

WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
GIFTED & TALENTED STUDY GROUP

September – November 2005

Group Participants

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADM	Average daily membership
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment (an assessment administered to students that is based on content unique to that school/district.
Chapter 16.....	Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines (web address: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/gifted)
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
ELL	English Language Learners (students who speak a language other than English as their primary language)
GIEP	Gifted Individualized Education Plan
GMDE.....	Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (a team meeting with parents prior to the GIEP, to review evaluation results)
GMDT	Gifted Multidisciplinary Team
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LEA	Local Education Agency (generally refers to the building principal)
LEC	Learning Enrichment Center
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test

I. PROGRAM GOALS

- A. The WCSD (Warren County School District) Gifted Program is based on the PDE (Pennsylvania Department of Education) Chapter 16 guidelines.

Objectives

1. Screening of students occurs earlier in their school career (March or April of the Kindergarten year/Grade 1) and at multiple times during their school experience (perhaps using a commercial screening product.)
2. The program focuses on mentally gifted as defined by Chapter 16:
Mentally gifted is defined as outstanding intellectual and creative ability the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program (22 Pa. Code §16.1) IQ 130 or more The term “mentally gifted” includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher, when multiple criteria as set forth in Department Guidelines indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone...The determination shall include an assessment by a certified school psychologist. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d))
3. Screening uses the multiple criteria listed in Chapter 16 (22 Pa. Code §11.12, 22 Pa. Code §16.21 (a) and 22 Pa. Code §16.21 (c)) as follows below:

Screening

School Age

The chapter 16 applies “gifted student” status to those students who are of “school age” which is defined under 22 Pa. Code §11.12 as “the period of a child’s life from the earliest admission age to a school district’s kindergarten program, or, when no kindergarten program is provided, to the district’s earliest admission age for beginners, until the age of 21 years or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first.”

Screening, identification, and education for gifted students commence where the school program begins, at entry to kindergarten. When no kindergarten program is provided, screening, identification, and gifted education begin at the district’s earliest admission-age for beginners.

Procedures

Chapter 16 requires that “Each school district shall adopt and use a system to locate and identify all students within that district who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction.” (22 Pa. Code §16.21(a))

“Each school district shall determine the student’s needs through a screening and evaluation process which meets the requirements of this chapter.” (22 Pa. Code §16.21 (c))

The district is obligated to provide appropriate screening and programming to all students of school age. Procedures and criteria must be developed to screen all students and evaluate students who are thought to be gifted. School districts should not delay or prolong the screening and evaluation process to avoid having to establish a gifted program for kindergarten students or early elementary students.

Screening is a two-step process. The first step is a systematic “first look” at all students and the second step is a more intense review of potentially gifted students. Screening should be based on existing information, observed performance compared with the normal peer population, and valid screening tools. Persons using initial screening checklists should be trained in their use. Screening is a team effort between the parents and the school district.

If screening tools are locally designed, their use must be consistent with Chapter 16 and the results carefully monitored for effectiveness in identifying gifted students by comparison to validated and normed data. Care should be taken to assure that the district screening device is not so restrictive as to inappropriately limit access to gifted education or to delay providing gifted services.

The screening procedures should generate data from a variety of sources. These data should then be compared to predetermined multiple criteria for gifted potential/performance. The screening process may include, **but is not limited to*, the following information, to the extent available:

**verbiage added by Study Group*

- Medical History
- Readiness/Developmental Tests
- Achievement Tests
- Ability Tests
- Group Intelligence Tests
- Anecdotal information – parent, educator, other
- Subject Area Assessment (e.g., student portfolio)
- Syllabus-based examination
- Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA)
- College Aptitude Test
- PSAT/SAT; CLEP
- Extra Curricular Academic Performance/Achievements
- Rating Scales
- Interest Inventories
- Cumulative Records
- Enrollment Records
- Parent Inventories
- Health Records
- Report Cards
- Subject Assessments of Cognitive Functioning

Although group achievement tests may be used as a screening factor, the “ceiling” effect must be taken into consideration. These tests often do not measure the comprehensive attainment and achievement levels of the gifted student. Students who are thought to be gifted should be referred for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) that would include an IQ test.

4. Services such as guidance, psychological services and social and emotional support services are provided to specifically support the gifted students.

