Gifted Education

Frequently Asked Questions

A Publication of the State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education

Kentucky Department of Education

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GIFTED & TALENTED STUDENTS DEFINED

According to 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented, what defines a GT student? According to state regulations for gifted and talented programs, a gifted and/or talented child is defined as one who is identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in one or more of the following areas:

- general intellectual aptitude
- specific academic aptitude
- creative or divergent thinking
- psychosocial or leadership skills in the visual or performing arts

Pursuant to state regulations, gifted and talented children comprise a category of "exceptional students."

FORMAL IDENTIFICATION

When are students formally identified for gifted services?

Initially, students may be formally identified in the fourth grade. Students who show evidence of giftedness any time during the school year or subsequent grade levels may also be considered. The district shall provide a system for continual diagnostic screening.

When screening for G/T students, is one instrument used?

Screening for gifted and talented students must include all five categories of giftedness (general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, leadership, and the visual or performing arts). A district shall develop a system for searching the entire school population on a continuous basis for likely candidates for services using both informal and available formal, normed, standardized measures, including measures of nonverbal ability, in all areas.

What can be done if a parent/guardian feels their child has been missed during the identification process?

A district must provide a petition system as a safeguard for a student who may have been missed during the identification process.

Can a formally identified GT student be re-evaluated for giftedness?

No. Once a student is formally identified, a student remains identified and eligible to receive gifted services until the student graduates from high school. A student's service options may be re-evaluated periodically, and is encouraged, as students' interests, needs and abilities change over time and those changes may require adjustments to services in order to assure continuous progress.

Has the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) come up with the same identification criteria that would unify all districts for identification?

The Commonwealth is diverse with each district being unique and having different needs. Districts may use identification tools that match their population. Unified requirements are provided for provided in the regulation, 704 KAR 3:285. Section 3. The regulation states that three evidence options are required, and that each area of identification has identifying criteria for GT. There will be more consistency in identifying GT students when more districts follow the regulation.

Must a student show evidence in both Reading and Language Arts to be identified as gifted in the area of Language Arts, Specific Academic Ability?

Only one area, not both, is needed for identification purposes. However, the additional information may be used as supporting evidence for giftedness, especially when providing service options matching strengths, interests, and abilities.

If a child is identified as gifted in general intellectual intelligence, does it mean he/she is gifted in all areas of giftedness?

No. General intellectual intelligence is one area of possible giftedness. There are five categories of giftedness recognized in Kentucky through regulation; general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, leadership, and the visual or performing arts. A student identified in one area does not directly indicate identification in another. Students may be identified in one area or several.

Can formal identification be accepted if a student comes from another school district in Kentucky?

Yes. All students in Kentucky, according to the regulation governing gifted and talented programs, must be identified with at least three pieces of qualifying evidence. Therefore, the identification of GT and the selection of PTP students from other districts should be honored. Service options may need to be adjusted for those students coming from districts that have less stringent qualifying criteria.

Can formal identification be accepted for a student who moves from another state to Kentucky?

No. In order to receive gifted and talented services, the student must meet the identification requirements according to Kentucky's regulation. The student's transferred records with evidence or qualifying test data that supports giftedness may be considered; but students would have to be re-qualified through available or new testing that meets Kentucky's regulation. Identification would not immediately transfer from another state to Kentucky unless all facets of the identification process aligned with Kentucky's regulation.

TESTING

What tests are recommended to identify giftedness in social studies and science?

KDE has not made any formal recommendations of any specific tests for any specific area. Presently, districts have a choice as long as they follow the criteria set forth in 704 KAR 3:285.

On the SAGES–2 test, there are Math/Science and Language Arts/Social Studies subtests. If a student scores in the 9th stanine on either subtest, can this be used as a qualifying score for both subject areas?

The subtest does not provide a composite test score in a specific subject area. Therefore, it cannot be used as a qualifying evidence for formal identification. However, SAGES-2 can be used as supporting evidence.

UNDERACHIEVEMENT

How is underachievement defined & determined?

A general definition as it applies to education is defined as a student achieving poorly and/or less than their potential or mental abilities would indicate they should be capable of attaining. Simply stated, underachievement is a discrepancy between ability and performance, or unfulfilled potential. The link below provides additional information:
http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Gifted+and+Talented/Frequently+Asked+Questions++Gifted+and+Talented+Underachievement.htm

PRIMARY TALENT POOL

What is the Primary Talent Pool?

The Primary Talent Pool is a group of primary students (P1-P4; Kindergarten through Third Grade) who are informally selected by the district as having characteristics and behaviors of high potential learners and who have been further diagnosed using a series of informal and formal measures to determine the desirability of differentiated services during the primary program.

What is the benefit of selecting students for the PTP?

