

Reaching and Teaching

A Comprehensive Guidebook
For Identifying and Educating
Gifted Students In West Virginia



West Virginia Department of Education

Purpose and Acknowledgements

Reaching and Teaching culminates the work of a task force charged to produce a document that could be used by new and veteran teachers of gifted students and by regular educators to identify and teach gifted students in West Virginia.

The following educators are to be commended for their input and many hours of dedicated work. Without their contributions, this document could not have been written.

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IDENTIFICATION
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Introduction

Requiring adequate yearly progress for all students, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reinforces the need for effective teaching and learning opportunities that challenge students in America's schools. Among the educators of gifted children, however, there is a growing concern that we are not effectively developing potential in our most able students. West Virginia's plan for implementing NCLB requires adequate yearly progress for all students, implying also that "No Child Shall Be Held Back."

Purpose

Society in general has not given the attention to the gifted population as it has other special groups. As a result, children of superior intellect may spend their time in a commonplace classroom, assimilating a curricular diet far below their potential. Gifted students who are not identified and served with gifted services are not likely to ever have their needs fully met while in school (Sousa, p.6)

Scope

Reaching and Teaching has been written to provide direction, guidance and resources for classroom teachers, gifted facilitators, related services staff and administrators so that we might better serve the gifts of all students. This user-friendly manual is a complement to *Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students*. Together, the documents can be used to ensure that students demonstrating giftedness receive appropriate services.

Legal Foundation

The information in the manual has been compiled to follow the steps delineated in *Policy 2419* for conducting child-find activities and appropriately serving students with extraordinary abilities who demonstrate the need for specially designed instruction. This process begins with general education interventions and continues through initial evaluation, developing an effective IEP and determining services and delivery model to meet the student's documented needs.

Expectations

Gifted children in West Virginia are served through Special Education and identified in state regulations as "Exceptional." The manual will refer to legal foundations regarding West Virginia's implementation of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97).

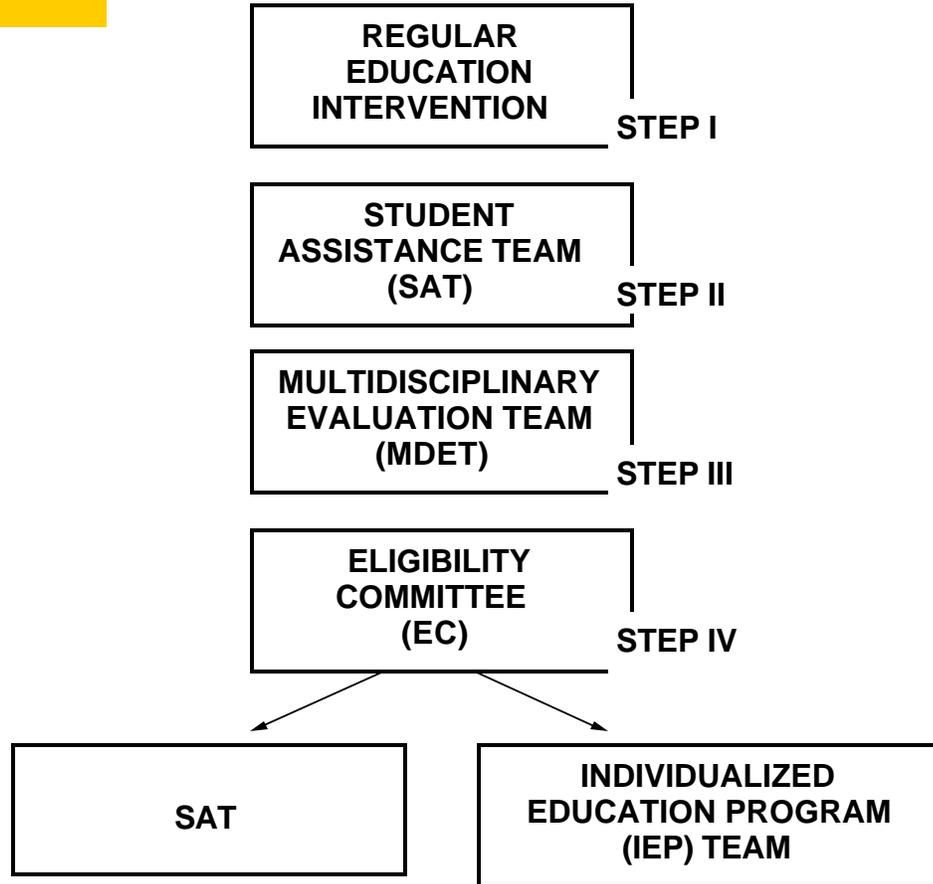
Parents of gifted learners in West Virginia have a right to expect that schools will fulfill the promise made that children will have consistent and daily opportunities for challenging learning experiences and will demonstrate continuous forward progress in their learning. This manual is an effort to help schools design educational opportunities that will keep that promise for advanced learners. Research-based concepts presented in this manual can set the stage to allow children in West Virginia to demonstrate their gifted behaviors.



**Identification
Process
At A Glance**

The following flow chart takes the identification process from Regular Education intervention through development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The sub-sections of each of the flow chart components will be placed before the narrative of each process step.

Chart 1.1



The first chapter also discusses the following areas: Definition of gifted, pre-referral, characteristics of gifted, historically underrepresented, assessment instruments, determining eligibility, and writing the IEP.

Subsequent chapters will discuss delivery models and instructional practices. This book has a resource section that offers the users a glossary of terms, frequently asked questions, resources for implementation and training and a selection of informative articles, including sections on Brain Compatible Learning, Cooperative Structures, other up-to-date teaching strategies and a carefully selected bibliography.

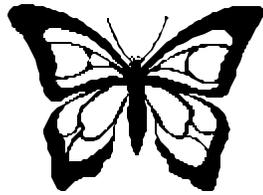
Each local school district will also receive training and a manual for staff development in gifted pedagogy in the regular classroom.

Rationale

Developing
Potential

Consequences
Of Not
Addressing
Giftedness

Impact
Of
Programming



**“There is nothing more unequal than
the equal treatment of unequals.”**

—Felix Frankfurter
U.S. Supreme Court Justice

The concept of **equal educational opportunity** extends to all children, including those identified as gifted, and in West Virginia, provisions are made to enable each child to move toward his/her high potential. Equal educational opportunity means providing meaningful opportunities for that development. **It does not** mean providing the same education for every child, since true equality is providing equal opportunity to benefit from education according to ability.

Using the same methods and materials for all children is not providing equal educational opportunity. Expectations for **learning** for gifted students should be set at high levels, since a student with high ability may not reach his/her potential if required to perform at exactly the same level of other students.

In the present social, political, and educational systems based upon democratic principles, there is an unacceptable tendency among “anti-elitists” to refuse to provide gifted children the right to an educational opportunity appropriate to their level of development. Those who assume that one level of educational opportunity meets the needs of all students are both unfair and uninformed. To be fair, schools must provide for all children a variety of learning opportunities at different and appropriate levels.

When entering the educational system, many gifted children have already developed the basic skills other students have yet to be taught. Their ideas and interests may be very different from those of their age peers, and they may begin to develop a sense of isolation or feel different from others. If their educational needs are being ignored while the teacher is “catching up” with other students, many students with giftedness fail to achieve their potential, set low goals, and achieve at levels significantly lower than their intellectual capability. Without access to special resources and intensive instruction early in their educational experience, the highly gifted are at risk for under achievement.

Gifted and talented students develop a sense of competence and self-confidence when they are provided services designated to meet their unique needs. Students with giftedness who receive special services tend to make significant gains in achievement, learning to work more **effectively** and **efficiently** and to develop strong problem-solving skills. These students absorb a vast amount of information and utilize this knowledge to produce a variety of possible solutions. They become **producers** of knowledge and ideas — not just **consumers**.

**Valuing
Giftedness**

Loss of talent through educational neglect can be a tragic waste for both the individual and society. **Students who are gifted and talented, because of their zeal to share knowledge and understanding gained with others and with the world, can benefit society by solving a range of complex problems facing humanity today.** Society needs these gifted individuals and should expect much from them (Smutney 2003).

As adults, today's gifted students will be needed to play more demanding and innovative roles as humanity faces future complex problems. Leaders, problem solvers, and complex thinkers are vital for society's progress in this millennium. The United States Congress recognized the value of these talented individuals in a declaration made in 1972 (P.L.I 95-561, Title IX, Part A, Section 901):

**Congressional
Declaration**

"The Nation's greatest resource for solving critical national problems in areas of national concern is its gifted and talented children. Unless the special abilities of gifted and talented children are developed during their elementary and secondary school years, their special potential for assisting the Nation may be lost. Furthermore, gifted and talented children from economically disadvantaged families and areas are often not afforded the opportunity to fulfill their special and valuable potential, due to inadequate or inappropriate educational services."

Gallagher

Because many students with giftedness do not continue to achieve without attention to their unique educational needs, the losses of individual potential and the benefits of gifted services are difficult to calculate. James Gallagher wrote in 1978, "...failure to help the gifted child reach his potential is a societal tragedy, the extent of which is difficult to measure but which is surely great. How can we measure the sonata unwritten, the curative drug undiscovered, the absence of political insight? They are the difference between what we **are** and what we **could be** as a society." (Adapted from work by Kansas State Department of Education, 2001)



**Federal
Definition**

Historically, giftedness has been defined as children and youth who are identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic, or leadership ability, or in the performing and visual arts and who by reason thereof, require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school. (Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978, Section 902)

**State
Definition/
Policy 2419**

West Virginia state Department of education Policy 2419: Regulation for the Education of Exceptional Students defines giftedness and delineates the criteria for eligibility. Gifted students are served in grades 1-8; Exceptional Gifted students are served in grades 9-12. For reference, the regulations pertaining to gifted education (pages 14-15 in the policy) are reprinted on pages 5-7 of this document. They are followed by a discussion of the elements of the regulations.

