

Burgettstown Area School District Overview of State and District Gifted Guidelines and School Procedures for Parents and Students

According to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education has developed guidelines for school districts to follow, while providing gifted services for students who are identified as being “mentally gifted”. These state guidelines recognize the fact that gifted students are considered to be “children with exceptionalities” under the Public School Code of 1949 and in the need of specially designed instruction. Below is an overview of the 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16 guidelines and the procedures used by the Burgettstown Area School District to determine whether a student meets the definition of mentally gifted.

Definition of Mentally Gifted

According to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16, the definition of mentally gifted is part of a “multiple step” criteria. Below is a listing of the criteria which will be reviewed by the school, parents and other pertinent team members when determining whether a student qualifies for the Burgettstown Area School District’s gifted program:

IQ 130 or more

The term “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.... The determination shall include an assessment by a certified school psychologist. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))

No one test or measure is sufficient to determine giftedness, and the evaluation and testing literature recognizes that there is a margin for error in any standardized testing. The standard error of measurement also applies when reporting IQ.

IQ Lower than 130

A person 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. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))

If a student’s IQ is less than 130, other factors, such as academic performance, demonstrated achievement and other observed skills must strongly indicate gifted ability in order for that student to be admitted to a gifted program. Because disabilities and bias factors may mask gifted abilities, districts are cautioned to examine discrepancies between ability assessment results and academic achievement or demonstrated skills, and discrepancies among ability subtests.

Multiple Criteria

Criteria, other than IQ score, which indicate gifted ability include but are not limited to: Achievement, Rate of Acquisition/Retention, Demonstrated Achievement, Early Skill Development, and Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness.

1. Achievement

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. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e)(1))

The assessment instruments should have high enough ceilings to accurately reflect academic performance in the gifted range. Assessment should yield performance and achievement data beyond basic skills and should be used for appropriate instructional placement. The assessments should show not only what the student knows, but also where there is a need for instruction. This data should form the basis for decisions as to where, in specific content areas, specific courses or curriculum, a student should begin the learning experiences for the year. The results of the testing must provide instructional levels in all academic subject areas for use in determining educational placement.

2. Rate of Acquisition, Rate of Retention

An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e)(2))

Rate of acquisition is the rapidity or speed at which the student is able to acquire, understand, and demonstrate competency or mastery of new learning. Rate of acquisition and rate of retention of new materials/skills can be defined as how many repetitions the student needs before the student masters new information/skills and can use the information/skills appropriately any time thereafter. This data can be obtained by simple procedures such as Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA), direct observation, and reporting from parents, teachers or supervisors. An example of acquisition/retention: the gifted student with approximately one to three repetitions of new knowledge/skills is able to achieve mastery at a faster rate than a student who requires four to eight repetitions. Rate of acquisition/retention is used to adjust the pace of learning for the gifted student. See Chuska Acquisition/Retention Rating Scales. (Chapter- Additional Resources).

3. Demonstrated Achievement

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. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e)(3))

Another criterion is the student's demonstrated achievement, performance-based skills or expertise that shows a high-level of accomplishment, and indicates exceptional interest and motivation in specific areas. These may be documented in permanent products, portfolios, demonstration of skills, awards, community involvements, or others. For example: a student is a member of the high school debate team and has qualified for the state finals in grades 9, 10, and 11; a student loves to write poetry and has a folder of many unpublished works.

4. Early Skill Development

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. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e)(4))

Assessment of early and measured use of high level thinking skills could include checklists or inventories such as Guilford or Bloom's Taxonomy. It could also include anecdotal notes that document developmental milestones that are reached earlier than average students reach the milestone, or that a student has mastered skills beyond that child's age level. Skills charts often accompany grade level texts. Examples of a skills list:

- The average kindergarten student uses symbols and letters to represent words.
- The average third grade student uses a variety of sentence structures.
- The average sixth grade student writes effectively using standard grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in a final draft.

Using the above skills chart a kindergarten student who spells common words correctly, makes appropriate and varied word choices, and/or understands common capitalization and end punctuation would demonstrate achievements that are a result of early and measured use of high level thinking skills.

5. Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness

Documented, observed, validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, learning disability, physical impairment, emotional disability, gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation is masking gifted abilities. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e)(5))

Some students may have their gifted abilities masked by such factors as ethnicity, socio-economic status or disability. Data specifically tied to the student's learning environment is used to make decisions on remedial/coping strategies and specially designed instruction. For example: An economically disadvantaged household where educational resources and opportunities are lacking, a household in which English is not the first language, or a household including parental problems such as alcoholism, divorce, spouse/child abuse or incarceration may have a masking effect on the student's identification as gifted.

Burgettstown Area School District's Gifted and Talented Evaluation Process

If a parent/guardian requests for their son/daughter to be evaluated for the district's gifted and talented program, they will be required to complete a **Gifted and Talented Request Form** which will be provided by the school district. After the form is received and reviewed by the district, it may be recommended to the parent/guardian that a gifted and talented screening be completed for the student, although not mandated.

1. The screening process will be completed by a certified school psychologist while taking place within the district.
2. The following Student Screening Matrix will be completed by the certified school psychologist.

