

The Framework for the Education of Students Identified as Gifted

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**Interboro School District
Framework for the Education of Students Identified as Gifted**

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Philosophy and Mission

The Interboro School District recognizes that children learn through a variety of methods and different styles at varying paces. Students of varying academic and intellectual abilities are present in each school within the district. In addition, gifted students are present in all cultural groups and across all economic strata. The objective of the Interboro School District is to facilitate the development of all students who emerge from Interboro Schools to contribute successfully in a global community. Interboro School District recognizes the diverse learning needs of our student population and offers a range of educational programs designed to meet those needs, expand horizons and opportunities for its graduates, while preparing them to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

With these goals in mind, it is the mission of the Interboro School District to offer appropriate learning experiences for all students, including those identified as gifted. We strive to eliminate the academic ceiling that may restrict those with special talents from attaining progressively higher levels of achievement, and:

- ✓ Provide a reasonable, fair policy for identification of academically and/or intellectually gifted students;
- ✓ Provide professional development opportunities for teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff responsible for the education of students identified as gifted;
- ✓ Provide flexibility in curriculum to serve gifted students;
- ✓ Strive to develop effective cooperation between the regular education teachers and seminar program teachers through ongoing collaboration and communication;
- ✓ Provide a range of educational services to meet the diverse learning needs of intellectually and academically gifted students. These services are described within the following pages;
- ✓ Promote a positive perception of gifted education programs;
- ✓ Promote community involvement and support parents and families with gifted children by providing the use of facilities for parental support group meetings.

Definition and Governing Mandates

Definition

The U.S. Department of Education defines gifted students as “children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.” (U. S. Department of Education. (1993). National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent, p. 3).

A gifted student is defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a student with outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services or both not regularly provided in the regular education program. (24.P.S. § 13-1371).

A student who has an I.Q. of 130 or above and has a need for specially designed instruction, is eligible for gifted services.

Governing Mandates

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education Rules and Regulations defines a public school’s responsibility’ to provide a free and appropriate education for gifted students. Chapter 16 provides specific requirements for gifted education that must be fulfilled by the school district as they relate to:

- ✓ Identification and Evaluation
- ✓ Individualized Programming for Gifted Students
- ✓ Needs Assessment and Appropriate Educational Placement
- ✓ Safeguarding of Gifted Students’ Due Process Rights

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides the following documents to detail and support the mandatory responsibilities of public school districts in the Commonwealth as they relate to gifted students and their families:

- ✓ Basic Education Circular – Special Education for Gifted Students
- ✓ 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students
- ✓ 2004 Gifted Guidelines (Supplement to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16)

Guiding Principles for Gifted Education

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines (2004)

Programs for gifted children fit into the array of special programs available for all exceptional children. These programs reflect individual differences, equal educational opportunity, and desire for the optimal development of each child. Programs that are based on sound philosophical, theoretical and empirical foundations are those most likely to benefit gifted students.

The guiding principles for planning and implementing programs for the gifted include the following:

- *The local school district is primarily responsible for identifying all exceptional children and developing educational programs to meet their needs. (24 P.S. §13-1371)*
- *Pennsylvania School Law includes g students as “children with exceptionalities” who need specially designed instruction.*
Like all exceptional children, the gifted student possesses special characteristics that significantly affect that student’s ability to learn. In order to reach the maximum educational potential, the gifted student’s curriculum must be appropriately modified on an individual basis.
- *Appropriate specially designed instruction should be based on the gifted student’s needs and abilities. (22 Pa. Code §16.41(b)(1))*
The key to challenging the gifted student is the connection between instruction and individual cognitive and affective behaviors. The emphasis in special programs for these students should be on the stimulation of the cognitive processes of creativity, originality, problem solving, and complexity (increasing content depth and sophistication).
- *The Gifted Individualized Educational Program (GIEP) should be based on information obtained from formal and informal comprehensive needs assessments, including input from parents. (22 Pa. Code § 16.22 and § 16.32)*
The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Present Levels of Educational Performance must be sufficient in depth and breadth (scope) to provide the framework for a comprehensive gifted individualized education program. Student assessment and performance data should be reflected in the development of the GIEP. The gifted student may be involved in the development of the GIEP at the parent’s discretion.
- The placement of a gifted student should ensure that the student is able to benefit meaningfully from the rate, level and manner of instruction. (22 Pa. Code § 16.41)
An effective approach would include all of the following:
 - Acceleration, in which instruction is matched to the competence level of student;
 - Enrichment, in which opportunities for the investigation of appropriate materials are given: and
 - Individualization, in which instruction is matched specifically to the student’s achievement, abilities and interests.

Guiding Principles for Gifted Education (Continued)

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines (2004)

- *The placement of a gifted student should provide learning opportunities that go beyond the program the student would receive as part of regular education. (22 Pa. Code §16.41)*
School districts must ensure that the gifted student's individualized program is in a range of acceleration and enrichment options appropriate for the student's needs. The regular education curricula and instruction must be adapted, modified or replaced to meet the individual needs of the gifted student.
- *Gifted education programming must be an integral part of the instructional school day.*
Gifted students are not just gifted for a specific time each day or week. Responsibility for development and implementation of each GIEP is shared between regular education teachers, gifted education teachers and administrators.
- *Gifted students benefit from being grouped with their intellectual peers for a significant part of their instructional day.*
The continuum of programming services that exists for the gifted student must be based on sound research and best practice. Research studies from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented support flexible grouping for gifted students across grade levels and content areas. The research studies also indicate that ability grouping, coupled with acceleration and differentiated curricula, provides maximum instructional benefit to gifted students. Incorporating homogeneous grouping of the gifted with systematic and continuous provisions in their K-12 educational planning offers gifted students opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge through interaction with their intellectual peers.