**Policy 2419:
Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students**

Ability

A. Giftedness is exceptional intellectual abilities that are evidence of outstanding capability and require specially designed instruction and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

B. For Gifted students, grades one (1) through eight (8), documentation that a student meets both of the following:

(a) Intellectual Ability

(A) General intellectual ability, a full scale score of 2.0 or more standard deviations above the mean on a comprehensive test of intellectual ability, with consideration of 1.0 standard error of measurement at the 68% confidence interval, **and**

(b) Achievement/Performance

(A) At least one area of academic achievement as measured by an individual standardized achievement test, indicating that the student requires specially designed instruction in one or more of the four (4) core curriculum areas; **or**

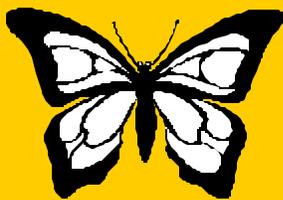
(B) At least one area of classroom performance, as determined during the multidisciplinary evaluation, indicating that the student requires specially designed instruction in one or more of the four (4) core curriculum areas.

Achievement

**Classroom
Performance**

C. For exceptional gifted, grades 9 through 12, documentation that a student meets the eligibility criteria for gifted and **one** or more of the following:

(a) the eligibility criteria for one or more of the disabilities as defined in this section; **and/or**



**Policy 2419
continued**

**Grades 9-12
Exceptional
Gifted**

**Special
Considerations
For Eligibility**

**Historically
Under-
represented**



(b) the definition for economically disadvantaged: **and/or**

Student whose family income meets the federal guidelines for reduced or free school lunch (glossary)

(c) the definition for underachieving, which takes into consideration the student's ability level, educational performance and achievement levels; **and/or**

Academic achievement and/or classroom performance that is significantly discrepant with the student's intellectual ability documented by the student's educational record (glossary)

(d) the definition for psychological adjustment disordered as documented by a comprehensive psychological evaluation.

Having significant emotional or behavioral symptoms that adversely affect a student's educational performance, documented by a comprehensive psychological evaluation (glossary)

D. Special Considerations

When a student is being considered for eligibility based upon an ability score that falls within the minus range of 1.0 standard error or measurement, at 2.0 standard deviations above the mean, the Eligibility Committee shall document that the student has the potential to achieve or perform at a level expected of a student scoring 2.0 standard deviations above the mean.

If determined that the eligibility criteria and/or assessment instruments discriminate against a student because the student belongs to an historically under-represented gifted population, eligibility for gifted services shall be based upon criteria that complement the definition and eligibility for gifted as described in this policy. To determine whether a student demonstrates the potential for intellectual giftedness, absent a definitive cognitive measurement that meets the traditional eligibility criteria, the eligibility committee must consider all data gathered by the multidisciplinary evaluation team. These data include, but are not limited to, individual achievement, group achievement, classroom performance, teacher input, inventories, scales, checklists, student products(s) and parent information.

**Policy 2419
continued**

**8th-Grade
Review**

**IEP/4-Year
Plan**

Before the end of the eighth grade year, the EC shall review the evaluation data for each identified gifted student to determine eligibility as an exceptional gifted student in grades 9-12. The records for each eighth grade student are then referred to the IEP team.

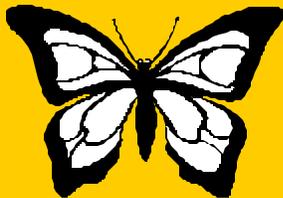
If the student is eligible as exceptional gifted, the IEP team shall develop an IEP. If the student is not eligible as exceptional gifted, the IEP team shall write a four-year plan that appropriately addresses the student's educational needs. Including honors/advanced education, when appropriate. The implementation and annual review of this plan are required by the public agency. The review team shall include the student, parent, school counselor, and building administrator.



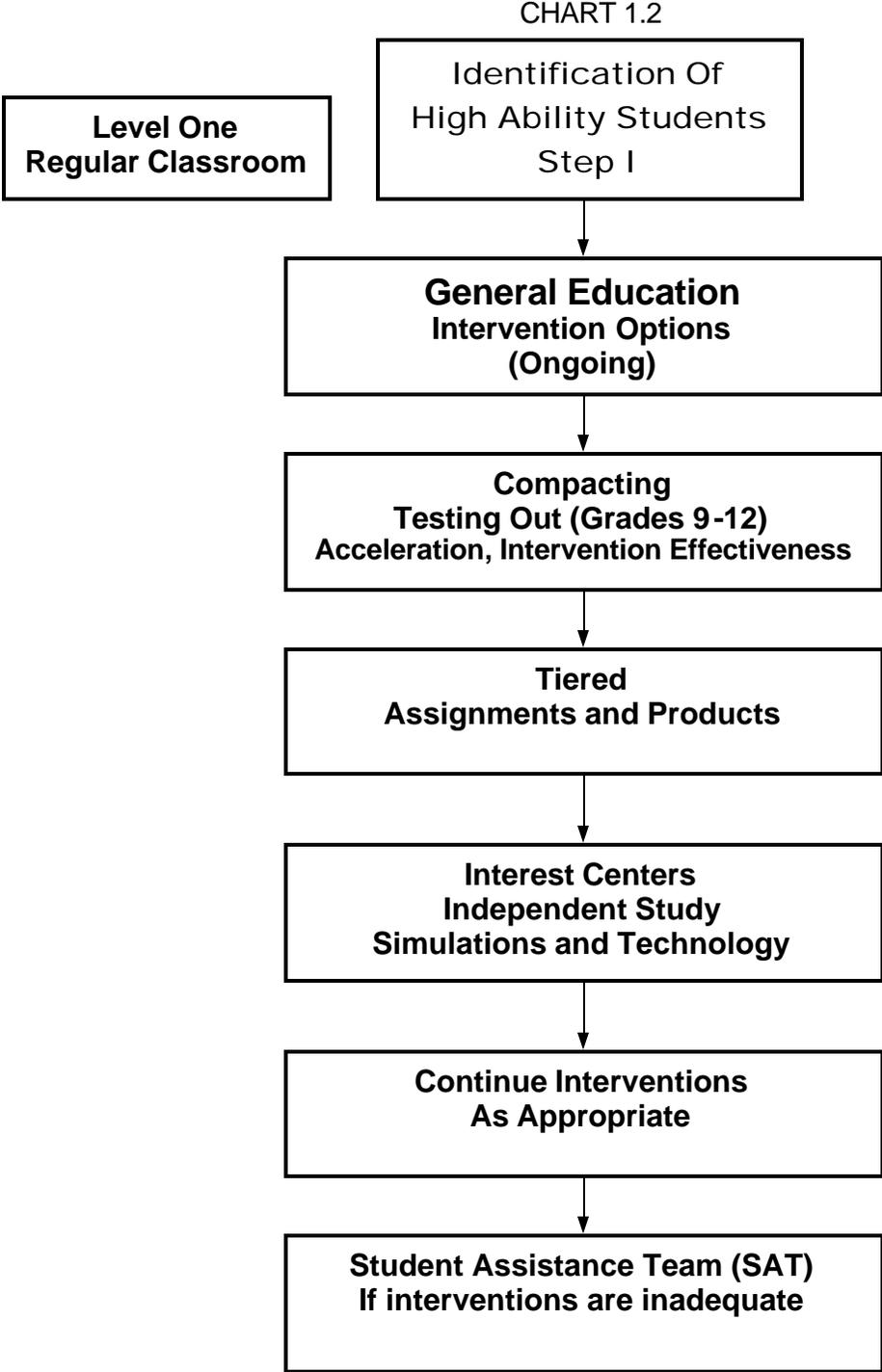
**Should This Butterfly Have Been
Kept In A Cocoon?**

“The remainder of my schooldays were no more auspicious than the first. Indeed, they were an endless Project that slowly evolved into a Unit...As for me, I knew nothing except what I gathered from Time magazine and reading everything I could lay hands on at home, but inched sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system. I could not help receiving the impression that I was being cheated out of something. Out of what, I knew not, yet I did not believe that twelve years of unrelieved boredom was exactly what the state had in mind for me.”

— Scout Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, after being reprimanded by her teacher for knowing how to read and write when she entered first grade.



Identifying potentially gifted students and meeting their needs is a multifaceted, multi-level process. The first step is processed in the regular classroom as the teacher differentiates for the high ability students. The following chart depicts the most common differentiation interventions used by the regular classroom teacher.



Looking for Giftedness At Home or In School

Pre-Referral

Common Behaviors Associated With Giftedness



Although there is no “cookie cutter” formula that will guarantee that every referral will result in identification, there are characteristics commonly associated with giftedness. Parents and teachers, who are excellent referral sources, can make their referrals more effective and inclusive if they are aware of the characteristics to look for in potentially gifted children.



Gifted students are not all the same shape, and they shouldn't be expected to jump through the same hoops.

The following list is not exhaustive, but several obvious characteristics are noted. Some or all of the following behaviors may be exhibited by a gifted student.

- A. Exhibits high achievement in one or more areas
- B. Uses a large working vocabulary and high level of oral expression
- C. May learn to read early, often before entering school with better comprehension of the nuances of language
- D. Needs less practice than other children when learning new skills
- E. Shows superior abilities to reason, generalize or problem solve
- F. Tends to ask “how” and “why” often
- G. Sets high standards for self
- H. Seems to have inherent knowledge of issues and ideas that are not apparent to his or her chronological peers
- I. Usually responds well to adults and older children
- J. Well organized and goal directed; looked upon as a leader
- K. Can draw inferences from both verbal and nonverbal cues
- L. Generates multiple solutions to problems
- M. Tends to be intensely focused on areas of interest (such as sports, dinosaurs, music lyrics, and space exploration)
- N. Can concentrate and work independently for long periods of time
- O. Shows social poise or an ability to communicate with adults in a mature way
- P. Has an aptitude for logic, spotting inconsistencies quickly

For a list of research articles and a more extensive list of characteristics of gifted children, see the Resource Section.

**Abilities
Vary**

Exceptional intellectual abilities that evidence outstanding capability are demonstrated in a variety of behaviors. Areas such as age, gender, culture, race, and economic status impact upon the manifestation of these abilities. At times, some of these behaviors may be viewed as negative. The following chart notes the broad manifestations of giftedness and how characteristics can be viewed as both positive and negative. These characteristics are common but not universal.