- B. The WCSD Gifted Program is an individualized program.
Objectives
1. All stakeholders are invited to participate in the process.
 2. Regular education teachers are actively involved in writing and implementing the GIEP.
 3. The GIEP (Gifted Individualized Education Plan) is specific as to who is responsible to implement what parts of the program.
 4. GIEP is formatted to district and state specifications.
 5. Accelerated curriculum is available to all GIEP students as appropriate.
- C. The WCSD Gifted Program is integrated with the regular education program.
Objectives:
1. In-service and professional development opportunities relevant to gifted education are available for all professional staff.
 2. The Gifted program is designed to meet PA. state standards. All planned instruction would accommodate acceleration and enrichment for gifted students.
 3. There is a shared responsibility (partnership) for implementing the GIEP.
 4. There is a consistent procedure throughout the District for homework, missed work and make-up work for gifted students.
 5. At the discretion of the parent and student, 7th and 8th grade students have the option to receive graduation credit for accelerated coursework.
- D. The WCSD Gifted Program develops and maintains an open communication process for all stakeholders.
Objectives:
1. An annual report to the board and public is compiled each year with input from all stakeholders.
 2. Communication between parents/teachers/public is occurring on a regular basis.
 3. A brochure about the WCSD gifted program is on the WCSD web page and contained in the parent handbook.
 4. Parent workshops are available to provide training on GIEP's, parental rights, advocacy, etc.
 5. A newsletter to parents is sent home at least every 9 weeks.
- E. A Guidance Counselor is dedicated to the Gifted Support Program.
1. Guidance staff provides to the GIEP students information on scholarships, summer gifted opportunities, special gifted competitions, opportunities for leadership/mentoring and other activities as appropriate.
 2. Guidance counselor works with the home school counselor to assist students with scheduling.
 3. The guidance counselor would provide social and emotional support to gifted students as needed.
- F. Implementation of the new guidelines begins in the 06/07 school year
Objectives:
1. The study group continues the work with the evolving process of Gifted Education.
 2. Consistent Instructional leadership is provided for the program
 3. Quarterly reports are provided to the Board
 4. The administration is responsible to implement the plan the Board approves.

II. BENCHMARKS

A. Program Benchmarks

1. 100% sign-off on GIEP's, i.e. Parent, Gifted Support Teacher, Regular Education Teacher(s), LEA (Local Education Agency), Student (when appropriate), Psychologist (initial GIEP).
2. Participation in the gifted program (of which the LEC is only one part), this year will serve as the baseline with a goal of 5% growth per year in the total program. The goal is to attain the District ADM (Average Daily Membership) percent of attendance.
3. Compare percentage of GIEP students in WCSD to surrounding districts to measure identification of gifted population.
4. Students are accelerated at least 1 to 1 ½ grade levels in their area(s) of giftedness, as appropriate.

B. Student Benchmarks

Elementary:

1. All students show measurable progress as based on their GIEP goals.
2. Percentage of gifted student participation in the WCSD Gifted Program is comparable to the attendance rate of the WCSD elementary (K-6) population.
3. Students enter the gifted program at the earliest point in their school career.
4. 75% of parents are satisfied with the delivery of the GIEP as based on a yearly parent survey.

Secondary:

1. All students show measurable progress as based on their GIEP goals.
2. Percentage of gifted student participation in the WCSD Gifted Program is comparable to the attendance rate of the WCSD secondary (7-12) population.
3. 75% of parents are satisfied with the delivery of the GIEP as based on a yearly parent survey.

III. PROGRAM DELIVERY

NOTE: The study group (after consultation with outside resources) does not support the inclusion of "high achievers" in the recommended restructuring of the program. With a specific emphasis on highly individualized GIEP's, programming needs to focus on those students with GIEP's.

A. Teacher Certification

1. All teachers of gifted students in accelerated programs must be certificated in the area of instruction they are delivering to students.

B. Types of Programs – One size does not fit all. Some of the models that are included in Best Practices for Gifted Education are:

1. **School within a school** – The gifted program is part of the school program and housed in a school building. The gifted students would be part of the regular education program for some of their courses of study and have access to the gifted program on a period by period basis.

The regular education staff and the gifted support staff would be working in collaboration, conferring about observations and carrying out the education plan.

A better understanding of best practices for the gifted may take place as the regular educator and the teacher of the gifted plan together, create schedules for testing so the gifted student isn't overscheduled. Consideration needs to be made so the gifted student doesn't miss something or have under amounts of homework.

The gifted student's progress on a daily basis can be made available. A natural off-chute of this model would be the teacher of the gifted may assume the role of a consultant teacher for part of the day and a self-contained teacher for other parts of the day.

2. **Resource Room** – This is popular at the elementary level. It is similar in design and structure of students identified with disabilities. This would allow for cross-age grouping (a third grader sitting next to a fifth grader.) The gifted student can be serviced on a five day a week schedule on a period by period basis.

The teacher of the gifted would be available throughout the day to assist the gifted student and the regular education teacher. Not all gifted children are gifted in all areas, and this model can work with the student on their identified strengths and weaknesses.

3. **Special Schools** – This model allows for a more intensive education approach with the gifted student engaging with other gifted students and is usually housed in another setting away from the regular education setting. The student usually attends the school for all of their educational needs and is usually found in urban school districts.

