

NESHANNOCK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

I. Definition of Mentally Gifted

The definition of mentally gifted comes from the Chapter 16 Pennsylvania Rules and Regulations of the 22 PA Code. It states:

Mentally Gifted- Outstanding intellectual and creative ability the development of which requires specially designed programs and support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.

The Pennsylvania Chapter 16 Rules and Regulations also state that “each school district shall establish procedures to determine whether a student is mentally gifted. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria as set forth in this chapter and in the 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 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. Determination of mentally gifted must include an assessment by a certified school psychologist.”

The multiple criteria to consider indicating gifted ability:

(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 judgment.

(4) Early and measured use of higher level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communications 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 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability), gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities.

II. Referral for Gifted Evaluation

A. District Child Find

In the Neshannock Township School District, screening data from a variety of sources will be reviewed annually. This systematic screening process fulfills the district's obligation to conduct child find activities for students who may need instruction not ordinarily provided in the general education curriculum. Please see Gifted Identification Process flowchart in Appendix A.

The District Child Find review considers information about academic and cognitive abilities collected on all students at a given grade level. In the spring of each year, after receiving the results of the state assessments, the district will conduct a review of the screening information for all students. When the student's data fall within a range expected for students who need gifted education, the district will complete the Level 1 Gifted Screening Form.

During **Level 1**, a Gifted Screening Form will be used to determine if there is a need to refer the student for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (or level 2). There is an Elementary Gifted Screening Form used for K-6th grade, and a Secondary Gifted Screening Form used for 7th-12th grades. An initial Child Find letter will be given to the teachers to gather academic information for these Screening Forms. Please see Appendices B, C, and D for a copy of the Child Find Letter and the Level 1 Elementary and Secondary Gifted Screening Forms.

Data considered on the **Elementary Gifted Screening Form** include: IOWA percentile scores in reading and math, grade percentile scores in math and language arts, the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS) - School Form, and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) composite score. If the Cognitive Abilities Test is not available, the guidance counselor will administer the Slosson Intelligence Test. This information is compiled into a district generated screening matrix with point values given for each item. If a student achieves the required number of points, he or she is recommended for Level 2, the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation.

Data considered on the **Secondary Gifted Screening Form** include: PSSA scores in reading and math, the student's QPA, and the student's most recent Cognitive Abilities Test composite score. If a student has a matrix score of 16 or more, the student's teachers in the four major subject areas (English, Math, Social Studies, and Science) will be given the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)-School Form to complete. The results of the GRS will be put into the matrix and if the student obtains the required number of points, the student will be referred to Level 2, the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation.

If the student is referred to the Level 2 evaluation (Multidisciplinary Evaluation), the parent will be sent a Permission to Evaluate form to gain their written consent for the evaluation. The district must receive a parent's signature on the Permission to Evaluate form in order to continue with the evaluation process. If the student does not meet the

required number of points to be referred for Level 2, the gifted screening process ends at Level 1.

B. Teacher Referral

When a teacher makes a referral for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE), the district will review the previous Child Find Data and if the student meets the required criteria for Level 1 screening, he or she will be referred for Level 2 Evaluation, the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation.

C. Parent Referral

According to Pennsylvania Chapter 16 Rules and Regulations, *“when a parent suspects their child is gifted, he or she may request a GMDE at any time, with the limit of one request per school year. The request must be in writing. The school district shall make the permission to evaluate form readily available for that purpose. If a request is made orally to any professional employee or administrator of the school district, that individual shall provide a copy of the permission to evaluate form to the parents within 10 calendar days of the oral request.”*

Neshannock Township School District shall make the permission to evaluate form readily available to the parents and provide a copy of the form to the parents within 10 calendar days of an oral request. The district must receive a parent’s signature on the form in order to continue with the evaluation process. Parents will also be asked to provide information that will be included in the multi-disciplinary evaluation.

III. Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)

When a student is referred to Level 2, the district will initiate a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) to be conducted by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT).

A. The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT)

Pennsylvania Chapter 16 Rules and Regulations state:

“The GMDE must be sufficient in scope and depth to investigate information relevant to the student’s suspected giftedness, including academic functioning, learning strengths, and educational needs. The multidisciplinary evaluation process must include information from the parents or others who interact with the student on a regular basis, and may include information from the student, if appropriate. No one type of test may be used as the sole criteria for determining that a student is or is not gifted. Intelligence tests yielding an IQ score alone may not be used as the only measure of aptitude for students of limited English proficiency, or for students of racial-, linguistic-or ethnic-minority background”.