CHART 1.3
GIFTED BEHAVIORS: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

| | Observable Behaviors Manifested Positively | Observable Behaviors Manifested Negatively |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| FLUENCY | Generates many solutions to problems | Dominates others; may have difficulty bringing task to closure |
| FLEXIBILITY | Has a high tolerance for ambiguity | Is impatient with details or restrictions |
| ORIGINALITY/ IMAGINATION | Is able to express ideas in unique and unusual ways; Uses fun and fancy to enhance learning | Is considered "silly" or "weird" by peers and teachers; May refuse to accept authority; May not conform |
| ELABORATION | Is able to add detail beyond expectations | Uses descriptive details in excess |
| CURIOSITY | Is intensely interested in a wide variety of things; Asks many questions | Interrupts or ignores class activities to pursue individual interests |
| KNOWLEDGE | Has unusually wide range of knowledge for his/her age and is able to conceptualize at advanced level. | Is intolerant of others and seems to "show off" |
| PERFECTIONISM | Produces work that is always correct | Does not finish or submit any work if he/she doesn't consider it perfect |
| SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS | Relates positively to peers, older students and adults | Has difficulty relating to chronological-age peers |
| HIGH SKILL LEVEL | Masters new skills and concepts very quickly | Becomes disinterested with repetitive tasks; may refuse to do work "already knows" |

The Historically Underrepresented Gifted Population

Pre-Referral

Gifted Students In Some Cultures May Be Overlooked

Gifted students are not a homogeneous group. The array of talents and levels of physical, social, and emotional development varies extensively. Consequently, the behaviors of these students in the classroom may be quite diverse. These students are not automatically the high achievers, the most attentive, or the most cooperative in terms of task completion and compliance in the classroom. This is particularly true of the historically underrepresented students (HUGS), whose giftedness may be latent or just beginning to emerge.

Many West Virginia students come from backgrounds that are “culturally or linguistically” different from the backgrounds of the normed population for standardized tests. Students from single-parent families, low socio-economic status, uneducated households, and some racial minorities have historically under-performed the white, middle-class student from a highly educated family. Research suggests that this situation exists because students in educated households have “environmental opportunities and experiences that foster and encourage skills and academic performance to a level higher than students who don’t have such opportunities” (Slocumb and Payne, RFT Publishing, 2001, p 20).

Paul D. Slocumb, co-author of Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty, maintains that school systems are obligated to establish identification processes that consider the home environment when processing students for gifted eligibility.

For students from the population that has been historically under-represented as identified gifted, the mainstream checklist items often become irrelevant. The following page includes some behaviors/characteristics that may be observable in students from this population.

Although the section on evaluation and determining eligibility for students from the under-represented population suggests different ways of looking at intellectual ability, a recent search for students in McDowell County indicates that the greatest deterrent to identification is **failure to refer**. The checklist on the following page contains some of the indicators that teachers should be looking for in their students. Re-member: without a referral there is no possibility for identification.



CHART 1.4

**Historically
Under
Represented**

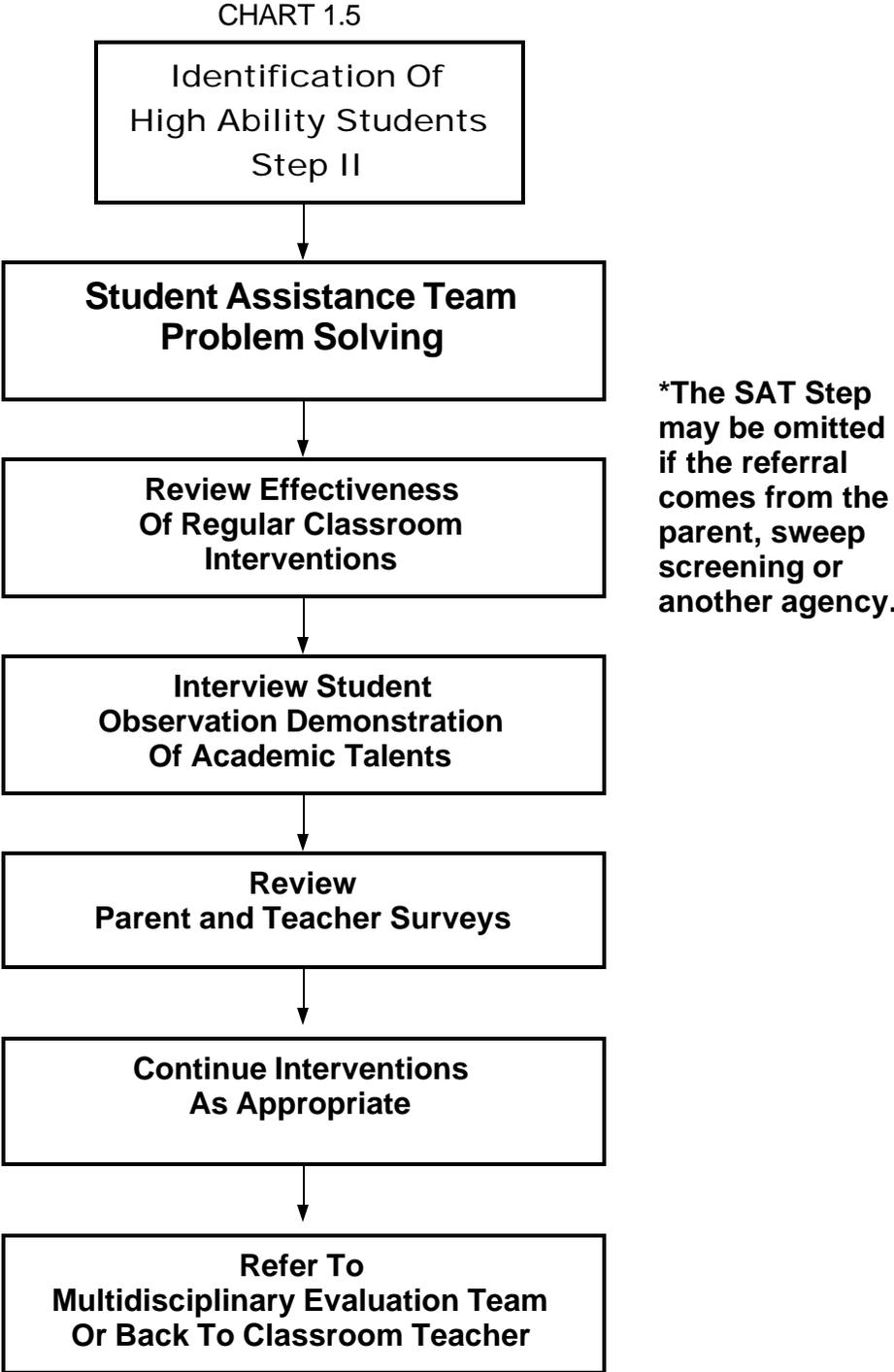
**Characteristics of Potentially Gifted Students
From Historically Underrepresented Populations**

- A. Verbal fluency and spontaneity may not be evident within the classroom.
- B. Performance shows weakness in school knowledge and vocabulary.
- C. Attendance is irregular.
- D. Achievement is at or below expected grade level.
- E. Parents may not be aware of their children's gifted potential.
- F. Student seems alienated and isolated from teachers and classmates.
- G. There is an obvious disparity between academic and standardized test performances.
- H. Student is impatient with drill and practice, which could result in gaps in basic skills.
- I. Student's predominate social group is not a part of the school program. Students may socialize with others who have problems in behavior or underachievement.
- J. Peer acceptance is more important than scholastic achievement.
- K. Attendance record shows transience in elementary school.
- L. Student exhibits poor work habits.
- M. Student's environmental experiences are limited.
- N. Interest in and enjoyment of reading material may not be evident..
- O. Poor test performance is not uncommon.
- P. Student shows evidence of poor self esteem.
- Q. Student may show an intense interest in one area, such as music or sports.
- R. Peers outside school perceive student to be a leader (teams, gangs, etc.)

Gifted children from poverty, single-parent families and backgrounds that are culturally or linguistically different are at risk for being Historically Underrepresented gifted Students (HUGS).



The second step, the Student Assistance Team (SAT), may be initiated by the regular teacher, the parent, the student, the administrator, or other staff members. This level results in three options: refer back to regular classroom; more team problem solving, or referral to Level 3, the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET).



Who May Refer?

West Virginia State Board of Education Policy 2510 provides a specific avenue, the Student Assistance Team (SAT), to initiate referral for a student who exhibits gifted behaviors. Any person (parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, another student, the student himself/herself, or another interested party) or agency may refer a child to initiate identification.

What To Do If You Think A Student May Be Gifted

Giftedness does not manifest itself in a neat package that is consistent either from student to student or even intra-personally across settings and time. This phenomenon not only complicates recognition and referral but also necessitates careful selection of assessment and screening instruments.

Assessment Instruments

Although screening is not mandatory, several instruments are available for group screening of potentially gifted students. Among them are the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, the Otis Lenon School Ability, the Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale, and the Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction.

Bright Or Gifted?

Teachers and parents sometimes refer children for gifted evaluation and are disappointed when the student does not qualify. "But he/she is so bright," they might say. A useful scale to compare very bright, productive children with gifted children (who may or may not be productive) was developed by Janice Szabo Robbins in 1989. To use the scale, think of a particular child and mark where the child lies on the continuum for each item. Upon completion, the teacher or parent should have a clearer idea of the child's potential. The complete scale and directions for its use can be found in the Resource section.

Examples from the Robbins Scale follow:

CHART 1.6

| Bright Child..... | Gifted Learner |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Knows the answers.....X..... | Asks the questions |
| Is interested.....X... | Is highly curious |
| Works hard.....X..... | Plays around, yet tests well |
| Answers the questions.....X..... | Elaborates with details |
| Top group.....X..... | Beyond the group |

Student Assistance Team (SAT)

The SAT provides a team problem-solving process for meeting the needs of all students in a heterogeneous classroom. When teachers feel that their interventions for a student who is potentially gifted have not been successful, they should refer that student to the SAT, which determines whether further intervention is needed or whether the student should be referred to a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team to initiate evaluation.

The Student Assistance Team (SAT)

- Before initiating evaluation, the school personnel are required to
- Provide parents with a copy of the Parent Rights Document
 - Review existing data **from general education interventions**
 - Provide Prior Written Notice of intent to conduct an initial evaluation, and
 - Obtain informed written consent for the proposed action

Referrals Made By a Parent

Parents may also request in writing that their child be evaluated for eligibility in the gifted program. When a parent referral is received, the school personnel must

- Provide parents with a copy of the Parent Rights Document
- Review **any existing** data
- Provide Prior Written Notice of intent to conduct an initial evaluation
- Obtain informed written consent for the proposed action

Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET)

The local education agency may refuse a request for assessment by a parent, but it must provide the parents with Prior Written Notice of the refusal and the reasons for the refusal. The parents, however, may request mediation or due process if they want the assessment conducted.