The educational programming for the gifted student in the WCSD most closely resembles the Special School model. The gifted student usually attends for one day per week. The gifted student is involved in enrichment activities as well as specific courses.

4. **Acceleration** – Moving faster through academic content, which typically includes offering standard curriculum to students at a younger than usual age or lower than usual grade level. Grade skipping and early entrance are forms of acceleration.

5. **Enrichment** – Refers to richer and more varied educational experiences, a curriculum that is modified to provide greater depth and breadth than is generally provided in the regular education classroom.

6. **Curriculum Compacting** – Teacher, through the use of pre-testing for mastery, organizes instruction around broad themes, and using less time for drill and practice and moves more rapidly through the required curriculum content to provide additional time for gifted students to pursue alternate learning activities.

7. **Independent Study/Self-paced instruction**

8. **College Level Courses**

9. **Mentoring**

- C. Pros & Cons of moving the gifted program to the home school:

PROS

- Create a smaller ratio of gifted support instructors to gifted students allowing for more individualized instruction.
- Better able to integrate the enrichment process with the regular classroom
- Wouldn't be a mystery as to what goes on at the LEC.

PROS

CONS

- Inefficient use of gifted support staff by losing time traveling between buildings.
- Cost of equipping each school with all the equipment and technology currently used at the LEC.
- Gifted students not being able to work with one another and build off of each other.

CONS

- Enrichment could be more than a one day a week thing.
- Could allow enrichment activities/courses to non-gifted students.
- Might make individualization of GIEP easier/better
- Less chance of a student to worry about missing a test

- With declining enrollment, both in general and within the LEC, there is a higher cost to provide the same instruction to a smaller group.
- Would limit, due to cost effectiveness, the range of enrichment and advanced learning areas that could be offered.
- No set room/rooms dedicated for the efficient setup and instructing of gifted subjects.
- Instructors have to work from a traveling cart, which waters down what they can do because of transportation of material/equipment
- Could water down the enrichment offerings and ability
- Could lead to inequity in offerings to gifted students between schools.
- Regular teachers may become even more blasé about the gifted program and its importance.

D. Pros and Cons of moving Gifted Program to a new location/same setup

PROS

- Use current space not now used, but already heated and maintained
- Savings of rent
- More staff availability
- More potential resource availability
- Consolidation of administration

CONS

- Cost of moving and installing equipment at a new location
- Need to establish an identity with the unit apart from the school.
- Potential development of “This is Warren” VS “Warren County”

E. Pros and Cons for keeping the LEC Program at the current location:

PROS

- The location is already established, no cost to set up
- Neutral site for students to come together
- Most cost effective use of instructors by consolidating the students together rather than having the instructors travel from school to school
- Equipment is already established. No need to duplicate for multiple sites
- State Hospital grounds is a more efficient and cost effective source of heating than at any of the schools

CONS

- Student loss of time traveling to and from their home school to the current LEC.
- Higher administration costs due to separate location
- Makes integration with the regular classroom harder
- Students must bring their own lunch.
- Security issue in regard to the state hospital patients.

PROS

- By keeping the gifted support program consolidated in one location, a broader range of courses, seminars and activities can be offered to the gifted students because we are now instructing more students at a time than we would at the home school
- The culture at the LEC is a remarkable collaborative experience for the student with each other and with the staff.
- Student/teacher relationship is collegial, not adversarial. There is an aura of success at the LEC.

CONS

- Without increased education, it does not close the expectation gap between the gifted support students and the home school teachers.

IV. COMPONENTS OF THE GIEP

A. Components of the GIEP – should be strictly aligned with Chapter 16 (22 Pa. Code 16.31) as follows

1. The GIEP

The GIEP of each gifted student must be based on the GMDT's (Gifted Multidisciplinary Team) evaluation report and recommendations must contain the following:

The GIEP should reflect the needs of the student. The needs of culturally diverse, disadvantaged, underachieving, female, ELL (English Language Learners), and students with disabilities who are gifted may require different assessment and attention to their multiple special needs in the development of the GIEP. There should be a description of the student's present instructional levels and other information necessary to develop 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.

The writing of the GIEP is a duty of the school district. To foster discussion and understanding, school districts are encouraged to compose GIEP's that are understandable to educators who will be delivering the GIEP, to parents to ensure the student's active participation and understanding of the gifted education program that will be delivered, and where appropriate, to the student.

2. GIEP Preparation - The Warren County School District utilizes the PDE provided form to prepare a GIEP. In order to fully document that all stakeholders are involved in the preparation and administration of the GIEP, this committee has revised page 1 of the GIEP (Attachment 1). The revised page adds to the PDE form and has been reviewed by the WCSD solicitor.

V Progress Reporting

- A. Parents will receive progress reports each nine weeks relevant to the goals and objectives of the individual student's GIEP.

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