It is the intention of the Interboro School District to deliver an appropriate, meaningful education to the students identified as gifted, in accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 16 building upon that foundation to develop a model gifted program in our district.

Gifted Services Goals and Objectives

To meet the needs of gifted students as required by Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code, the Interboro School District will work to:

- ✓ Promote gifted education and academic excellence in all ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups.
- ✓ Provide identification procedures in a timely manner using multiple criteria to evaluate student needs for gifted services.
- ✓ Provide flexible learning opportunities that will enhance the accelerated development of gifted students.
- ✓ Encourage collaboration among parents, educators, and community members in order to maximize gifted student development.
- ✓ Provide staff development in Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Students and the Special Characteristics and Needs of Gifted Learners to enable all educators to recognize and appropriately serve gifted students.
- ✓ Provide adequate and appropriate resources for the uniform implementation and ongoing support of The Framework for Gifted Education in all schools within the Interboro School District.
- ✓ Ensure uniformity and compliance with Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code.
- ✓ Provide improved and balanced individual programming opportunities and classroom adaptations focused on the following objectives:
 - To meet the needs of students who need to work at an individual pace with more difficult classes provided at a younger age.
 - To provide balanced instruction in language arts, math, science, and social studies during the elementary years.
 - To challenge students to their full academic potential and at appropriate levels.
 - To foster a progressive building of self-motivation by recognizing and responding to the intrinsic desire to be challenged present in the overwhelming majority of gifted children.

Gifted Program Standards Guide for Best Practices

The following standards are considered when measuring program effectiveness, criteria for program evaluation, guidelines for program development, and recommendations for minimal requirements for gifted education programming:

Curriculum and Instruction

- ✓ Differentiated curriculum for the gifted learner must span grades K-12.
- ✓ Regular classroom curricula and instruction must be adapted, modified, or replaced to meet the unique needs of gifted learners.
- ✓ Instructional pace must be flexible to allow for the accelerated learning of gifted learners. Educational opportunities for subject and/or grade acceleration must be provided to gifted learners and supported through positive communication.
- ✓ Learning opportunities for gifted learners must consist of a continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches, and resource materials.

Program Administration and Management

- ✓ Appropriately qualified personnel must direct services for the education of gifted learners.
- ✓ Gifted education programming must be integrated into the general education program.
- ✓ Gifted education programming must include positive working relationships with constituency and advocacy groups, as well as with compliance agencies.
- ✓ Requisite resources and materials must be provided to support the efforts of gifted education programming.

Program Design

- ✓ Rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services must exist for gifted learners.
- ✓ Gifted education must be adequately funded, and opportunity for collaboration among teachers of gifted individuals should be built into the district's policies to ensure ongoing development of curriculum and sharing of best practices.
- ✓ Gifted education programming must evolve from a comprehensive and sound base.
- ✓ Gifted education programming services must be an integral part of the regular education classroom on a daily basis.
- ✓ Flexible groupings of students must be developed in order to facilitate differentiated instruction and curriculum.
- ✓ Policies specific to adapting and adding to the nature and operations of the general education program are necessary for gifted education.

Program Evaluation

- ✓ Ongoing evaluation of gifted education identification, assessment, and programming will be conducted in a purposeful, efficient and economic fashion.

Gifted Program Standards Guide for Best Practices (Continued)

Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counseling

- ✓ Gifted learners must be provided with differentiated guidance efforts to meet their unique socio-emotional development.
- ✓ Gifted learners must be provided with affective curriculum in addition to differentiated guidance and counseling services.
- ✓ Underachieving gifted learners must be served rather than omitted from differentiated services.

Professional Development

- ✓ A comprehensive staff development program must be provided for all school staff involved in the education of gifted learners. Training in the characteristics and unique social/emotional needs of gifted students should be provided for all educators and administrators. Additionally, professional development in differentiated instruction should be provided for cluster teachers.
- ✓ Only highly qualified personnel should be involved in the education of gifted learners.

Student Identification

- ✓ A comprehensive and cohesive process for student nomination must be coordinated in order to determine eligibility for gifted education services.
- ✓ Instruments used for student assessment to determine eligibility for gifted education services must measure diverse abilities, academic talents, strengths, and needs in order to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate any strengths.
- ✓ All student identification procedures and instruments must be based on current theory and research.