POINTS	4	3	2	1	0	SCORE
GPA	4.0-3.7	3.69-3.3	3.29-3.0	2.99-2.5	Below 2.5	
PSSA reading	advanced	proficient	basic	below basic		
PSSA math	advanced	proficient	basic	below basic		
PSSA writing	advanced	proficient	basic	below basic		
Reading achievement	95%+	94-90%	89-85%	84-80%	Below 80%	
Math achievement	95%+	94-90%	89-85%	84-80%	Below 80%	
					TOTAL	
					Average	

Evaluation Results:

- _____ Refer for psychological evaluation (3.5-4 point average).
Instructional assessment indicates high potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted or at a level which exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom.
- _____ Further evaluation is not suggested (average less than 3.5).

The results of the screening will be shared with the parent(s)/guardian along with a recommendation by the Burgettstown Area School District. The parents, school personnel and other pertinent team members will then make a team decision as to whether a comprehensive gifted evaluation is necessary.

Evaluation Process

If the gifted multidisciplinary team decides to go ahead with a comprehension gifted evaluation for the student, the following process will be followed:

A student scoring a full scale score of 130 or higher on a standardized intellectual assessment, will also be required to be assessed through the Burgettstown Area School District's Multiple Criteria Student Matrix. The multidisciplinary team will then review the results of the matrix and will make a team decision as to whether or not the student qualifies for the district's gifted and talented program.

OR

A student who does not score a full scale score of 130 or higher on a standardized intellectual assessment, will also be required to be assessed through the Burgettstown Area School District's Multiple Criteria Student Matrix. The student must score an 18 or higher on the matrix to qualify for the district's gifted and talented program.

Multiple Criteria Student Matrix

POINTS	4	3	2	1	0	Score
Points from Screening Total	3.5-4	3.0-3.4	2.5-2.9	2.0-2.4	Below 2.0	
Full Scale IQ Score	125-129	120-124	115-119	110-114	Below 110	
Acquisition and Retention Rating	12 pts.	10-11 pts.	8-9 pts	6-7 pts.	Below 6 pts	
7 Skill Areas	4 (or more)	3	2	1	0	
Gifted Scale	98+	84-97	69-83	<69		
					Total	0

**** A Total Score of 18 or more points equates recommendation for gifted support**

Parental Request for Gifted Screening or Evaluation

If a parent/guardian would like to request an initial gifted screening or evaluation for their child, please follow the below steps:

1. Request the gifted screening or evaluation orally or in writing, to the Burgettstown Area School District's Special Education Coordinator. The written request can take the form of a written letter or email by using the below contact information.

- If requesting by mail, please send to:

Walinda Nicholson
Special Education Coordinator
Burgettstown Area School District
104 Bavington Road
Burgettstown, PA 15021

OR

Email: [wnicholson@burgettstown.k12.pa.us](mailto:w Nicholson@burgettstown.k12.pa.us)

Evaluation Timeline

Once a parent/guardian makes an oral or written request for a gifted and talented evaluation, the school will follow the process outline below:

1. The school district will send home a **Gifted and Talented Evaluation Request** form for the parent/guardian to complete and send back to Michele Burton the district's Special Education Coordinator.
2. If the district consents to the evaluation, the school will then send the parent/guardian a **Permission to Evaluate/Reevaluation** form, a copy of the **procedural safeguards** (parent rights) and a parent/guardian **gifted questionnaire**.
3. The parent/guardian is to keep the procedural safeguards for their records, complete the parent/guardian gifted questionnaire and sign/date the permission to evaluate/reevaluate form, if the parent/guardian gives consent to a gifted and talented evaluation. The parent/guardian is to mail these documents back to the school by using the post addressed stamped envelope, which will be provided with the packet of information.
4. The evaluation timeline begins from the date the school district receives the **Permission to Evaluate/Reevaluate** form, back from the parent.
5. The gifted multidisciplinary evaluation will be completed within **60 calendar days**.
6. The Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) must be completed **30 calendar days** after the GWR is written.
7. The parent will be asked to sign a **Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA)**, which shows agreement to the placement/program in which the student will be enrolled.

8. The GIEP will be **implemented no more than 10 school days** after it is signed or the start of the following school year if the GIEP was developed fewer than 30 days before the last school day of the year.

Confidentiality

§ 16.65. Confidentiality.

Each agency shall protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding a gifted student or a student thought to be gifted in accordance with section 13(a) of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C.A. § 1232g), 34 CFR Part 99 (relating to family educational rights and privacy), Chapter 12 (relating to students) and other applicable law.

Description of Burgettstown Area School District's Gifted Program

The Burgettstown Area School District provides a wide array of activities and programs for students who have found to be eligible for the district's gifted and talented program. The needs of each student are addressed in a GIEP and are based on their individual needs. Annual goals and/or short term objectives (if appropriate) are developed in the GIEP along with specially designed instruction which will be implemented in accordance with the GIEP.

The activities in which students in the gifted program can participate may vary from year to year. The activities may consist of but are not limited to:

- Enrichment activities stemming from the regular education/supplemental curriculum(s)
- Supplemental Instruction from school personnel
- Individual or team competitions (Local, State and/or National)
- Community Service opportunities
- Educational field trips

Each year, an elementary/middle-high school checklist is created, to help students/parents choose activities for each school year. It is important to note that these checklists are not a comprehensive list and other activities, projects and/or academic opportunities can be added at any time, upon the discretion of the GIEP team. If you have any questions with regards to the Burgettstown Area School District gifted program, please do not hesitate to contact me by using the below contact information:

Walinda Nicholson
Special Education Coordinator
Burgettstown Area School District
724-947-8104
wnicholson@burgettstown.k12.pa.us