When a student has been referred for evaluation to determine eligibility for gifted services, the public agency must complete the multidisciplinary evaluation and convene an Eligibility Committee within 80 calendar days of the receipt of the written parental consent for evaluation.

The Initial Evaluation

After obtaining informed written consent to conduct the initial evaluation, members of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET), consisting of the student's regular teacher, at least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of students (such as a school psychologist), and at least one teacher or specialist with knowledge in the area of giftedness, begin the process of collecting the needed data. Evaluation team members must utilize a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information from the parents, the classroom teacher, and the student himself.

To make these determinations, the MDET must utilize any instruments and strategies that are necessary to determine whether a student has an exceptionality and to identify the educational needs of the student.

The Eligibility Committee must meet within 80 calendar days of the receipt of permission from the parent/guardian to evaluate.



**Multi-
disciplinary
Evaluation**

The initial evaluation must be comprehensive enough to identify the special education and related services needed by the child, including general intelligence, academic achievement, classroom performance, social and emotional development and any other information deemed appropriate by the MDET.

No single procedure should be used as the sole criterion for determining a child's eligibility. When considering the evaluation instrument the multidisciplinary team should abide by standard/acceptable-testing procedures. The evaluation must be

- Given in the student's primary language
- Validated for specific purpose used
- Non-discriminatory
- Administered by appropriately trained personnel

**Acceptable
Testing
Procedures**

Frequently used instruments for assessing intellectual ability of gifted students in West Virginia are the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Third Edition (WISC-III) and Stanford-Binet Fourth Edition SB-IV). Each offers a valid IQ score, but their ability to identify gifted students from the under-served populations has been criticized by some groups as being biased.

**Frequently
Used
Instruments**

If the examiner feels that a student's giftedness is being masked because he/she belongs to a historically underrepresented population, the examiner should administer a more appropriate test.

Psychologists should consider a student's total background in selecting an appropriate measure of intelligence. **Chart 1.8** notes several alternative instruments, each having both strengths and limitations. Kanawha County Schools is currently using the Differential Ability Scales with some measure of success in identifying giftedness.



The **third step**, the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET), may be initiated by a referral from the SAT or from a direct parent referral. The MDET determines the assessment needs of the student and selects the appropriate areas and instruments for assessment. Parental consent, which is the first step in Due Process, is required before testing is initiated.

CHART 1.7

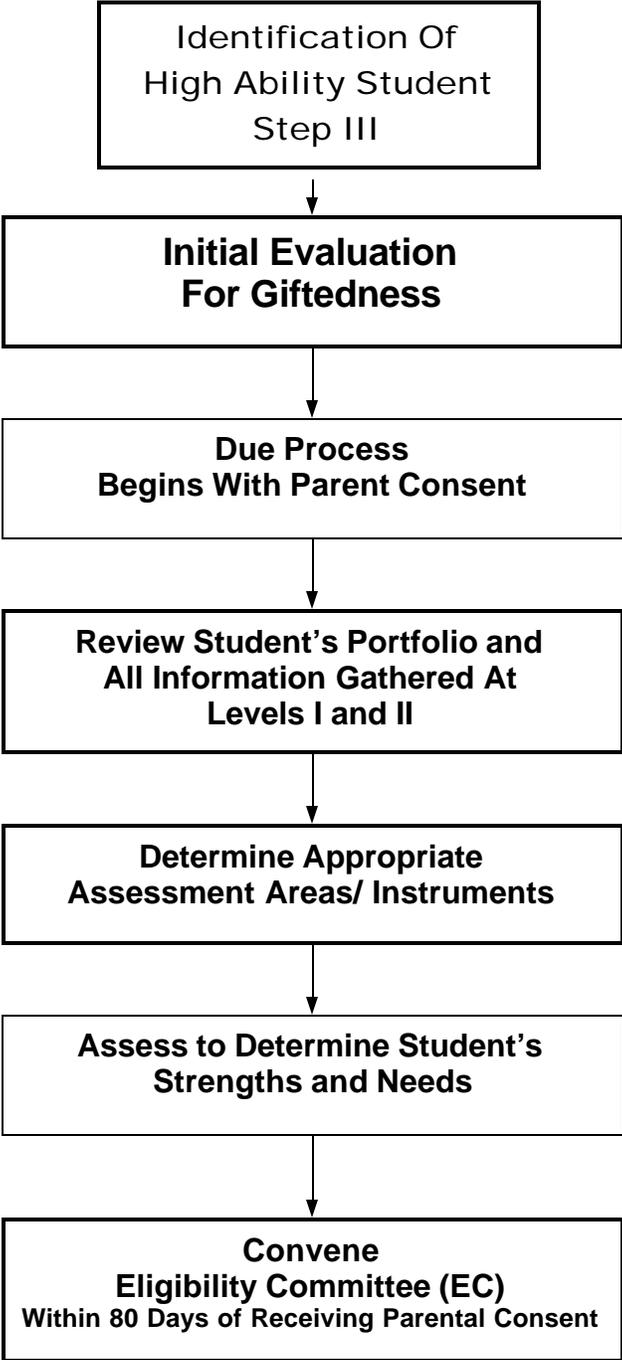


CHART 1.8

INSTRUMENTS USED TO DETERMINE INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL

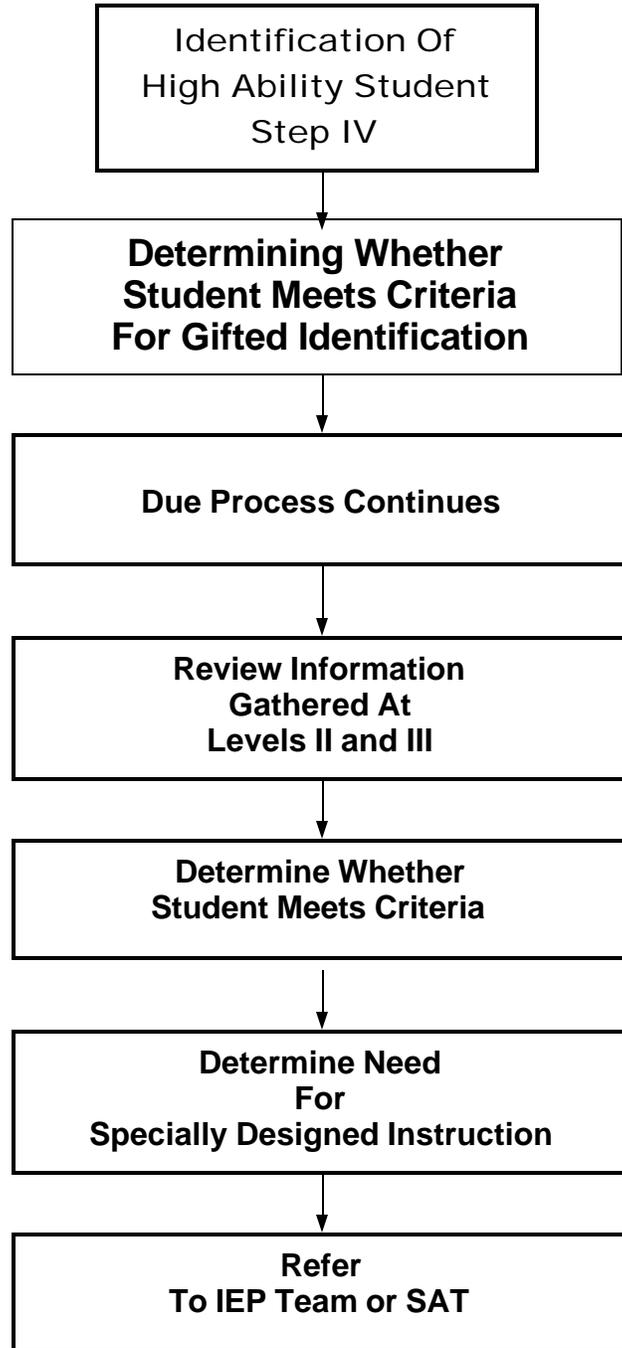
| Cognitive Assessment Instruments | Advantage | Disadvantage | Notes/ Comments |
|--|---|---|---|
| WISC-III Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Third Edition | Predicts school success equally across ethnic groups | Scores can be depressed for children of lower SES* background; children who are slow or methodical are penalized on timed tests | Most widely used intelligence test |
| SB-IV Stanford Binet, Fourth Edition | Does not penalize children who are compulsive or methodical on timed tests: higher ceilings | Scores can be depressed for children of lower SES background | Long administration time |
| KABC | Scores can be depressed for children of lower SES background | Norms are outdated (1984); limited ceilings for gifted intelligence | Useful for younger children |
| UNIT Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test | Nonverbal test displays fairness across diverse groups | Penalizes children who are highly verbal | Useful for children with ESL** |
| CAS | Shows the smallest mean IQ differences for children of different ethnic backgrounds | May penalize children who have high verbal reasoning ability | No research has been conducted for identification of gifted |
| SOMPA | Takes in consideration many factors of a child's family background | Limited psychometric characteristics—may inflate learning potential | Based on WISC-R |
| Differential Ability Scale | Useful to evaluate learning problems. Provides for minimizing importance of speed of performance for students who are slow or who may be compulsive. Reasonable administration time | Assesses limited verbal reasoning ability; no factual information on test | Very high correlations with WISC |
| Matrix Analogies Test-EF | Useful for children whose scores may be influenced by speed; short administration time; high correlation with the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test | May penalize children who are highly verbal; not suitable for children who have severe visual impairment | Provides higher estimate of general intellectual ability for African-American students than any other intelligence test |

* Socio-Economic Status

** English as a Second Language

The **fourth step**, the Eligibility Committee (EC) Meeting, is initiated when the MDET completes the assessment and the reports. The EC, staffed by qualified professionals and the parents, responds to the following questions: 1) Is the student gifted? 2) If so, is specially designed instruction needed? 3) If not, what type of differentiation should be provided in the regular classroom?

CHART 1.9



**Achievement
Testing**

**Classroom
Performance**

**Determining
Eligibility**

**Meeting
Agenda**

**Areas
To
Consider**



West Virginia Department of Education Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students notes that the assessment for students considered for gifted services must include both **achievement** and **classroom performance**. Specifically, §126-16-4.1.3.f.B.b. A and B states, "At least one area of academic achievement as measured by an individual standardized achievement test, indicating that the student requires specially designed instruction in one or more areas; or at least one area of classroom performance, as determined during the multidisciplinary evaluation, indicating that the student requires specially designed instruction in one or more of the four (4) core curriculum areas." Those four areas are language arts, math, science and social studies.

