



## Huntingdon Area School District Gifted Support Programs

*Every day, all students are challenged to develop their full potential and experience success, leaving school inspired and eager to return the next day.*

### **Program Purpose**

The Huntingdon Area School District provides an accelerated, enriched individualized curriculum via gifted support programs for students who demonstrate a significant need for such programming. Program activities challenge the individual's creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. These activities are presented at a pace conducive to developing each student's full potential.

The following guidelines and descriptions reflect the Huntingdon Area School District's continuing commitment to providing educational services appropriate for mentally gifted students that are consistent with their individual needs, outstanding abilities, and potential for performing at high levels of accomplishment.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education has defined the purpose of its regulations governing special education for gifted students (22 Pa. Code Chapter 16) as follows:

#### ***22 Pa. Code §16.2.***

- (a) This chapter specifies how the Commonwealth will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. It is the intent of the Board that gifted students are provided with quality gifted education services and programs.*
- (b) The Commonwealth, through the Department, will provide general supervision of services and programs provided under this chapter.*
- (c) The Department will disseminate information about and promote the use of promising practices and innovative programs to meet the needs of gifted students.*
- (d) To provide services and programs efficiently, the Commonwealth will delegate operational responsibility to its school districts. Each School district shall, by direct service or through arrangement with*

*other agencies provide the following:*

- (1) Services and programs planned, developed and operated for the identification and evaluation of each gifted student.*
- (2) Gifted education for each gifted student which is based on the unique needs of the student, not solely on the student's classification.*
- (3) Gifted education for gifted students which enables them to participate in acceleration or enrichment, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to their intellectual and academic abilities and needs.*

## **Identification and Definition of Mentally Gifted Students**

*22 Pa. Code §16.1, 16.21(d)*

### **Definition of Mentally Gifted**

*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.*

*Intellectual ability is not equated with an IQ score alone. Intellectual ability is and should be a reflection of a range of assessments including a student's performance and potential.*

*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.*

*No one test or measure is sufficient to determine giftedness, and the evaluation and testing literature recognizes that there is a margin for error in any standardized testing. The standard error of measurement also applies when reporting IQ.*

*A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability.*

*If a student's IQ is less than 130, other factors, such as academic performance, demonstrated achievement and other observed skills must strongly indicate gifted ability in order for that student to be admitted to a gifted program.*

## Screening and Evaluation Process

*The following pertain to:*

*22 Pa. Code §16.21, §16.22, 16.23*

The Huntingdon Area School District shall endeavor to identify gifted students as those who:

(a) have demonstrated having exceptionally high intellectual abilities and/or exceptionally high achievement and

(b) have demonstrated academic needs which extend beyond that provided in grade-level general education programming, for the purpose of providing those students with educational programming appropriate to their individual academic needs.

### ***Screening Process:***

1. The screening process is recommended, but not required, and can be initiated at any time by parents, teachers, or administrators.
2. Beginning in kindergarten and first grade, students will be given district curriculum-based assessments and other tools to help teachers screen students.
3. In the spring of the student's 2nd grade year, the results of the TerraNova, and/or other District curriculum-based assessments, will be used as preliminary screening instruments for gifted referrals. Teachers will be asked to review the records of students who performed in the 99th percentile in math and language arts, and then complete a checklist of other characteristics of the children.
4. Once the student has been identified through the preliminary screening, a valid standardized individual screening test of general intelligence would be administered, scored and reviewed. The student may be referred to the District Child Study Team, (description attached) to discuss these results with the parent or a student may be referred for a full evaluation.
5. Students who obtain a standard score on the intellectual screening test at or above a set cut-off level (as outlined under *eligibility requirement*) will be referred for a full evaluation.

## ***Evaluation Process***

1. Prior to conducting an initial gifted multidisciplinary evaluation, the Huntingdon Area School District shall comply with the notice and consent requirements under ***Pa. Code §16.61 and 16.62*** (relating to notice; and consent).
2. Parents who suspect that their child is gifted may request a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation of their child at *any time*, with a limit of one request per school year. The request must be in writing. The school district shall have the permission to evaluate form readily available for this purpose. If a request is made orally to any professional employee or administrator of the school district, (that individual shall provide) a copy of the permission to evaluate form shall be provided to the parents within 10 calendar days of the oral request. Requests made in writing should be forwarded to the building Principal or to the Director of Student Services.
3. Multidisciplinary evaluations shall be conducted by a gifted multidisciplinary team (GMDT). The GMDT shall be formed on the basis of the student's needs and shall be comprised of the student's parents, a certified school psychologist, persons familiar with the student's educational experience and performance, one or more of the student's current teachers, persons trained in the appropriate evaluation techniques and, when possible, persons familiar with the student's cultural background. A single member of the GMDT may meet two or more of the qualifications specified in this subsection.
4. The GMDT shall prepare a written report that brings together the information and findings from the evaluation or reevaluation concerning the student's educational needs and strengths. The report must make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, indicate the basis for those recommendations, include recommendations for the student's programming and indicate the names and positions of the members of the GMDT.
5. The initial evaluation shall be completed and a copy of the gifted written report (GWR) will be presented to the parents or guardian no later than 60 calendar days after the district receives written parental consent for evaluation or receives an order of a court or hearing officer to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation, except that the calendar days from the day after the last day of the spring school term up to and including the day before the first day of the subsequent fall school term may not be counted.
6. The procedural rights will be made available to protect the student and parent, in language which is clear and fully explains all rights.
7. The GMDT shall determine eligibility for gifted support services as defined in ***§ § 16.1 and 16.21***.