Screening Procedures

Interboro School District will provide screening procedures that ensure equal opportunity and access for all students including minority students, students with disabilities (including twice exceptional students), and students who are economically disadvantaged. There will be opportunities for peer, teacher, self, and parent nominations. This screening will allow for a broad-based pool of students to be considered for placement in service delivery options for gifted students. The screening process will include:

- ✓ Multiple criteria for decision-making, including formal assessment
- ✓ Assessment that goes beyond a narrowed conception of giftedness
- ✓ Reliable instruments and strategies for assessing giftedness
- ✓ Appropriate instruments used with underserved populations
- ✓ Data that provides relevant information for instructional decision-making rather than labeling

Giftedness is the manifestation of ability to learn well beyond the expected level of one's age mates. It can be discovered through outstanding student performance, high test scores, or through observation. These abilities are sometimes muted in students by unfavorable environmental circumstances and need to be actively sought.

Teachers of the Gifted will conduct a screening for all kindergarten students to determine eligibility for gifted services. A follow-up screening at the end of 3rd grade is conducted district-wide.

Gifted Education to Special Education Referral

The District has a written procedure in place for referring students from gifted education to special education. This procedure is as follows:

1. The gifted teacher observes and documents learning or behavioral issues that a student in gifted support may be demonstrating;
2. A GIEP meeting is called by the gifted teacher to address learning or behavioral concerns;
3. Strategies to support the student are implemented in the gifted and regular classroom settings;
4. A referral to a special education multidisciplinary evaluation team, including the students' parents or guardians and a certified school psychologist, is made when strategies are progressed monitored and the student continues to demonstrate learning or behavioral difficulties.
5. A "parent packet" is sent to secure parental consent for MDT evaluation.
6. The student is assessed by the MDT and a comprehensive evaluation report results.
7. If the student meets eligibility criteria under Chapter 14 and he or she demonstrates a need for special education, an IEP meeting is convened.
8. All gifted goals and objectives are addressed through the student's IEP.
9. Gifted goals and specially designed instruction, in the form of acceleration, enrichment, or other elements of gifted support, are progressed monitored through the IEP process.

Special Education to Gifted Education Referral

The District has a written procedure in place for referring students from special education to gifted education. This procedure is the following:

1. The special education or regular education teacher observes and documents achievement, creativity, leadership and other gifted characteristics that a student in special education may be demonstrating;
2. An IEP meeting is called by the teacher (or classroom teacher, parent);
3. A checklist to document the student's advanced achievement, creativity, leadership, or other suspected gifted characteristics is issued.
4. A referral to a special education multidisciplinary evaluation team, including the students' parents or guardians and a certified school psychologist, is made when strategies are progressed monitored and the student is suspected of needing enrichment, acceleration, or other avenues of gifted support.
5. A "parent packet" is sent to secure parental consent for gifted evaluation; student is assessed by the MDT to ascertain evaluation results.
6. If the student meets eligibility criteria under Chapter 14 and Chapter 16, and he or she demonstrates a need for special education-gifted education, an IEP meeting is convened.
7. Gifted goals/objectives are addressed and progress monitored via the student's IEP, in the form of acceleration, enrichment, or other elements of gifted support, and are progressed monitored through the IEP process.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) and Gifted Written Report (GWR)

When a student is referred for evaluation, parental consent will be obtained and a Gifted Multidisciplinary Team will be convened to conduct an in-depth evaluation and determine the presence of gifted characteristics and potential. The team will consist of the students' parents, the Gifted Seminar Teacher, the Gifted Resource & Support Teacher, community school principal, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, and a representative from Pupil Services. The procedure for evaluation of a potentially gifted student will be as follows:

- ✓ The Gifted Resource & Support Teacher will collect, review, and maintain student screening information and secure parental consent to test if recommended. Based on Chapter 16 requirements, the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) will be completed within 60 school days after receiving parental permission for initial evaluation, or after notifying parents of a reevaluation, or after receiving an order of a court or hearing officer to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. The Interboro School District currently utilizes a 12-point scale providing multiple measures of evaluation for the identification of gifted ability. (See appendix).
- ✓ The Gifted Resource & Support Teacher will coordinate communication with parents, teachers, and team members, and prepare a Gifted Written Report (GWR) within ten school days after the GMDE is completed. The GWR will include functional learning levels based on assessment data to be used to determine appropriate placement in all academic subject areas. The GWR will also include an assessment of the student's rate of acquisition and rate of retention of new materials/skills for use in determining how much review, if any, is necessary year-to-year in academic subject areas and the rate and pace of introducing new concepts and skills to provide a comfortable but challenging rate of learning as required by Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code. A copy of the GWR must be given to parents within 5 school days after it is completed (22 Pa. Code § 16.2 (d)(6)).
- ✓ The Gifted Resource & Support Teacher will coordinate a meeting for purposes of developing a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) within 30 calendar days after completion of the GWR. The multidisciplinary team will meet with student (if desired) and with parents to review the GWR, make decisions on the placement of student, and recommend appropriate gifted services, when indicated. The GIEP Team will consist of the student (if desired), parents, one or more of the student's current teachers, community school principal, school psychologist, and other individuals familiar with the student's educational experience and performance. Copies of testing data, psychologist's reports, and other pertinent information will be provided for parents at that time. The Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) will be developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

**Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)
and Gifted Written Report (GWR) (Continued)**

Additional Policy & Procedural Notations

- ✓ Transfer students will be ensured rapid attention to placement needs.
- ✓ Referral to the Gifted Resource & Support Teacher may be made any time during the school year, by teachers, parents, or the student.
- ✓ A GMDE may be requested, in writing, once per school year.
- ✓ The school District is obligated, under PA State Law, to consider information obtained from an independent evaluation of a student by a certified school psychologist.
- ✓ The School District is not obligated to develop separate LEP's or use separate procedural safeguard processes for twice-exceptional students (those students with identified learning disabilities). The special needs of these students will be addressed through the Individualized Education Plan process under the requirements of Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code.
- ✓ A gifted student must be reevaluated before a change in educational placement is recommended for the student. This process can be initiated by the student, parents, or following a judicial decision. Reevaluations must be documented in a GWR.

Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP)

The Interboro School District recognizes that all children, including those identified as gifted, have unique learning needs that relate to content, manner, and pace of instruction. The educational needs of gifted children are reviewed and individual programming is developed to meet their needs in the context of a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) Meeting. The integral components of a GIEP, which include Present Levels of Educational Performance, Annual Goals and Short-term Learning Outcomes, and Specially Designed Instruction are developed in a collaborative environment. Members of the GIEP team must include: one or more of the student's parents, the student (if desired), a Legally Authorized Representative (LEA) of the School District, one or more of the student's Classroom Teachers, the student's Gifted Seminar Teacher, the Gifted Resource & Support Teacher, and other individuals, at the discretion of either the parents or the district, that may have valuable input to the development of the students gifted individualized education plan.

A GIEP will be developed for students newly identified as gifted in a timely fashion as mandated by Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code. In addition, a revised and updated GIEP will be developed for each child previously identified as gifted on an annual basis, and in accordance with newly established PLEP data. Parents, students, or district personnel may request a meeting to revise an existing GIEP at any time.

The GIEP should reflect the needs of the student, and must include appropriate goals and outcomes by subject area to provide acceleration, enrichment, or both as needed. The student's placement must provide an instructional environment that can meet the accelerated learning needs and enrichment needs of the gifted student and must be documented in the GIEP (Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP)

The foundation for an effective GIEP is built on the accurate and timely assessment of a gifted students instructional and educational levels, interests, and motivation, not solely on the student's classification as gifted. Information from the GMDT, GWR, Student Interest /Motivation Surveys, Gifted Behavior Checklists, and the Gifted Student Portfolio will be used to establish a child's PLEP, as well as assessment test scores, group and individual achievement measures, grades, progress on goals, instructional levels, aptitudes, interests, specialized skills, products, and evidence of excellence in other than academic areas. PLEP should be updated annually (Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) (Continued)

Annual Goals and Short-Term Learning Outcomes

The annual goals and short-term learning outcomes on the GIEP should reflect the student's present levels of educational performance, where the learning experience should begin, and specifying the performance levels to be achieved through the individualized education program based on rate of acquisition/retention, academic acceleration needs, and academic enrichment needs.

Annual goals and short-term learning outcomes should be child-specific and measurable. The annual goals and short-term learning outcomes are not based on, nor limited to, what the district has in place or is willing to provide, but on the child's learning needs. In cases where the student's learning needs far exceed the district's curriculum, the district and parents are encouraged to work cooperatively to explore other options to meet the needs of the students. These options may include early graduation, early-to-college, distance learning or other options. (Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction includes adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum for students who are gifted. (22 Pa. Code § 16.1) This may consist 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. Specially designed instruction for gifted students may include compacting, accelerating the student, or placing the student in more than one grade level.

Chapter 16 requires that specially designed instruction for gifted students be holistically designed to provide meaningful benefit for the gifted student. Specific requirements of the Pennsylvania Education Code state that specially designed instruction must be:

- ✓ Conducted in an instructional setting.
- ✓ Provided in an instructional or skill area.
- ✓ Provided at no cost to the parents.
- ✓ Provided under the authority of a school district, directly, by referral or by contract.
- ✓ Provided by a school district, intermediate unit, or other educational service agency.
- ✓ Individualized to meet the educational needs of the student.
- ✓ Reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.
- ✓ Provided in conformity with a GIEP. (22 Pa. Code §16.1)

The District acknowledges that the use of extra work, peer tutoring, or helping the teacher does not constitute specially designed instruction or gifted education, and Advanced Placement or Honors courses are not in and of themselves gifted education if they do not respond to the gifted student's individual needs. (Adopted from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) (Continued)

This Framework for the Education of Students Identified as Gifted provides multiple resources that can be used to help parents, teachers, and administrators to ensure the employment of best practices for purposes of defining Goals and Outcomes and Specially Designed Instruction. Information and concepts from the Annotated GIEP, Multiple Intelligences Product Grid, and Staff Development Differentiated Instruction Techniques, and GIEP Framework Recommendations included at the end of this document should be incorporated as part of the individual student GIEP when deemed appropriate by parent, teacher, student, and/or administration.

The Pennsylvania School Code mandates that a new GIEP Meeting be held annually, and that objective criteria and assessments should be used, on at least an annual basis, to determine whether the short-term learning outcomes are being achieved. In this manner, it is intended that the progressive needs of students identified as gifted will continue to be served without reconvening the GIEP Team for another formal meeting in the same school year unless necessary, and that active and ongoing involvement on the part of the student and the parent(s) will promote ownership and accountability.