Eligibility for any Special Education is determined according to Policy 2419 and county procedures. After all evaluations have been completed, an Eligibility Committee Meeting will be scheduled. At this meeting, some or all of the following will be discussed: classroom performance; IQ; individual and group achievement; inventories, scales, checklists, student products, and parent and teacher information.

The Eligibility Committee, staffed with the personnel required in Policy 2419, must carefully consider all of the data that has been collected about the student. A suggested meeting agenda follows:

- Introduce team members
- State the purpose of the meeting
- Consider parent input
- Consider classroom teacher input
- Review achievement-test results
- Review intelligence-test results
- Distribute and review criteria for eligibility
- Determine eligibility
- If student is eligible, initiate the IEP process
- If student is not eligible, make recommendations to the SAT for continued interventions

The EC must carefully consider **all** information provided to the group in determining whether a student meets the criteria for gifted identification. There has been some misunderstanding about the section of the policy regarding the need for specially designed instruction. Eligibility Committees should look at **both** achievement and classroom performance, determining whether the need for specially designed instruction is evident in **either**.

Furthermore, if a student's achievement is well below the expected level, that in itself is a need for specially designed instruction.

The Diversity of the Gifted

Being Gifted
Is Like
Having
A
Really Nice
Car...

Help Gifted
Students Enter
The Highspeed
Freeway
Of Learning



Understanding the Diversity of the Gifted

Being gifted is like having a really nice car. But the environment in which you drive affects your forward momentum.

- The gifted from a nurtured, enriched background has the car with an outside accessory package. Everyone can see, admire, and serve the talents.
- The low-socioeconomic status gifted has the car, but may not yet have the keys to drive it.
- The highly gifted or prodigy gifted has the car but may only be allowed to drive within the city limits and must follow all the usual traffic signs, such as *slow, caution, speed limit, and stop*.
- The underachieving gifted has the car, but is considered too young to drive it.
- The language-different gifted has the car, but the signs and directions are in another language so it cannot go anywhere.
- The ADD/ADHD gifted has the car, but the electrical ignition system is wired differently so it stays in motion when others want it to stop.
- The culturally diverse gifted has the car, but it has a shrink-wrapped cover over it which clouds its potential.
- The physically challenged gifted has the car, but the air conditioning is broken. The mechanics are kept so busy trying to fix the air-conditioning that the car never gets to be driven.
- The gifted female has the car, but she may self-sabotage or be around others who think she does not deserve it. Many wonder what her daddy does!

“Being gifted is like having a really nice car. Our challenge is to help all educators and parents to become sensitive to the diversity of the gifted so their cars can safely enter the high-speed freeway of learning.”

—Bertie Kingore, Tempo, Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented.

Volume 17, Number 2 (pp. 1,6) Spring 1997

Use what talent you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best.

**Special
Considerations
for the
Historically
Under-
represented
Gifted Student
(HUGS)**

**Policy 2419
Directive**

**Options for
Complement-
ing
Definition**

Caution



To address the diversity of cultural and economic differences among potentially gifted students, a **multidimensional** approach must be adapted and used to identify these culturally diverse students. Lack of exposure to “environmental opportunities” may mask a student’s true potential; therefore, the West Virginia Department of Education requires that the Eligibility Committee consider all data that can substantiate giftedness for such a child.

Teams should carefully consider the presence of bias and interpret the results of that evaluation accordingly. Research shows that some standardized tests underestimate the intelligence of certain groups of children, especially those from some racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, children who are bilingual, children who are poor, and rural children (Pendarvis, 2002).

The Eligibility Committee is charged with the responsibility of basing eligibility for gifted services upon criteria that complement the definition of giftedness as described in Policy 2419. “To determine whether a student demonstrates the potential for intellectual giftedness, absent a definitive cognitive measurement that meets the traditional eligibility criteria, the eligibility committee must consider all data gathered by the multidisciplinary team” (Policy 2419: §126-16-4.1.3.f.D.b.). The following list is not exhaustive, but some of the ways of looking at the historically underrepresented child differently follow:

- Applying the Standard Error of Measurement for the Full Scale IQ at the 95th confidence interval
- Using alternative assessment to identify giftedness in minority students
- Using either the Verbal or Performance score on the WISC III when there is a *significant* discrepancy between the two scores if the evaluator feels that the greater score is a better indicator of the student’s abilities
- Considering the “Preponderance of Evidence” scales developed by Paul Slocumb and Ruby Payne in addition to Intelligence scores. Using a matrix such as the one on page 24 to get a total picture, **or**
- Using the parent, student and teacher rating scales in the Resource section to give added information

Policy 2419 gives Local Education Agencies considerable latitude in choosing information that complements the definition of giftedness. As a result, the LEA’s are required to develop methods for identifying giftedness that may be masked by the traditional IQ tests. These data are to be used **in conjunction with, not instead** of the Full Scale IQ on an individual test of intelligence.

**HUGS,
continued**

**Be Aware
Of
Potential
Bias**

**Are They
Really
Gifted?**



Dr. Edwina Pendarvis at Marshall University reports that it is necessary to make a concerted effort to increase teacher nominations of historically under-represented children to be tested. According to Pendarvis, **“early identification is crucial for HUG children because they tend to compare most favorably with other children on tests when they enter school.** They fall farther and farther behind so that by the time they are in the fourth or fifth grade even, it is difficult to identify them” (Pendarvis, 2002).

It is important that professionals conducting evaluations be aware of the potential bias that exists in all areas of assessment and seek to choose techniques and tools that reduce bias to the largest extent possible. This may involve being more aware of the growing body of research literature on this topic, developing a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity represented in the school, purchasing evaluation materials that have been developed to reduce bias and, when necessary, using bilingual examinations.

But Are They Really Gifted?

Teachers, even teachers of gifted students, can be heard referring to students for whom the playing field has been leveled, “But they aren’t *really* gifted.” They contend that there is a noticeable difference in the HUG identified students and the “traditional gifted” student. These teachers have not learned to make the modifications for the “individual and collective differences that are represented in his/her classroom” (Slocumb).

Slocumb avers that gifted students from poverty lack many of the skills and experiences found in students of middle class. Before the gifted students from poverty are successful, they must learn how to use their skills in an academic environment. It is the role of the teacher to address these issues through instructional strategies **that will allow the HUG students to master a differentiated curriculum the same as the non-poverty gifted students.** In other words, the teacher must “fill the gaps” (Kaplan, TEMPO, 1999, p. 20) that will bridge the difference between home environment and school environment. *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty* covers this topic fully.

CHART 1.10

A FORMULA FOR HELPING DETERMINE GIFTED ELIGIBILITY FOR HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

The Eligibility Committee may consider a combination of scores and grades as “criteria that complement the definition and eligibility for gifted” if it is determined that the criteria and/or assessment instruments discriminate against a student because the student belongs to an historically underrepresented gifted population.

Using the accompanying scale, the EC could convert intelligence range, academic achievement (either individual or group results) and classroom performance to derive a total scaled score of at least **100** as *one way* to make such eligibility decisions.

| Full Scale IQ | Scaled IQ | Achievement Percentile | Scaled Achievement | GPA | Converted GPA |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------|-----|---------------|
|---------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------|-----|---------------|

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|------|----|-----------|---|
| 123 | 47 | 99 | 50 | 4.0-3.75 | 9 |
| 122 | 46 | 98 | 49 | 3.5-3.74 | 7 |
| 121 | 45 | 97 | 48 | 3.25-3.49 | 6 |
| 120 | 44 | 96 | 47 | 3.0-3.24 | 5 |
| | | 95 | 46 | 2.75-2.99 | 4 |
| | | 94 | 45 | 2.5-2.74 | 3 |
| | | 93 | 44 | 2.49 ? | 2 |
| | | 92 | 43 | | |
| | | 91 | 42 | | |
| | | 90 ? | 41 | | |

EXAMPLES

| Student | FSIQ | Scaled | Achievement Percentile | Scaled Ach. | GPA | Scaled GPA | Total | Qualify? (100 pts) |
|---------|------|--------|------------------------|-------------|------|------------|-------|--------------------|
| A | 123 | 47 | 90 | 41 | 4.0 | 8 | 96 | N |
| B | 122 | 46 | 85 | 41 | 3.75 | 8 | 95 | N |
| C | 120 | 44 (+) | 99 | 50 (+) | 3.75 | 8 (=) | 102 | Y |

**Gifted
Under-
achievers
On the Rise**

**Enthusiasm for
Learning
Wanes**

**Some
Under-
Achievers
Are Trying
To Escape**



A growing segment of the historically underrepresented gifted population is that of the **gifted underachiever**. Underachievement can have many causes, but a major culprit is the failure to recognize giftedness that may not manifest itself in daily classroom tasks. Very bright students sometimes separate themselves from work that they are already familiar with, convincing themselves that they know all there is to know about the topic. As a result, they do not do the routine class work and homework associated with it.

Dr. Sylvia Rimm, in *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades*, says, “Underachievers usually begin as apparently bright and often very verbal preschooler, but at some point their enthusiasm for learning and their satisfactory school performance change—gradually for some, suddenly and dramatically for others. The change in their achievement pattern can be easily seen by comparing their year-to-year achievement test scores. Percentile scores are stable while children are in an achieving mode, but they decline steadily when the children enter the underachieving mode. There are other more apparent indicators. The most obvious warning is the direct communication from teachers that these children are not working to their abilities. Parents also observe their children’s disinterest and detachment from the school learning process.”

Rimm continues, “Underachievers tend to be disorganized. They dawdle. They forget homework, lose assignments, and misplace books; they daydream, don’t listen, look out the window, or talk too much to other children. They have poor study skills, or none...Some underachieving children are lonely and withdrawn...Some are aggressive....Some never read books, while others immerse themselves in reading as an escape....Some are literal and concrete in their thinking. . .while others display very creative and unusual thinking Underachievers are unconsciously manipulative.”

Underachievers may include the creative student who escapes into his own made-up world. Neil Diamond describes such a boy —himself — in “Brooklyn Roads.”

Five Types of Gifted Underachievers

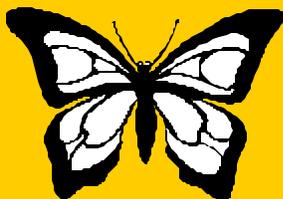
1. Low grades, high test scores
2. Low test scores, high grades
3. Low performance in all subjects
4. Low performance in certain subjects
5. Unnoticed

...David A. Sousa

**Not
Achieving?**

**“He’s got a
good head if
he’d apply it”**

**The
Twice
Exceptional
Student**



I can still recall
The smell of cookin’ in the hallways...
And report cards I was always
Afraid to show.

