

12/21/2023

Screening, Evaluating and Programming for Gifted Students

1. Describe your entity's awareness activities conducted annually to inform the public of the gifted education services and programs offered (newspaper, student handbooks, school website, etc.)

Information regarding gifted education services and programs offered in the Wayne Highlands School District (WHSD), as well as steps parents/guardians may take when they suspect their student may have gifted abilities, is provided in the student handbook for each school building and on the district's website. Additionally, the WHSD is included in NEIU 19's annual public notice of services which is published in local newspapers and on the NEIU 19 website.

2. Describe your entity's process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may be in need of specially designed instruction (screening).

When a teacher suspects a student may be mentally gifted, he/she will refer that student to the guidance counselor in that school for possible screening. If, based on the data provided by the teacher, there is reasonable evidence to support the possibility of mental giftedness, the guidance counselor will complete a cognitive ability screener. Based on the results of that screening, the student's parents may be contacted to provide permission for further assessments to formally evaluate the student and determine eligibility for gifted education services.

Parents may also request screening/evaluation for gifted education services. Parents are given the option of having their child screened for gifted eligibility before moving to an evaluation. Whether the parents opt for screening or evaluation as the initial step, the LEA honors their decision.

The LEA is available to complete evaluations for gifted eligibility with resident students of the district who do not attend our public schools (i.e. those attending private schools, charter schools, etc.).

3. Describe your entity's procedures for determining **eligibility** (through **multiple criteria**) and **need** (based on **academic strength**) for potentially mentally gifted students (**evaluation**).

Multiple Criteria are used to identify potentially gifted students at the Wayne Highlands School District. These include the following:

A. Intellectual Ability: To be measured by the school psychologist through the WASI (Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence). If a student's score on this test indicates a cognitive ability of 130 or higher (standard scores), the student is eligible for Gifted Education as explained in Chapter 16 Regulations. If a student's performance on this assessment indicates a cognitive ability in the range of 125 or higher (standard scores), the student's eligibility qualifies for further consideration through multiple criteria.

B. Outstanding Academic Achievement (one or more subject area - through normed assessments): The measurement tools include the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) (standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment), KeyMath Assessment, and the Woodcock Diagnostic Reading Battery (both standardized and norm-referenced measures of academic achievement). Information is compiled by the guidance counselor. On the PSSA the student must achieve an Advanced score in one or more academic area(s). On the remaining measurement tools the students must perform in the 97th percentile in one or more academic area(s) in order to be eligible for consideration.

C. Exceptional Academic Achievement (one or more subject area - curriculum-based assessments): Information will be gathered by the teacher and/or guidance counselor from the student report cards/checklists or curriculum-based assessments. In order to be eligible for consideration, the student must consistently achieve the highest mark possible on his/her quarterly report in the area(s) being considered for gifted ability or consistently perform in the 97th percentile in curriculum-based assessments at 1 year or more above the student's grade level. "Consistently" is defined as occurring during at least three quarterly reports.

D. Exceptional Rates of Acquisition and Retention: Information will be gathered by the teacher, parent, and guidance counselor utilizing the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS), which are norm-referenced rating scales, as well as teacher and parent input and checklists. The guidance counselor will distribute, collect, and analyze the necessary SIGS rating scales and input forms. Significant examples of acquisition and retention rates will make the student eligible for consideration.

E. Early and measured use of higher skill, academic creativity, leadership skill, intense academic interest, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, and technology expertise are also criteria to measure potential for gifted eligibility. The SIGS tool is used to measure student aptitude in these areas by the teacher, parent and/or guidance counselor, in addition to parent and teacher input and checklists. The guidance counselor will distribute, collect, and analyze the necessary SIGS rating scales and input forms. Students must be in the 97th percentile or higher in 4 or more of the areas in SIGS to be eligible for consideration.

Once the necessary assessments have been completed, a Gifted Written Report (GWR) is written, a meeting is held with the parents, and the GWR is sent to the Director of Special Education who forwards it to the Teacher of the Gifted.

To continually assess the needs of students identified as mentally gifted and to inform each one's annual Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP), the measures identified below are utilized on an ongoing basis:

- Updated input from teachers, students, and parents regarding areas of strength, interest, and need
 - Bi-annual administration of standardized, norm-referenced academic achievement assessments
 - On-going monitoring of progress reports, reports cards, and state assessments.
4. Describe the gifted programs*being offered that provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment or both. *The word "programs" refers to the *continuum of services*, not one particular option.

The Wayne Highlands School District employs four part-time teachers to serve the students identified as eligible for gifted education. In an effort to continue these students' participation in the general education curriculum in the regular education setting, they participate in Itinerant Gifted Education services. Each student's gifted education teacher collaborates with the student, parents, and other teachers to determine the most appropriate educational program for that student. In consideration of all team members' input, the gifted education teacher collaborates with general education teachers to provide enrichment and acceleration opportunities within the regular education classroom as well as, in many cases, outside of the regular education setting within specialized groups and/or through individual instruction.

Course and/or grade level acceleration is available to students in the Gifted Program. GIEP Teams, including students and their parents, consider all relevant factors and data when considering these options and the LEA provides these options for a student when it is determined to be in his/her best interest..

In addition to each student's consistent gifted education program, the Wayne Highlands School District's Gifted Education Program offers myriad opportunities for identified students to participate in enriching educational activities outside of the school setting. Students identified as mentally gifted also have opportunities to participate in competitions and extra-curricular activities that provide enrichment and acceleration in a number of areas.