Objective Criteria and Assessment Procedures

For purposes of measuring GIEP effectiveness and the student's performance in relation to attaining the Goals and Outcomes contained within their GIEP, the Interboro School District will use multiple measures and assessment. Samples of student work will be considered a vital component of this ongoing evaluation procedure.

Support Services

The GIEP will identify support services that may be needed to help a gifted student benefit from or gain access to a meaningful education. Support services are provided for the student could include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Career guidance
- ✓ Counseling
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Technology education
- ✓ Special services (occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing, etc.)

Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA)

A Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) must be dually signed by the parent(s) and the Superintendent of the Interboro School District when the GIEP is developed or significantly modified. This form is used to acknowledge receipt of, and either accept or reject the proposals contained within the GIEP. In the case of a formal GIEP Meeting, the NORA is either presented to the parents at the GIEP meeting or by certified mail within five calendar days after the completion of the GIEP meeting. When a significant change has been

Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) (Continued)

made to the GIEP as a result of parent/student/teacher or student/teacher conferencing as described within this Framework, the NORA will be provided to the parent(s) with a copy of the revised GIEP within five calendar days.

Parents are required to indicate their acceptance or rejection of the proposed GIEP, and sign and return the NORA to the School District within five calendar days if presented to the parents at the completion of the GIEP Meeting, or within 10 calendar days if presented by certified mail (22 Pa. Code § 16.62(5)).

If the parents receive the NORA in person and approve the recommended assignment within five calendar days, the school district may not implement the GIEP for at least five calendar days, to give the parents an opportunity to notify the district within the five-day period of a decision to revoke the previous approval of the recommended assignment. (22 Pa. Code §16.62(5)).

Timelines

Chapter 16 states specific timelines for the GMDE, GWR, and GIEP processes, as follows:

- ✓ The GMDE must be completed within 60 school days after receiving parental permission for an initial evaluation or after notifying the parents of a reevaluation or after receiving an order of a court or hearing officer to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation.
- ✓ The GWR must be written within 10 school days after the GMDE is completed, and a copy of the GWR must be given to parents within 5 school days after it is completed. (22 Pa. Code § 16.22(j)(1)(2)(3))
- ✓ The Invitation to GIEP meeting be sent 10 calendar days before the GIEP meeting. (22 Pa. Code§16.2(d)(6))
- ✓ A NORA is presented to parents at the GIEP meeting or by certified mail within 5 calendar days after the completion of the GIEP meeting (22 PA. Code§16.2(f) and §16.62(4))
- ✓ The GIEP must be done 30 calendar days after the GWR is written. (22 Pa. Code§16.2(f) and §16.62(g)(1))
- ✓ The GIEP must 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. (22 Pa. Code§16.2(g)(2))

Transfer Students

The District responds to a transfer student with a GIEP in a manner that supports appropriate placement and timing of the implementation of the student's mandated services.

When a student transfers into the Interboro School District with a GIEP, the student will continue to receive gifted services.

1. Information is gathered by the classroom teachers and teacher of gifted to determine the present levels of education.
2. A GIEP meeting is convened to develop a GIEP with updated goals and present level information.

If the Interboro School District deems it necessary to conduct a formal evaluation on a transfer student, gifted services will continue until such evaluation is completed. The following process will be implemented for students requiring a formal evaluation or re-evaluation:

1. The school psychologist reviews and works with the gifted support teacher(s) to review transfer records.
2. Teacher of Gifted will contact parents/guardian to discuss the need for a re-evaluation.
3. Pupil Services will send permission to evaluate to parents/guardian.
4. A re-evaluation will be conducted by the school psychologist.
5. A GIEP meeting will be scheduled to develop a new GIEP if necessary.

Gifted Programming Options

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines acknowledge that a combination of acceleration and enrichment provides the greatest opportunity for flexible programming to meet the needs of the gifted. In a district where an enrichment/pullout program is present, as in Interboro, an individualized program must be provided in addition to that program. The gifted student must be provided instruction at an appropriate level of challenge and with adjustments that accommodate individual needs. The instruction must be reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

The Gifted Guidelines provide various recommendations for gifted programming options, and states that school districts are free to group gifted students in ways that best serve the needs of each gifted student. Programming options chosen for each gifted student should be developed based on the strengths and needs identified within the GIEP and must be agreed to by the GIEP team.

Programming options for gifted students may be offered through a variety of settings and selections such as:

- ✓ Early entrance to kindergarten based on mental age and individual readiness
- ✓ Cluster grouping based on instructional level
- ✓ Open-ended compacted curriculum with flexible pacing
- ✓ Level, grade, and/or subject acceleration with flexible pacing
- ✓ Grade or subject “skipping”
- ✓ Advanced placement and honors courses with earlier-than-normal access
- ✓ Permission to submit proposals to replace requirements for which the student has demonstrated mastery as recommended by the GIEP team (college courses)
- ✓ Independent study designed to meet a gifted student’s long-term interests and expertise in a given area
- ✓ Specialized curriculum for gifted learners based on validated research in gifted education
- ✓ Distance Learning
- ✓ On-line courses
- ✓ Enrichment in content areas
- ✓ Independent learning contracts
- ✓ Mentorships, apprenticeships, internships and field experiences designed to meet gifted students’ performance level and career interests

Options, differentiated according to the needs of each gifted student, may be used in combination to form a comprehensive program from kindergarten through grade 12. These choices are not based on existing “canned” curricula, student scheduling, age-peer levels, age-grade levels or grouping.