Mama’d come to school,
And as I’d sit there softly crying,
Teacher’d say, “He’s just not trying.
He’s got a good head if he’d apply it,
But you know yourself,
It’s always somewhere else.”

I’d build me a castle
With dragons and kings,
And I’d ride off with them
As I stood by my window
And looked out on those...

Brooklyn Roads
“Brooklyn Roads”
Neil Diamond

The gifted student with a disability is most likely of all school populations to be overlooked—especially the Gifted child with a learning disability. Although we comprehend the fact that an athlete may be gifted in sports but challenged in the classroom, it seems to be more difficult to understand that a child can be gifted and disabled (Nemeth-Taylor, 2002)

Nemeth-Taylor also says that because the Gifted-Learning Disabled child may have statistically significant variations among subtest scores, an average IQ is misleading, since an average score ameliorates the differences between the extremes. “Gifted students with learning disabilities typically fall into one of three subgroups: (1) students recognized as gifted whose disabilities have not been noticed; (2) students recognized as having disabilities but not identified as gifted; and (3) students in the regular education classroom who are gifted, have disabilities, and, because their giftedness and disabilities mask one another, are not recognized as either gifted or disabled (Baum 1990). Brody and Mills report that students in the first and third groups seem to achieve at an average rate until the curriculum becomes rigorous, making their difficulties obvious. The second group, however, may never be provided the educational opportunity for giftedness to flourish (1997).

Children with vision impairment may not respond correctly to performance measures involving things like color words although they

**Gifted
With
Visual
Impairment**

Otherwise have a well advanced vocabulary. Hearing-impaired children have known to teach themselves to lip-read, masking their disability.

Because research has shown that a “focus on weaknesses at the expense of developing gifts can result in poor self esteem, a lack of motivation, depression and stress (Baum, 1984; Whitmore and Maker, 1985), it is imperative that the talents, strengths, interests and superior intellectual capacities of these gifted students with disabilities be addressed. Characteristics of gifted students with specific disabilities follow on the next three pages.

Gifted Students with Visual Impairment

- Fast rate of learning
- Superior memory
- Superior verbal communication skills and vocabulary
 - Advanced problem-solving skills
 - Creative production or thought that may progress more slowly than sighted students in some academic areas
 - Ease in learning Braille
 - Great persistence
 - Motivation to know
 - Sometimes slower rate of cognitive development than sighted students
 - Excellent ability to concentrate

(Whitmore & Maker, 1985)

Gifted Students with Physical Disabilities

- Development of compensatory skills
 - Creativity in finding alternate ways of communicating and accomplishing tasks
 - Impressive store of knowledge
 - Advanced academic skills
 - Superior memory
 - Exceptional problem-solving skills
 - Rapid grasp of ideas
 - Ability to set and strive for long-term goals
 - Greater maturity than age mates
 - Good sense of humor
 - Persistence, patience
 - Motivation to achieve
 - Curiosity, insight
 - Self-criticism and perfectionism
 - Cognitive development that may not be based on direct experience
 - Possible difficulty with abstractions
 - Possible limited achievement due to pace of work
- (Cline, 1999; Whitmore & Maker, 1985; Willard-Holt, 1994)

**Gifted
With
Physical
Disabilities**



**Gifted
With
Hearing
Impairments**

Gifted Students with Hearing Impairments

- Development of speech-reading skills without instruction
- Early reading ability
- Excellent memory
- Ability to function in the regular school setting
- Rapid grasp of ideas
- High reasoning ability
- Superior performance in school
- Wide range of interests
- Nontraditional ways of getting information
- Use of problem-solving skills in everyday situations
- Possibly on grade level
- Delays in concept attainment
- Self starters
- Good sense of humor
- Enjoyment of manipulating environment
- Intuition
- Ingenuity in solving problems
- Symbolic language abilities (different symbol system).
(Cline, 1999; Whitmore & Maker, 1985)

Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

- High abstract reasoning ability
- Good mathematical reasoning ability
- Keen visual memory, spatial skills
- Advanced vocabulary
- Sophisticated sense of humor
- Imaginative and creative
- Insightful
- Exceptional ability in geometry, science, arts, music
- Good problem-finding and –solving skills
- Difficulty with memorization, computation, phonics, and/or spelling
- Distractibility and/or disorganization
- Supersensitivity
- Perfectionism
- Grasp of metaphors, analogies, satire
- Comprehension of complex systems
- Unreasonable self expectations
- Often, failure to complete assignments
- Difficulties with sequential tasks
- Wide variety of interests
(Baum, Owen, & Dixon, 1991; Silverman, 1989)

**Gifted
With
Learning
Disabilities**



Research indicates that in many cases, a child is diagnosed with ADHD when in fact the child is gifted and reacting to an inappropriate curriculum (Webb & Latimer, 1993). The key to distinguishing between the two is the pervasiveness of the “acting out” behaviors. If the acting

**ADHD
OR
BORED?**

**Bored
Students**

**Students
With
ADHD**

**Differentiating
Between ADHD
and Giftedness**

out is specific to certain situations, the child's behavior is more likely related to giftedness; whereas, if the behavior is consistent across all situations, the child's behavior is more likely related to ADHD. It is also possible for a child to be BOTH gifted and ADHD. The following lists highlight the similarities between giftedness and ADHD.

Characteristics of Gifted Students Who Are Bored

- Poor attention and daydreaming when bored
- Low tolerance for persistence on tasks that seem irrelevant
- Begin many projects, see few to completion
- Development of judgment lags behind intellectual growth
- Intensity may lead to power struggles with authorities
- High activity level; may need less sleep
- Difficulty restraining desire to talk; may be disruptive
- Question rules, customs, and traditions
- Lose work, forget homework, are disorganized
- May appear careless
- Highly sensitive to criticism
- Do not exhibit problem behaviors in all situations
- More consistent levels of performance at a fairly consistent pace

(Cline, 1999; Webb & Latimer, 1993)

Characteristics of Students with ADHD

- Poorly sustained attention
- Diminished persistence on tasks not having immediate consequences
- Often shift from one uncompleted activity to another
- Impulsivity, poor delay of gratification
- Impaired adherence to commands to regulate or inhibit behavior in social contexts
- More active, restless than other children
- Often talk excessively
- Often interrupt or intrude on others (e.g. butt into games)
- Difficulty adhering to rules and regulations
- Often lose things necessary for tasks or activities at home or school
- May appear inattentive to details
- Highly sensitive to criticism
- Problem behaviors exist in all settings, but in some are more severe
- Variability in task performance and time used to accomplish tasks.

(Barkley, 1990; Cline, 1999; Webb & Latimer, 1993)

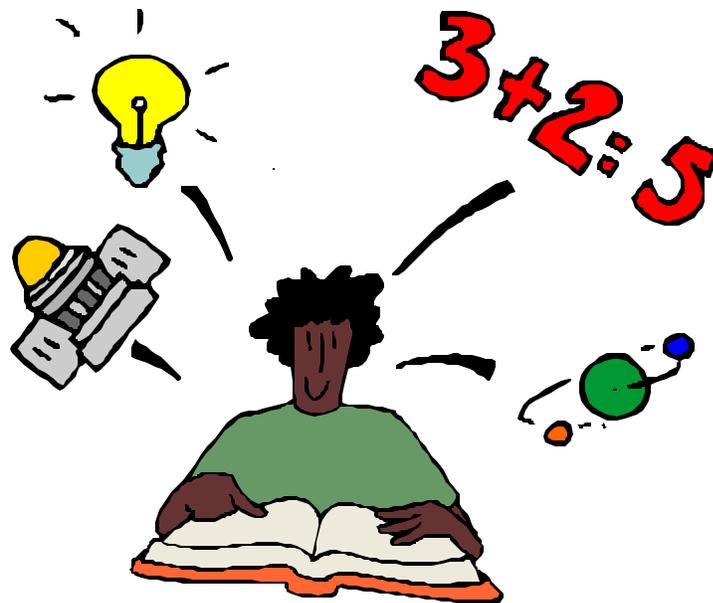
Questions to Ask in Differentiating between Giftedness and ADHD

- Could the behaviors be responses to inappropriate placement, insufficient challenge, or lack of intellectual peers?
- Is the child able to concentrate when interested in the activity?

Differentiating Between ADHD And giftedness

- Have any curricular modifications been made in an attempt to change inappropriate behaviors?
 - Has the child been interviewed? What are his/her feelings about the behaviors?
 - Does the child feel out of control? Do the parents perceive the child as being out of control?
 - Do the behaviors occur at certain times of the day, during certain activities, with certain teachers or in certain environments?
- (Willard-Holt, 1999)

The article containing these characteristics is reprinted in its entirety on Pages 5-9 in the Quality Reading section of this document.



Gifted or ADHD?

On the surface, the behavior may be similar, but a discerning eye can tell the difference by asking pointed questions of and about the student.



**Specially
Designed
Instruction**

One of the criteria for gifted eligibility is the need for **specially designed instruction**.

Definitions and examples of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) can be found in the Delivery and Instruction sections of this document.

There has been some question about just what constitutes the need for specially designed instruction. In considering the four core areas (Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies), the Eligibility Committee should look for both outstanding performance and poor performance for the gifted student. **Since the goal for the gifted student is to realize his or her potential, there are cases when weaknesses must be overcome in order for the student to capitalize on his/her strengths.**

For example, a student with a 137 IQ who breezes through all work with little effort would need challenging, specialized instruction. Another student with a 137 might be failing 3 or 4 classes. That student would also need specially designed instruction so that he/she might overcome a weakness such as organizational skills. If that student's achievement scores are very high, he/she might need instruction that has been compacted, deleting repetitious work that is already mastered.

In other words, the need for specially designed instruction can be present if the student's achievement scores or classroom performance are either **above or below** the expected levels.



Gifted students, although they may be similar intellectually, are NOT cut from the same pattern. Their needs must be met through specially designed instruction.



**The Need
For Specially
Designed
Instruction**

The chart below gives examples of four students considered for Gifted Eligibility, showing only the reported test scores and grades, which can be used to determine the need for Specially Designed Instruction (SDI).