The benefits of selecting students to participate in the PTP are to assure continuous progress, to minimize underachievement, and to provide early enrichment for those students whose gifts and talents need to be nurtured in order for those talents to develop further. Provision of Primary Talent Pool services provides essential early recognition of student abilities matched to differentiated services. Additionally, PTP talent development may assist in the formal identification process in fourth grade.

When students become eligible for formal identification in the fourth grade, are PTP students automatically identified as GT?

PTP students are not automatically identified as GT once they reach the fourth grade. Specific and more stringent criteria must be met to formally identify a GT student.

Can formal testing be used to select students for the PTP?

Data from formal, normed measures shall not be used for the purpose of eliminating eligibility for services to a child in the primary program; however, these measures may be used to discover and include eligible students overlooked by informal assessment.

What percentage of primary students is recommended to be selected for the PTP?

According to 704 KAR 3:285, "high-potential learners" are students who typically represent the top quartile (25%) of the entire student population in terms of the degree of demonstrated gifted characteristics and behaviors. The PTP may represent the top 5% in each of the five areas of GT (general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, leadership, creativity and the visual and performing arts) for a total of 25% of the entire primary school population.

Can a student be selected for the PTP one year and not the next?

No. Once a student is in the PTP, the student remains in the talent pool until exiting the third grade (P4). The levels of service will vary based on student need and target areas for service. Those services may need to be adjusted periodically to fit the individual child's specific needs.

Are parents/guardians to be notified that their child is in the PTP?

There is no reference in the GT regulation that parents/guardians are to be notified of student selection for the PTP. Individual schools/districts may decide whether to notify and this can be addressed in the school's/district's policies and procedures.

How are services delivered to PTP?

For a student in the primary grades, services shall allow for continuous progress through a differentiated curriculum and flexible grouping and regrouping based on the individual needs, interests, and abilities of the student. Emphasis on educating gifted students in the general primary classroom shall not exclude the continued, appropriate use of resource services, acceleration options, or other specific service options. A recommendation for a service shall be made on an individual basis by matching services to student interests, needs, and abilities.

GIFTED STUDENT SERVICE PLAN (GSSP)

What is a GSSP?

A GSSP is an educational plan that matches a formally identified gifted student's interests, needs, and abilities to differentiated service options and serves as the communication vehicle between the parents/guardians and school personnel. GSSPs are applicable to students who are in grades 4-12.

Is a GSSP required for every GT student?

Yes. Every formally identified student in grades 4-12 must have a GSSP. A parent/ guardian of a GT student shall be notified annually of services included in the GSSP and given access to specific procedures to follow in requesting a change in services.

Should parents/guardians play a role in the development of the GSSP?

Yes. A local school district shall implement a procedure to obtain information related to the interests, needs, and abilities of a GT student from the parent/guardian for use in determining appropriate services.

Is the school required to provide any feedback on a student's progress?

Yes. The school personnel shall report a student's progress related to the GT services delineated in the GSSP at least once each semester.

PROGRAMMING FOR THE GIFTED & TALENTED

What should quality GT services look like?

Quality GT programming will reflect a range of services designed to meet the varied needs of students who are Gifted and Talented. In any school district, high quality gifted services require careful planning, maintenance, and evaluation. Quality GT services necessitate: clearly articulated policies, procedures and services, primary through grade twelve; a grievance procedure through which a parent, guardian, or student may resolve a concern regarding the appropriate and adequate provision of primary talent pool services or services addressed in a formally identified gifted and talented student's services plan; employment

of properly certified and professionally qualified personnel; evidence of appropriate professional development for all personnel working with gifted and talented students; and equitable opportunities for consideration for services at the primary level and in each category of service in grades 4-12.

Can parents have input on local district programming for GT services?

District policies and procedures shall ensure that a program evaluation process shall be conducted annually and shall address parent(s) attitudes toward the program and appropriateness of services.

Must a district assign a GT coordinator for the program?

Yes. A district receiving state funding shall designate a properly endorsed GT program coordinator.

What are some of the duties of a GT program coordinator?

Some duties include: oversight of the district GT services; serving as a liaison between the district and the state; ensuring internal compliance with state statutes and administrative regulation for GT programs; and administering and revising the GT program budget.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

What important information should parents/guardians know about GT service delivery options?

Some important information to know: service options are to be provided primary through grade 12; services are to be differentiated to meet individual student needs; grouping and multiple service delivery options shall be utilized in a local district education plan; grouping formats shall include grouping for instructional purposes based on student interests, abilities, and needs, including social and emotional; and there shall be multiple service options with no single service existing alone.

According to 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented, what is differentiation?

Differentiation is a method through which educators establish a specific, well thought out match between learner characteristics

in terms of abilities, interests, and needs; and curriculum opportunities in terms of enrichment and acceleration options, which maximize learning experiences. Differentiated service options are educational experiences that extend, replace, or supplement learning beyond the standard curriculum.

How are counseling services matched to the needs of gifted children?