Gifted Programming Options (Continued)

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

AP and Honors Courses

Honors courses or Advanced Placement courses provide options to meet the needs of some gifted learners. For other gifted students, modifications such as availability at earlier age, adjustment in pace or depth, or another adaptation may be needed for AP or honors courses to be considered “specially designed” instruction for gifted students.

Learning Contracts

A learning contract can be an effective option when a teacher or qualified adult is scheduled to meet with the student, provide access to instruction/advice, and supervise the accomplishment of milestones and goal completion. Close monitoring by teachers or mentors is an essential component for a successful independent study experience.

Comprehensive Program

A comprehensive program for gifted students cannot be limited to enrichment alone, one academic area, one program option, or solely on extracurricular activities. Each school district must decide what program options are needed to provide specially designed instruction for each gifted student. A needs assessment survey of gifted students is a highly effective tool to guide decisions on program changes and options. Once the needs of the students are known, the school district may utilize many types of resources, on and off campus, to provide a full continuum of services. (Note: Following implementation of the changes to gifted programming outlined in this Framework, the Task Force will elicit feedback from students identified as gifted, parents, teachers, and district personnel to provide information for use in ongoing programming enhancement.)

The scheduling of options should enhance, not penalize, the gifted student’s participation. Make-up work may be necessary under certain circumstances when gifted programming requires students to miss regular education classes, but requiring make-up work to be completed that inappropriately penalizes the student and detracts from a successful gifted education is an unintended consequence and should be avoided. The GIEP should clarify what make-up work missed in the gifted student’s regular education classes will be required to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding.

Gifted Service Delivery Options Provided in the Interboro School District

Chapter 16 mandates that a continuum of services should be available to address the specific needs of many different types and levels of giftedness from kindergarten through grade 12 to ensure an appropriate education that includes acceleration or enrichment or both. Students who are gifted may need education placement that is beyond age or grade level in order to align them with their ability and achievement. Districts are free to group across grades, according to academic talent, or based upon other performance characteristics. Depending on a student's talents or achievements, options for gaining credit for learning obtained outside the school district or advanced placement within the school district may need to be considered. Credit by examination may be an option to determine appropriate educational assignment. Graduation planning may need to be part of the GIEP process even for young gifted students because acceleration sets the stage for earning credits early or out of sequence, for early graduation and/or for early admission to college. Additionally, educational placements may need to support the emotional/social challenges the student may face, as would be the case for a student who, through acceleration, attends classes with students 3-4 years older (Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

The Interboro School District strives to provide a learning environment that meets the needs of students identified as gifted as established by the Pennsylvania Board of Education. The District offers a holistic gifted education program with multiple components to ensure optimal service delivery. These components include:

- ✓ Gifted Seminar (Pull-out) Program
- ✓ In-house – enrichment classes held at the student's home school
- ✓ Course compacting
- ✓ Differentiated Instruction - Provided for students identified as gifted within the context of their regular education classrooms (K-5) and their core subject instructional periods (6-8) on a daily basis by teachers specially trained in differentiated instruction for gifted learners, and cognizant of the unique characteristics and social/emotional needs of these students. Differentiated instruction is used in content areas for grades 9-12.
- ✓ Subject and/or Grade-level Acceleration - considered as indicated for students identified as gifted when recommended and approved by Pupil Services, teachers, parents, AND student.
- ✓ Enrichment Programs - programs offered for gifted students under the supervision of a Teacher with special skills and/or training in specific content area. Student/Family funding may be required for participation in some optional programs
- ✓ Advanced Placement and Honors Courses - Provided for students in grades 9 through 12
- ✓ Independent Study

Gifted Service Delivery Options Provided in the Interboro School District

Administrative Support

The Interboro School District acknowledges that, in order to ensure uniformity in practice throughout the four community schools, and to provide for the ongoing enhancement of this program, collaboration and administrative support must become integral components of the gifted education program. As a result, the following administrative components are considered vital to the Framework for the Education of Students Identified as Gifted:

- ✓ Administrative support will be provided to ensure the optimal implementation of improved gifted education programming.
- ✓ Ongoing support will be provided in classroom differentiation, GIEP development, professional development, and faculty collaboration by a Gifted Resource & Support Teacher.
- ✓ Ongoing professional collaboration opportunities will be built into the District's schedule for professional development to enable Cluster teachers from all community schools to meet regularly to collaborate, share best practices, and continually enhance the curriculum for gifted learners.
- ✓ Administration will promote a positive climate for gifted education in the Interboro School District and uniform implementation of procedures at each community school.

Professional Development

(Adapted from the Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

In order for specially designed instruction to be effective, it is necessary for both gifted education teachers and regular education teachers to be knowledgeable about gifted education, supported with continuing professional development, and involved in the program development.

