includes grades 6-12, 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 and talented 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.

5. Look at the district's most recent PIMS October 1 snapshot in field 80. How many students are identified in each area GY (gifted with or without a 504 and receiving services on a GIEP); GS (dually exceptional/twice exceptional and receiving services through an IDEA IEP); GX (gifted and does not require specially designed instruction). Provide the numbers for each category in PIMS. Are all the district's gifted students accounted for in PIMS. If not, how are they different and how will you address the discrepancy? *

According to Pittsburgh Public School District's most recent PIMS October 1 snapshot in field 80, there are 1,303 students identified as GY and 81 students identified as GS. The district's PIMS report does not track students identified as GX. It was recently discovered that there was no mechanism configured in the IEPWriter system to properly identify students who are identified as Gifted and are not receiving gifted services. Without the configuration, the data are not captured in our student information systems to relay to PDE via PIMS reporting. The district is working with the vendor to properly record this data so reporting to PIMS can include it.

6. Review the district data for gifted identification proportionality. Is the district identification proportionately reaching the underrepresented populations? If the answer is yes, how did you address the issue. If the answer is no, how will you address the issue. *

Given the data below, the district gifted identification proportionality is not reaching the underrepresented populations.

The Pittsburgh Public School District will address this issue as follows:

- Revise identification procedures by evaluating and adjusting identification criteria to ensure they are culturally responsive and do not disadvantage any group.
- Consider factors like socioeconomic status, English, English language proficiency, and diverse cognitive strengths.
- Incorporate multiple assessment methods, including the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), teacher recommendations and performance-based assessments to capture a wider range of giftedness.
- Increase awareness and outreach by partnering with community organizations to raise awareness about gifted programs and the identification process within underrepresented communities.
- Conduct workshops for parents and teachers to educate them about gifted identification and the importance of recognizing diverse forms of giftedness.
- Provide training and professional development for educators on culturally responsive teaching practices to ensure fair identification.
- Train staff on using diverse assessment tools and recognizing diverse forms of giftedness.
- Offer enrichment activities and advanced learning opportunities in underserved communities to engage students early and build interest in gifted programs.
- Regularly monitor the demographics of students identified as gifted and enrolled in programs and compare this data with overall student demographics to evaluate progress in achieving proportionality.
- Use data and feedback to address identification practices and outreach efforts as needed to improve representation.

By implementing this plan, the district aims to create a more equitable and inclusive approach to identifying and serving gifted students, ensuring that all students have access to opportunities to match their abilities and potential.

Gifted Students for the 2024-2025 School Year:

Race	Count	%GT Count
White	988	65.39%
African American	251	16.61%
Multi-Racial	166	10.99%
Asian (not Pacific Islander)	72	4.77%
Hispanic	31	2.05%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2	0.13%
American Indian	1	0.07%

Gifted Students for the 2023-2024 School Year:

Race	Count	%GT Count
White	864	66.06%
African American	213	16.28%
Multi-Racial	142	10.86%
Asian (not Pacific Islander)	60	4.59%
Hispanic	27	2.06%
American Indian	1	0.08%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.08%

7. 22 Pa. Code § 16.5 (related to personnel) requires that a school district and intermediate unit shall provide, under section 1205.1 of the School Code (24 P.S. § 12-1205.1), in-service training for gifted and regular teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff persons responsible for gifted education. Describe how the district is addressing this mandate, including information related to how and when general education teachers are trained and held accountable for delivering gifted services. *

Pursuant to Title 22, Pa. Code § 16.5, under section 1205.1 of the School Code, Pittsburgh Public School District provides in-service training for gifted and regular teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff persons responsible for gifted education. The training is provided in person and/or asynchronously throughout the school year. To ensure the effective application of training, general education teachers are monitored through observations, walk-throughs, provided with coaching/mentoring and performance evaluations.

8. What is the breakdown of the district's total costs for gifted education for the current year?

Training for general education teachers * 19,370.00

Staff costs * 7,505,480.00

Training for gifted support staff * 11,000.00

Materials used for project-based learning * 30,000.00

Transportation * 20,000.00

Field Trips * 15,000.00