Recommended best practices suggest that a counselor with any GT students in his/her service population should be prepared to address the needs of those students. Counselors, by the nature of their work, are to be aware of the special needs of the GT population and should prepare through courses of professional development. Specific counseling services appropriate for gifted students will address relevant issues including: perfectionism, executive function skills, goal-setting, underachievement, etc.

What services should be provided for a student identified in visual/performing arts who has no matching class in his/her schedule?

All classroom teachers must be made aware of each GT student's identification area(s). Differentiation may be used in terms of interests, products, process, enriched content, etc. Other ideas include securing a mentor, providing a periodic pullout session, independent study, looking to individuals in the community, parents, school personnel, etc. All teachers' input should be reflected on the students' GSSP.

Are there any specific qualifications for a teacher who works with GT students?

Direct services to GT students shall be provided by appropriately certified personnel having an endorsement for GT education.

Is it good practice to allow a GT child to tutor another child?

Having students help one another may be a useful management strategy. However, the GT student is often a poor choice to help a struggling student because he/she may not understand the questions or issues around something they have already mastered very well. A better practice would be to have another student who just mastered the concept help the struggling student. If a GT child has mastered a concept or skill and the

standard task provides limited challenge, a better practice would be to use differentiation of the content, process, or product to adjust the task.

What criteria should be used to determine the level of service required to meet the needs of a GT student?

The goal of quality gifted services it to facilitate continuous progress toward the student's potential. This requires use of the following:

- Diagnostic data that show levels of mastery and need
- Student work samples that show the application of skills and concepts, and
- Relevant information about interests, goals and needs in order to develop services in the classroom

GT services should be articulated to provide systematic growth and challenge.

What recourse does a parent/guardian have if there is a concern regarding appropriate and adequate provision of services to either a primary talent pool student or a formally identified GT student who is receiving services addressed in a student services plan?

Typically, the place to begin with those concerns will be at the school level through the teacher, GT personnel, and administrator. It is recommended that parents and school districts work together to meet the needs of the individual child. A school district shall establish a grievance procedure through which a parent, guardian or student may resolve the concern(s). This procedure should be included on the formally (4th -12th grade) identified GT student's Gifted Student Service Plan.

CURRICULUM FOR GT STUDENTS

Should GT students have the same curriculum that is provided for all students?

A comprehensive framework or course of study for GT students shall be based on a district or school's curricula that shall be differentiated, supplemented or modified to assist students to further develop their individual interest, needs, and abilities.

DIVERSITY

How can a district address the issue of underrepresentation of minority children identified as GT?

Alternative means and methods are often helpful in identifying GT children from minority populations, relying more heavily upon observation (by teacher and/or GT specialist) and nonverbal tests. Such nonverbal tests may include the NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) and the Raven's Progressive Matrices. Observation-based methods for teachers may include the KOI (Kingore Observation Inventory) and the Renzulli Rating Scales. It would be helpful to combine these methods with information specifically relating to gifted minority students. A local school district shall provide a system for diagnostic screening and identification of strengths, gifted behaviors and talents which provides equal access for racial and ethnic minority children, disadvantaged children, and children with disabilities.

FUNDING/ALLOCATIONS

Must the money allocated to districts for GT education be spent before the fiscal year closes?

Yes, districts must use the state allocation for GT Funding by June 30. If nearing the deadline, unused money can be encumbered and off the books immediately unless districts wish to return the unused amount over 10% of the allocation to the state.

Why isn't there a funded, statewide provision for all teachers to receive professional development for educating gifted and talented students?

Districts are provided state funds allocated specifically for professional development. The state makes no recommendation as to what professional development is to be provided. It is the decision of each district to use the professional development allocation as needed. Bringing the issue to the attention of district administrators (and in some cases the school council) may open the door for district wide professional development on educating GT students.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Can a district write more stringent and/or specific guidelines than those outlined in 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented?

Policies and procedures can be written to reflect individual district population and need. The guidelines in 704 KAR 3:285 are minimal requirements.

What is to be done with the records of GT students upon graduation?

Students' GT records should remain in the students' cumulative folder and upon graduation, the GT records will be handled in the same manner as the students' cumulative folder.

Can a parent/guardian have access to the district policies and procedures for GT programming?

A local school district shall have in operation, and available for public inspection, local board approved policies and procedures which address each requirement in the administrative regulation for GT programming.

STATE REPORTING

When should student data be entered in the state reporting system (Infinite Campus)?

KDE recommends entering data regularly or as soon as it is available, not only at the end of the year. KDE has the capability to extract district data at any time and does so periodically. The data must be current and reflect daily changes in order to create an accurate view of Kentucky's GT student information at any given time during the year.

References

704 Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented

Primary Talent Pool Frequently Asked Questions; A Publication of the Kentucky Advisory Council for Gifted & Talented Education & the Kentucky Department of Education

KDE Website: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Gifted+and+Talented

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