Staff development should be an ongoing, systemic process. Educators enter and exit this cycle of professional development based on previous knowledge, experience, and their need for information as it relates to their role in the education of gifted learners. School districts should encourage attendance at appropriate state, regional and national gifted conferences and teleconferences. Staff development may include visitations to other districts' gifted programs. To have an effective program for the gifted students, administrators, counselors, librarians, psychologists and other support personnel must also receive training in gifted education. Professional development should:

- ✓ Promote an understanding of Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students.
- ✓ Promote awareness of gifted student characteristics and learning needs;
- ✓ Include for identification of the gifted;
- ✓ Increase positive attitudes toward gifted students and their unique qualities;
- ✓ Expand teachers' knowledge of content appropriate for gifted students' learning;
- ✓ Generate enthusiasm for curriculum differentiation;
- ✓ Build repertoire of teaching strategies that maximize potential for gifted behavior;

Gifted Service Delivery Options Provided in the Interboro School District

- ✓ Enhance skills for teaching and advising the very able and talented;
- ✓ Assist with the development of specially designed instruction according to GIEPs;
- ✓ Promote an understanding of current research and trends affecting programming for the gifted;
- ✓ Integrate gifted education within the total school curriculum;
- ✓ Nurture a collaborative spirit and skills among professional educators, families, and community members;
- ✓ Provide to teachers information about resources for facilitating learning;
- ✓ Contribute to the overall mission of renewal and revitalization of education throughout the total school program; and
- ✓ Develop evaluation techniques for student progress and program effectiveness.

Teachers of gifted students should have ample time for preparation, teacher-to-teacher contact, GMDE involvement, GIEP development, and parent conferences. When teachers are assigned to teach or direct the learning experiences for gifted students, there should be evidence that they are trained and able to fulfill this assignment. When regular education and gifted education teachers are working together, their roles need to be clearly defined. All teachers need appropriate support, reasonable schedules, adequate materials, technology assistance and appropriate training.

Professional Development Plan in the Interboro School District

In order to ensure compliance with Chapter 16 and provide the professional development for staff that will be crucial in facilitating the implementation of effective differentiated instruction as required by the Gifted Guidelines, the Interboro School District will initiate the following programs for immediate implementation:

- ✓ Incorporate a component on the characteristics, special needs and identification of gifted learners into the teacher induction program.
- ✓ Cluster teachers will be identified through administrators based on interest and ability, and provided with training in Differentiated instruction for Gifted Learners. All middle school Subject Area Teachers and one grade-level representative from each elementary school will begin training prior to September, 2005.
- ✓ Provide training in the Characteristics and Identification of Gifted Children. Program should include an introduction to the identification of twice exceptional children and children with Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, and developmental disorders commonly associated with gifted learners. (Preferred Mechanism: 3-hour presentation on the characteristics and special needs of gifted learners, with a summary of identification techniques.)
- ✓ Provide staff development refresher course in objective reporting for all teachers to ensure accurate feedback for purposes of student identification.
- ✓ Develop an ongoing, systemic professional development process to provide opportunities for all qualified teachers to work with gifted students.

Curriculum and Instruction

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

Chapter 16 requires districts to provide gifted students with specially designed instruction (§16.4 1(b)), and defines this instruction as adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum for students who are gifted. (§16.1)

Implementation of specially designed instruction requirements is the responsibility of both the gifted support staff and regular education teachers. All teachers must play a role when providing instructional adaptations and modifications for the gifted. Assessed student needs must be the basis for the specially designed instruction, not delivery of a single option or one-size-fits-all programs.

Three fundamental differences that distinguish gifted learners from other learners are:

- ✓ The capacity to learn at faster rates, more in-depth and with greater complexity,
- ✓ The capacity to find, solve, and act on problems more readily, and
- ✓ The capacity to manipulate abstract ideas and make connections.

Taking these fundamental differences into account, difficulties arise when gifted programs are limited to:

- ✓ Offering more of the same level of material or the same kind of problem.
- ✓ Providing either enrichment or acceleration alone.
- ✓ Teaching higher thinking skills in isolation from academic content.
- ✓ Presenting additional work that is simply different from the core curriculum but not differentiated specifically for the gifted learner.
- ✓ Grouping with intellectual peers without differentiating content and instruction.
- ✓ Providing only grade-level content.
- ✓ Overlooking curricular gaps between elementary and secondary placements.

To overcome these limitations, curricular and instructional adaptations or modifications are essential throughout the learning environment. These adaptations should be based upon the specific nature of the individual's needs, abilities, and interests. Instruction for the gifted student should feature acceleration, complexity, depth, challenge, and creativity. Best practice strategies that address content, process, learning environment, and product establish both the framework and practical action steps for assuring high quality instruction for gifted students.

A broad base of research exists that supports and describes effective curriculum and instructional design for the gifted.

Curriculum and Instruction (Continued)

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

Curriculum

The following key principles provide a guide for program development for the gifted:

- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should focus on and be organized to include more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, key concepts and themes that integrate knowledge within and across disciplines. Present comprehensive, reinforcing, related experiences within an area of study.
- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should have a strong foundation based on demonstrated abilities, strengths, and interests of the group and individual.
- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should be an extension of core learning, using both acceleration and enrichment strategies. Streamline curriculum that the student is able to master quickly.
- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should encourage exposure to, selection and use of varied, challenging, and specialized resources.
- ✓ Curricula and instruction should provide opportunities for students to recognize complex relationships and arrive at sound generalizations.
- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should stress higher-level thinking, creativity, and problem solving skills.
- ✓ Curricula for the gifted should set high standards that demand rigorous expectations for student work and performance demonstration.