“Tests and similar evaluation materials used in the determination of giftedness shall be; a) selected and administered in a manner that is free from racial and cultural

bias and bias based on disability, b) selected and administered so that the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude, achievement levels or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, c) professionally validated for the specific purpose for which they are used, d) administered by certified school psychologists under instruction provided by the producer of the tests and sound professional practice, and e) selected and administered to assess specific areas of educational need and ability and not merely a single general IQ."

"The GMDT shall prepare a written report (GWR) that brings together the information and findings from the evaluation or reevaluation concerning the student's educational needs and strengths. The report must make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, indicate the basis for those recommendations, include recommendations for the student's educational programming and indicate the names and positions of members of the GMDT."

"The initial evaluation shall be completed and a copy of the evaluation report presented to the parents no later than 60 calendar days after the agency receives written parental consent for evaluation or receives an order of a court or hearing officer to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation, except that the calendar days from the day after the last day of the spring school term up to and including the day before the first day of the subsequent fall school term may not be counted."

B. Tools for Evaluation

In addition to the information that is provided through the level 1 screening, the following data will also be considered by the GMDT in a Gifted Written Report (GWR):

- 1) Standardized and nationally normed individual intelligence tests; including, but not limited to, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children IV, Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test V, or Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities-III (the most current revisions will be used as available).
- 2) Standardized and nationally normed individual achievement tests; including, but not limited to, the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II, Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-II, Test of Written Language-3, Gray Silent Reading Test (the most current revisions will be used as available).
- 3) Chuska Scales for Rate of Acquisition and Rate of Retention
- 4) Parent Information Questionnaire and Parent Checklist (checklist of characteristics of gifted children) to be filled out by the student's parent or guardian.
- 5) As provided to the GMDT, a review of the student's products, portfolio's, competition results, demonstrated skills or other noteworthy achievements to help in the determination of expertise or specialized skills, higher level thinking, academic creativity, intense academic interest areas, communication skills,

- foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise. This information may be given to the GMDT by the teacher(s) and/or parent(s).
- 6) Curriculum Based Assessments (current and above grade level testing) will be used as needed to further determine the student's need for specially designed instruction.

IV. Gifted Identification Decision

A. Gifted Individual Education Program (GIEP) Team

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Gifted Individual Education Program (GIEP) Team to determine whether or not a student is gifted, based on a review of the information in the Gifted Written Report (GWR). Once the GWR is completed, a GIEP meeting will be scheduled and parents will receive an invitation to attend. The Pennsylvania Chapter 16 Rules and Regulations state: *“the GIEP Team includes one or both parents; the student if the parents choose to have the student participate; a representative of the district who serves as the chairperson of the GIEP Team and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district and authorized by the district to commit those resources; one or more of the student's current teachers; other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or the district, a teacher of the gifted.”*

B. NTSD Gifted Identification Guidelines for GIEP Team

The following areas will be assessed, given a point value, and plotted on the district Level 2 Gifted Matrix (please see Gifted Matrix in Appendix E). The areas that will be assessed (in accordance with Chapter 16 of the 22 PA Code) are:

1. Intellectual ability - full scale IQ standard score from an individually administered intelligence test, including, but not limited to, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children IV, Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test V, or Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities-III (the most current revisions will be used as available). The General Ability Index (GAI) will be used on the WISC-IV if deficits in memory or processing speed are determined to lower the overall full scale IQ score.
2. Achievement- the highest subtest standard score on an individually administered achievement test, including, but not limited to, the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II, Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-II, Test of Written Language-3, or Gray Silent Reading Test (the most current revisions will be used as available).
3. Rate of Retention and Rate of Acquisition- the combined total score on the Chuska Scale for Rate of Retention and Rate of Acquisition.

4. Demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more subject areas- the highest total rubric score obtained from a review of the portfolio of demonstrated achievement or expertise submitted to the GMDT by teachers/parents.

5. Learning Strengths (higher level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership, intense academic interest, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, and technology expertise)- the total number of strengths as indicated through teacher and parent reports/questionnaires/checklists and ratings on the Gifted Rating Scale (a T score of 60 or above).

****NOTE:** When making a determination of eligibility for gifted services, the GIEP team will take into consideration any documented, observed validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to a child with a disability), gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted ability.

The scores from these 5 areas above will be totaled on the matrix, and if a student achieves the required number of points, the student qualifies for gifted support services. This matrix system ensures that a comprehensive assessment (that includes an assessment of the student's intellectual abilities, academic skills, rate of retention/acquisition, learning strengths, and review of the student's portfolio/areas of expertise) is provided to a student referred for an evaluation for inclusion in gifted support services.