

Critical Content of Gifted Education for K-12 Schools

Potential and Performance: Opportunity, motivation, and task commitment can assist in developing advanced potential into outstanding performance. Schools can find those learners with advanced potential and design appropriately differentiated experiences that provide opportunity and challenge to develop a particular talent into outstanding performance. Curriculum and experiences designed for typical learners are not sufficiently complex to develop advanced potential.

Identify Students Who Need Gifted Services

- It is a state and local responsibility to identify and serve gifted students; there is no federal law.
- Check state code and rules to find domains of giftedness required to be identified and served (e.g., general intellectual, specific academic, visual and performing arts, creativity).
- District-level identification ensures consistent, fair practices and implementation.
- The purpose of identifying gifted children is to provide them with specific services in order to develop their advanced potential in a particular domain, not to identify them for the sake of a label.
- Identification measures are matched to the services provided (e.g., for services in language arts, use a measure of verbal reasoning and a measure of verbal achievement; a student could be identified through either pathway).
- A multifaceted identification system includes measures of performance (achievement), measures of potential (ability/aptitude), and qualitative data (descriptive data specific to the domain being served).
- Effective performance measures in academic content areas are valid, reliable, and include norm-referenced achievement tests with high ceilings. Criterion-referenced measures frequently have grade-level ceilings.
- With fair and defensible identification systems, the group of students identified for gifted services will reflect the cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity of the district as a whole.
- Unless the state requires otherwise, students can qualify if they score at an outstanding level on *either* the achievement *or* the ability measure. Not all students have had equal opportunity to develop.
- Unless the state requires otherwise, different norms (local and subgroup), rather than different measures, will help find students from traditionally underrepresented populations.
- Screening procedures are designed to include all students at targeted points in the school sequence.
- Establish and equitable appeals and exit procedures are best practice.

Provide Appropriately Differentiated Learning Experiences

- Gifted students show greater achievement gains when they have opportunities to learn together. Ability grouping for the gifted is an evidence-based practice.
- Grouping must be accompanied by more in-depth curriculum and more rigorous instructional methods for gains to occur.
- Greater learning gains occur when challenge is provided daily in the talent area.
- Gifted students benefit from opportunities to pursue individual interests in depth.
- Acceleration combined with enrichment (tied to content) is needed for optimal growth.
- Gifted learners respond well to a faster pace of instruction with more complex and in-depth content.
- An acceleration policy establishes procedures for learners capable of more rapid progression.

- Quality instruction develops critical and creative thinking.
- Further differentiation of gifted services, curriculum, pacing, and instruction is necessary to meet individual needs. This is true even within programs such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate.
- Some gifted students will need additional and ongoing supports in order to be successful.
- Teachers of gifted students need ongoing specialized professional development led by qualified individuals with deep content knowledge and experience in gifted education.
- Learning experiences should be developed and articulated across K-12 for systematic talent development.
- Gifted students benefit from differentiated guidance and counseling services and deliberate cultivation of intrapersonal skills that support a commitment to high achievement.

Advanced Performance and Program Effectiveness

- Statewide and district assessments allow for above-grade achievement and individual growth.
- Some gifted students need additional opportunities for above-level work, such as taking high school courses in middle school; college level work while in high school.
- Evidence of advanced performance is collected and used for decision making across each domain included in a talent development framework.
- Evaluating program effectiveness analyzes outcomes, solicits feedback, looks for program coherence, and provides direction for future improvements based upon data.