Instruction

- ✓ Instruction for the gifted should promote in-depth learning and investigation that deal with real life problems and issues. Select concepts and content that promote the students' involvement as practitioners of the discipline.
- ✓ Instruction for the gifted should allow for the development and application of productive thinking skills to enable students to re-conceptualize existing knowledge and/or generate new understanding.
- ✓ Instruction for the gifted should be flexibly paced and matched to the student's ability, pre-assessment data, learning style interest, and motivation.

Gifted education materials should be provided to address the advanced conceptual and processing abilities of the gifted learner. Often these materials and resources are not typically used in the regular education curriculum or in a particular level of regular education. Instructional resources and materials that meet the needs of the students as determined by the Present Levels of Educational Performance may include:

- ✓ Advanced level supplementary books, original source documents, and skill development (e.g., independent computer searching) resources that enhance and enrich the teaching of the curriculum

Curriculum and Instruction (Continued)

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

- ✓ Technology to facilitate learning
- ✓ Appropriate hands-on materials
- ✓ Instructional resources needed for academic competitions
- ✓ Methodological resources that aid students in carrying out a study in a particular field of knowledge
- ✓ Curriculum reference materials designed specifically for gifted education

The Appendix contains a list of websites providing assistance and information pertaining to a wide range of gifted education subject matter.

Curriculum and Instruction - Process

- ✓ Provide students with the freedom to choose topics to study and the methods to use in manipulating and transforming information.
- ✓ Promote independent, self-directed, and in-depth study.
- ✓ Encourage the application of advanced research and methodological skills.
- ✓ Focus on open-ended tasks.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to develop leadership and group interaction skills.
- ✓ Allow student-centered discussion, Socratic questioning, and seminar-type learning.

Curriculum and Instruction – Process

- ✓ Encourage the development of products that challenge existing ideas and produce new ones.
- ✓ Incorporate the application of discipline methodologies in product development.
- ✓ Promote products that are comparable to those made by professionals in the designated field.
- ✓ Require that products of gifted students represent application, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge.
- ✓ Provide the opportunity to create products/solutions that focus on real-world issues.
- ✓ Establish high-level and exemplary criteria to assess student performance and products.

Curriculum and Instruction - Learning Environment

- ✓ Encourage the development of social and self-awareness (e.g. recognizing and using one's abilities, being self-directed, appreciating likenesses and differences between oneself and others).
- ✓ Encourage self-directed learning to promote the development of independent research studies.
- ✓ Encourage a tolerant and supportive environment that fosters a positive attitude toward creative challenges, investigative activity, and knowledge creation.
- ✓ Enable the pursuit of higher-level learning through the extension of classroom activities into the real-world.
- ✓ Provide access to resources and materials that meet the student's level of learning.

Curriculum and Instruction (Continued)

(Adapted from The Pennsylvania Board of Education Gifted Guidelines, 2004)

The instructional environment should be appropriate to the needs of gifted students with a supportive atmosphere and adequate space to provide a wide range of learning options. A gifted instructional environment could include the following:

- ✓ Space for students to simultaneously participate in a wide array of activities
- ✓ Accessibility to other learning environments and instructional groupings including the library, computer lab, or the media center
- ✓ Classroom space to facilitate student/teacher/peer conferencing, open-ended discussion, small group activity, large group activity, independent research and exploration
- ✓ Availability of stimulating complex materials covering a wide range of levels and topics
- ✓ A risk-free learning environment that supports exploration, application, and personal construction of knowledge
- ✓ An empowering atmosphere that promotes a shared choice in planning and Joint responsibility for learning between student and teacher

Personnel Roles and Responsibilities (2011)

Director of Pupil Services

- ✓ Supervise the provision of services for exceptional children, including those identified as gifted.
- ✓ Coordinate testing, evaluation, and assessment of students identified as gifted and those referred for evaluation through licensed school psychologists, Guidance Counselors, teachers, and other support personnel within the Department of Pupil Services.

Supervisor of Special Education

- ✓ Oversee programming and placement of students served by the Department of Pupil Services.
- ✓ Ensure a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as required by Pennsylvania School Code.
- ✓ Serve as LEA Chairperson.
- ✓ Evaluate curriculum and consult with teachers.

Gifted Resource & Support Teacher

- ✓ Serve as a member of the GMDE Team and contribute to the second-level screening process by working collaboratively with school psychologists
- ✓ Monitor GEIP implementation to ensure the optimal delivery of services provided for individual gifted learners, and assist teachers in differentiating instruction
- ✓ Administer annual assessments to determine PLEP for gifted learners
- ✓ Participate in GIEP development process for identified gifted students
- ✓ Advocate for gifted students and recommend individual programming options
- ✓ Participate in cluster teacher collaboration sessions to share best practices and promote ongoing enhancement to gifted education program.
- ✓ Serve as resource and liaison to ongoing committees, administration, teachers, and parents
- ✓ Assist with pro-active identification of unidentified gifted students through the screening process
- ✓ Develop and deliver the gifted seminar (pull-out) program for students in Kindergarten – 12th grade