CHART 1.11—GIFTED ELIGIBILITY PROFILE

| ACHIEVEMENT | | | | | PERFORMANCE | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|------|---------|----------------|-------------|------|----------|--------------|-------|
| | Language Arts | Math | Science | Social Studies | L. Arts | Math | Soc. St. | FSIQ* | SDI** |
| A | 125 | 118 | 115 | 123 | 98% | 97% | 99% | 122 | N |
| B | 129 | 127 | 131 | 133 | 72% | 45% | 98% | 138 | Y |
| C | 112 | 110 | 114 | 111 | 92% | 93% | 94% | 127 | N |
| D | 147 | 132 | 131 | 143 | 102% | 100% | 100% | 126 (HUG) | Y |

In a comparison of Student A and Student B, **student A** would most likely be the student referred by a classroom teacher. Student A, whose IQ score is within the High Average range is working to capacity and can probably enter any career field which interest him/her.

Student D, identified as belonging to a historically underrepresented gifted population, does not, at first glance, meet the IQ criteria, but using “criteria that complement the definition and eligibility for gifted” as described in Policy 2419, the EC should identify this student as gifted.

Student B, without close scrutiny, would not have been referred, although the need for Specialized Instruction is made obvious to the EC.

Student C, who could be considered for eligibility using one Standard Error of Measurement, appears to be achieving and performing in the high average range—not the superior range expected of intellectual gifted students; therefore, he/sshe would not meet the criteria for gifted services).

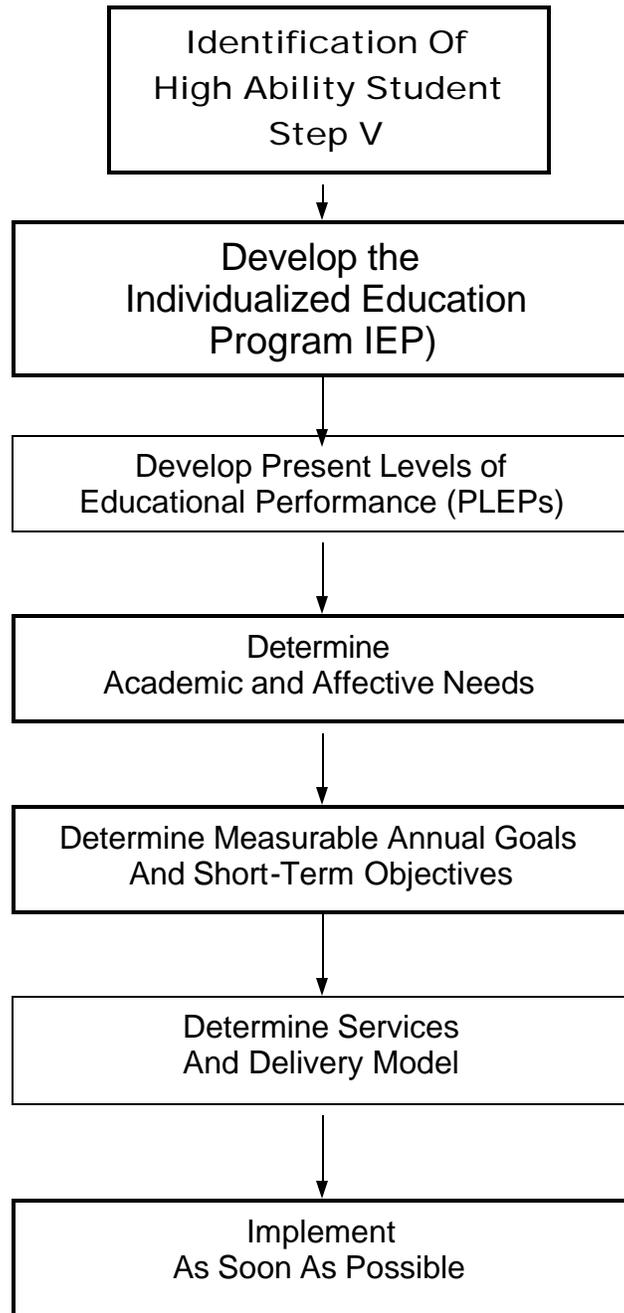
*FSIQ—Full –Scale IQ

**SDI—Specially Designed Instruction



The **fifth step**, the IEP Team (parents, assessment staff, at least one regular and one special education teacher, an administrator and when appropriate, the student), meets within thirty (30) days of the eligibility determination to develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

CHART 1.12



**The IEP
Team**

After a student has been determined eligible for gifted services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed by an IEP team. The Team is a group of people who come together in a meeting in order to develop the student's IEP. Collaborating among team members is essential to ensure that each student's educational experience is a success. All members are equal partners in IEP discussions. The opinions of all team members are valued and encouraged. Participants offer suggestions, listen carefully, encourage others, and ask questions.

**The Value
Of
Team Input**

Because of their long-term perspective and unique relationship, parents bring a valuable understanding of their child to the table. Students also can express their own needs, strengths, and interests. Educators, on the other hand, bring to the meeting an educational focus, an understanding of the curriculum, the challenging educational standards for the student, and the relationship to the general education environment.

PLEPs

The IEP team should work toward **consensus**, but the school has **ultimate responsibility** to ensure that the IEP includes the services the student needs in order to receive an appropriate education. It is not appropriate to make IEP decisions based upon a majority vote. If an IEP team, for any reason, is not able to reach consensus on one or more issues, the team should note those issues on which agreement does exist, and those portions of the IEP are implemented. The requirement of the membership of the IEP team can be found in Policy 2419.

Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs) that relate to the general curriculum must be established in order to develop measurable goals. The PLEPs summarize current achievement in the areas of need, and they specifically address how the giftedness affects the child's involvement in and progress through the general curriculum.

They contain current, specific, measurable, objective baseline information for each area of need resulting from the child's exceptionality. In addition, they link the evaluation results, the expectations of the general curriculum, and the goals for the child..

Their purpose is to identify and prioritize the specific needs of a child and establish a baseline from which to develop meaningful and measurable goals.

The PLEPs should

- Be stated in terms that are measurable and objective
- Describe current performance, not past performance
- Describe the child's performance in general curriculum
- Prioritize and identify needs that will be written as goals
- Provide baseline information for each need.



**Purpose and
Criteria
Of PLEPs**

In order to develop appropriate goals and objectives, the IEP team must have access to data that paint a vivid picture of the student. The IEP team should consider the following questions when writing the PLEPs:

- In areas of concern, what is the child's present level of performance in relationship to district standards and benchmarks in the general education curriculum?
- There areas of concern not reflected in the general education curriculum, e.g. social skills?
- What relevant strengths does the child exhibit?
- What educational supports and interventions demonstrate the ability to enhance educational success?
- What areas are of greatest importance to the child?

Vivid Picture

The two following examples reflect the impact that well written PLEPs can have on a student's education plan. **First glance:** Both of these students appear to be functioning at almost the same academic level. They're very bright, they're high achieving, and they make A's in all of their classes. This is good information, but it is **not enough** information.

First Glance

**The "I"
In IEP**

Checklists and scales from the parent, the student and the classroom teacher reveal that **Student A** is conscientious and dedicated to task. He works methodically, striving for perfection in every class. He often takes class assignments home to finish and/or check them, and he takes advantage of every opportunity to earn extra credit. He is very comfortable with his classmates and he is active in after-school activities. Although he enjoys reading and his reading scores are at grade level, he is not a fast reader. It takes him a longtime to get through reading assignment. He wants to be able to finish the Algebra book, although the teacher says that she usually only gets through 8 of the



**The “I”
In IEP,
(Continued)**

Examples:

**Measurable
Annual Goals**



Eleven chapters. Off-level testing at the 8th grade level derived percentiles in the 40-45 range in reading-related subjects, but the 85% ile in math.

Student B, on the other hand, rarely listens intently to lectures. He draws rockets on a sketchpad while new material is being introduced. He hurries through reading assignments and finishes most written work very quickly. His mother reports that he never brings school work home, but that he reads as much as he can – both fiction and non-fiction about space travel. His teacher reports that he has never made less than 100% on a math test all year, although he often makes careless errors in his class work “because he’s always in a hurry.” **Except for the library and the computer lab, he says, “School is a drag.”** He gets along with the students in his classes, but doesn’t feel a strong affinity to any of them. Off-level testing (8th-grade) was in the 90+ range for all subjects.

The difference in the needs of the two students is now very marked. Student A’s IEP team decided, with his input, that he would take a pre-test for each new chapter in the Algebra I book. He would then work only the types of problems for which he did not demonstrate mastery on the pre-test. This form of telescoping would move him through the curriculum more rapidly than the other students, providing the opportunity to finish the textbook while staying with his chronological peers.

Student B is a candidate for wide-scale acceleration. His IEP team decided that he would bypass the eighth grade and that he would pre-test Algebra I, using end-of-year tests provided by the textbook publishers. Then, during the summer, he would work on the content standards that he had not mastered, taking the county’s Testing For Credit Exam in August. Because the Algebra I grade will be on his permanent record, he asked for the option of taking the course if he made below an A on the test. The IEP team concurred. **Note: This student eventually tested out of four high school classes, worked through others at an accelerated rate, took dual credit courses, and graduated two years ahead of his chronological peers.**

Measurable annual goals are descriptions of what a child can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12-month period with the provision of special education (specially designed instruction) and related services. When selecting areas of need to address through annual goals, the IEP team’s focus should be what the student should know when the goal is accomplished.

Specialty Designed Instruction

Reaching and Teaching 2003

Measurable annual goals must be related to meeting the child's needs that result from the identified giftedness, enabling involvement and progress in the general or advanced curriculum. In addition, they must meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the giftedness.

Annual goals are **not** required for areas of the general curriculum in which the giftedness does not affect the ability to be involved and progress in the general curriculum. The annual goals should be individually selected to meet the unique needs of the individual child, and they **should not** be determined based on commonly exhibited traits of gifted children.

There must be a direct relationship between the measurable annual goal and the needs identified in the PLEPs. Because the PLEPs are the baseline data for the development of measurable annual goals, the same criteria used in establishing the PLEPs must also be used in setting the annual goal. For example, if the PLEP describes a situation wherein the child's reading level is much higher than that of his chronological peers, this should be addressed under both (1) goals and objectives and (2) specific special education and related services to be provided.

Four critical components of a well-written measurable goal follow.

- **Timeframe** is usually specified in the number of weeks or a certain date for completion
 - In 36 instructional weeks...
 - By December 1, 2002...
 - By the end of the 2002-2003 school year...
- **Conditions** specify the manner in which progress toward the goal is measured. Conditions are dependent on the behavior being measured and involve the application of skills or knowledge.
 - When presented with 3rd-grade-level text...
 - Given a mixed, 4th-grade-level calculation problem...
 - Given a story prompt and 30 minutes to write...

PLEPs are specific statements that describe the effect of the student's exceptionality on his/her educational performance. They are written in objective measurable terms, to the extent possible, using relevant information such as evaluation reports, state wide testing results, current progress data and parent information.



**Measuring
Goals**

- **Behavior** clearly identifies the performance that is being monitored, can be directly observed, and is measurable.
Savannah will read...
Addison will correctly solve...
Sarah will score...
- **Criterion** identifies how much, how often, or to what standards the behavior must occur in order to demonstrate that the goal has been reached. The goal criterion specifies the amount of growth the child is expected to make by the end of the annual goal period.
96 words per minute with five or fewer errors
85% or more correct for all problems presented

Annual goal example: In 36 weeks, Zachary will produce/publish a multi-disciplinary portfolio of top quality writing and authentic assessment tasks with fewer than ten errors.

Well written measurable annual goals will pass the "Substitute Teacher Test." This test involves evaluating the goal to determine if it is written so that a teacher who does not know the student could use it to develop appropriate instructional plans and assess the student's progress. The number of goals addressed in the IEP depends on the student's needs. Each IEP must have at least one measurable annual goal. Each measurable annual goal must have at least two short-term objectives that will serve as intermediate steps between the PLEP's and the Annual Goal.

**Can Your
Goals Pass
The
"Substitute
Teacher
Test"?**

Short-term objectives are measurable, intermediate steps between a child's present level of educational performance and the annual goal, with the conditions under which the skill is to be performed, the behavior to be observed, and the criteria for success. Their development is based on a logical breakdown of the components of the annual goals and they measure progress toward meeting the annual goal. They set the general direction to be taken by those who will implement the IEP and are the basis for developing a detailed instructional plan for the student.

Short-term instructional objectives are observable, measurable indicators of student progress toward attaining the annual goal. They describe the student's skill development, not learning activities or teacher behaviors. The goal should state what the child is to do (will say numbers 1-50 in four languages), the condition or circumstances surrounding the performance (after instruction), criteria for attainment (at 95% accuracy), and evaluation procedure (as recorded by teacher).



Annual Goals

Short-Term Objectives

Where Is the Instruction Delivered?



In other words, the PLEPs say where the child is; the annual goal states where he/she can reasonably be expected to be in 12 months, and the short-term objectives are the intermediate steps between the PLEPs and the Goal.

EXAMPLE PLEP, ANNUAL GOAL and SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

PLEP: Given the 5th-grade-level math curriculum, Susan, a fifth-grader, is currently able to solve 100% of all problems presented with 98% accuracy. She completes all class work quickly and accurately and often works ahead with no teacher instruction. She is a self-motivated, independent worker.

Measurable Annual Goal: In 36 instructional weeks, Susan will pretest the 5th-grade math curriculum. She will work with the class in areas that she does not show mastery and will be given extension activities when she shows mastery of the general education curriculum. She will show 90% mastery of all work.

Short-Term Objective 1: In 12 instructional weeks, Susan will pretest the first 1/3 of the math curriculum. She will work with the class in areas that she does not show mastery and will be given extension activities when she shows mastery of the general education curriculum. She will show 90% mastery of all work.

Short-Term Objective 2: In 24 instructional weeks, Susan will pretest the second 1/3 of the math curriculum. She will work with the class in areas that she does not show mastery and will be given extension activities when she shows mastery of the general education curriculum. She will show 90% mastery of all work.

Short-Term Objective 3: In 36 instructional weeks, Susan will pretest the third 1/3 of the math curriculum. She will work with the class in areas that she does not show mastery and will be given extension activities when she shows mastery of the general education curriculum. She will show 90% mastery of all work.

After the goals and objectives are written, the IEP team then determines where and how the services are to be delivered. Because gifted students are multi-faceted and differ greatly even among other gifted students, one service delivery option (e.g. special class) does not serve all gifted learners equally well.

Opportunities matching the needs of students to levels of services, such as cluster group options, special pull-out class, homogeneous class, special or magnet schools, mentorships, dual enrollment and so forth, will maximize learning for each individual student.

Although Policy 2419 requires that students with exceptionalities are to be educated with their chronological peers to the extent possible

**Continuum
Of Services**

**Gifted
Students
May Progress
Through
Curriculum
At Varied
Levels**

Participating in the general curriculum does **not** mean that children must be educated entirely within the general education classroom if that placement is not appropriate. It means that they are working toward meeting the same standards as all other children and learning the same skills expected of all children.

It is not necessarily appropriate for children who are the same age as 5th graders to be doing exactly the same thing that the 5th-grade class is doing. Children may have accommodations or be participating in a modification of the 5th-grade curriculum.

If the student has attained or surpassed the prerequisite 5th-grade skills, he/she may be proceeding throughout the general curriculum at a different level. The student may be working on skills in the 8th-grade curriculum, since topical areas can be presented at any instructional level to challenge and assure progress for students who are gifted.

Such students may need to be provided opportunities to progress at advanced levels and at an increased instructional pace in content areas of the general curriculum. They may need opportunities to progress at advanced levels and at an increased instructional pace in content areas of the general curriculum. They may need opportunities to pursue individual interests and expertise throughout the general curricular areas as well as opportunities to interact with their intellectual peers. The delivery of these opportunities may take place in the regular classroom or in a special education setting.

Further discussion of services, delivery and instruction are in subsequent chapters of this manual.



8th Grade Re-evaluation

Four-Year Plan



Reaching and Teaching 2003

Policy 2419 states, “a re-evaluation of a gifted student shall also be conducted during the eighth grade to determine eligibility for exceptional gifted. A team which meets the membership requirements of section 5.1.2.a shall conduct a reevaluation in accordance with section 3.1.3.c.” **The Reevaluation Team determines which assessments or assessment data are necessary for determining eligibility for any exceptionality.**

After the assessment data have been collected, the Eligibility Committee meets to determine whether the student meets the qualifications for exceptional gifted. The conditions for such eligibility are listed on page 5 of this manual.

Gifted Eligibility in West Virginia ends when the student exits the eighth grade. Students who do not meet eligibility criteria for Exceptional Gifted are guaranteed participation in advanced and honors classes in high school through an Adolescent Four-Year Plan. **This plan differs from other multi-plans required for all students in that it carries the weight of an IEP.** It is developed by an IEP team, including the student, and it lists all honors and advanced classes that the team deems appropriate. The classes are to be based upon the needs of the student, and once accepted by the IEP team, must be implemented by the school system. If parents wish to challenge the development of the Four-Year Plan, it is a special education issue. If the implementation process is challenged, it is a regular education issue.

Although the Four-Year Plan carries the weight of an IEP, it is **not** a special education document in grades 9-12; therefore, its review is not a duty of the teacher of gifted. The plan is to be reviewed each year by the student, parent, school counselor, and school administrator. Giving the high school guidance counselor a copy of the plan after the meeting will assure her awareness of the students who have four-year plans. The review does not require a meeting, but all involved parties must initial the plan each year. No changes may be made without the expressed consent of the parent and student.

The Adolescent Four-Year Plan should list only honors and advanced classes in the content areas in which the student has identified strengths.

**COUNTY GIFTED EDUCATION
ADOLESCENT (4-YEAR) PLAN**

Date _____

Student's Full Name: _____ Nickname _____ DOB _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____ WVEIS# _____ SSN _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Surrogate Parent _____

Address: _____

Telephone – Home _____ Work: _____

Extra-curricular interests/activities: _____

Education Goals: _____

Career Goals: _____

Present Levels of Performance/Assessment Data _____

| Honors/Advanced Classes Only | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Ninth Grade | Tenth Grade | Eleventh Grade | Twelfth Grade |
| <p>Record of Review</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Principal _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Counselor _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Parent _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student _____</p> | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Signatures of IEP Team Developing the Plan

Administrator _____ Parent _____
 Teacher _____ Student _____
 Special Educator _____ Other _____

This plan must be reviewed at the end of each grade to certify the guaranteed advanced/honors classes for the next year. It may not be changed without the required signatures.

**Exceptional
Gifted
(Grades 9-12)**

Students meeting the criteria for Exceptional Gifted are referred to the IEP Team, which then develops an IEP that addresses the student's academic and affective needs. For example, an under-achieving student might need goals for goals setting, task commitment, or compacting the curriculum. A student with a psychological adjustment disorder might need close monitoring as well as the opportunity for counseling.

Students who are economically disadvantaged may also be students who make straight A's. The goals for those students should concentrate on lifestyle opportunities career goal setting, college choices, and financial aid opportunities. The Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, has an excellent publication: *Helping Gifted Children and Their Families Prepare for College: A Handbook Designed to Assist Economically Disadvantaged and First-Generation College Attendees*. It can be found online at www.sp.uconn.edu/~nrcgt/nrcgt/m93201/wok93201.html.

Exceptional Gifted students who are also identified as students with a disability need goals that will help them maximize their potential. These twice-exceptional students' strengths are often ignored so that weaknesses can be addressed. Since the students are identified as needing specially designed instruction for both strengths and weaknesses, the teacher of gifted should focus on the strengths. Another specialist will work with the weaknesses associated with the disability.

The next chapter, "Delivery of Services," discusses Delivery Options as defined in Policy 2419 as well as the Delivery of Services for gifted and exceptional gifted students.



Ipsa scientia potestas est!

(Knowledge itself is power)

A Dependable Cure For Sadness

“The best thing for being sad is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. This is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting.” - advice from Merlin to Arthur in T.H. White’s *The Once and Future King*.



“Intellectual Capital Is America’s Most Valuable Asset.” *Fortune Magazine*

Over 90% of the scientists who ever lived are still alive.

“Intellectuals solve problems; geniuses prevent them.” Albert Einstein

“Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.” Confucius (551 BC -479)

“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” Aristotle

“Are we wasting our Country’s greatest single natural resource through failure to develop to the utmost the potential of our gifted children?” - West Virginia Department of Education (1966)

“Never seem more learned than the people you are with. Wear your learning like a pocket watch and keep it hidden. Do not pull it out to count the hours, but give the time when you are asked.” - lord Chesterfield (1694-1773)