## **Huntingdon Area School District Gifted Eligibility Requirements**

*The following pertain to:*

*22 Pa. Code §16.21(d)*

The policy for identification as a student in need of gifted support services in the Huntingdon Area School District requires students to meet the following criteria:

An IQ of 130 or greater in the area of Verbal, Nonverbal or the Full scale.

**Only students who qualify will receive enrichment and/or acceleration through our gifted programs.**

**Additionally**, students will be *considered* for identification as gifted if they have a tested **IQ of 125 or above in any of the areas listed above and have scored above the 98th percentile on the Reading or Math section of a valid, standardized achievement test.** As a child's IQ approaches the 130 score, achievement data will also be adjusted for eligibility based on the following scale:

125 IQ	98th Percentile Achievement
126 IQ	97th Percentile Achievement
127 IQ	96th Percentile Achievement
128 IQ	95th Percentile Achievement
129 IQ	94th Percentile Achievement

## **Gifted Individualized Education Plan**

*The following pertain to:*

### **§ 16.31. § 16.32**

A GIEP (Gifted Individualized Education Plan) is a written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student. The initial GIEP must be based on and be responsive to the results of the GWR and be developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 16.

The GIEP team, in accordance with the requirements shall, based upon the GWR, develop an initial GIEP and arrive at a determination of educational placement. Revisions to GIEPs, changes in educational placement, or continuation of educational placement for a student determined to be a gifted student shall be made by the GIEP team based upon a review of the student's GIEP and instructional activities, present levels of educational performance, as well as on information in the most recent evaluation.

**Each GIEP team must include persons who meet the following qualifications:**

- (1) One or both of the student's parents.
- (2) The student if the parents choose to have the student participate.
- (3) A representative of the district, who will serve as the chairperson of the GIEP team, who is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district, and who is authorized by the district to commit those resources.
- (4) One or more of the student's current teachers.
- (5) Other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or the district.
- (6) A teacher of the gifted.

**To ensure parent attendance at the GIEP meeting, the district will collaborate with parents to offer times that are convenient for both the parent and the district. An Invitation to Participate in a GIEP meeting will be mailed at least 10 calendar days in advance of the GIEP meeting date. The invitation will include:**

- (1) The purpose, time and location of the meeting.
- (2) The names of the persons expected to attend.
- (3) The procedural rights available to protect the student and parent, in language which is clear and fully explains all rights.

(4) That a determination will be made at the meeting regarding needs for gifted support services

**The GIEP of each gifted student shall be based on the GMDT's written report and contain the following:**

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance.
- (2) A statement of annual goals and short-term learning outcomes which are responsive to the learning needs identified in the evaluation report.
- (3) A statement of the specially designed instruction and support services to be provided to the student.
- (4) Projected dates for initiation, anticipated frequency, location and anticipated duration of gifted education.
- (5) Appropriate objective criteria, assessment procedures and timelines for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the goals and learning outcomes are being achieved.
- (6) The names and positions of GIEP team participants and the date of the meeting.

**A copy of the GIEP shall be provided to the parents, along with a notice of parental rights under § 16.61—16.65 (relating to procedural safeguards).**

The school district shall notify teachers who work with a student who has been identified as gifted and in need of specially designed instruction of their responsibilities under the student's GIEP.

**The following timeline governs the preparation and implementation of GIEPs:**

- (1) The GIEP must be completed within 30 calendar days after the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT) issues its written report (GWR). The GIEP must be put into action no more than 10 school days after it is completed.
- (2) The GIEP of each student shall be implemented no more than 10 school days after it is signed or at the start of the following school year *if completed less than 30 days before the last day of scheduled classes in accordance with § 16.62(5) (relating to consent)*.
- (3) GIEP team meetings shall be convened at least annually or more frequently if conditions warrant.
- (4) A GIEP team meeting shall also be convened at the request of a GIEP team member, the parent, the student or the school district.



## **Huntingdon Area School District Gifted Support Programs**

### **Elementary School Program**

The Huntingdon Area School District provides elementary gifted support services at Standing Stone and Southside Elementary schools to identified students in grades K - 5. Gifted support services are also offered at Brady Henderson and Jackson Miller Elementary School on an itinerant basis, or parents have the choice to send their children to either Standing Stone or Southside Elementary School. Transportation will be provided by the district.

At each building, one gifted support teacher works with the school principal, building leaders, and classroom teachers to provide gifted programming for students as needed. The gifted support teacher acts as a catalyst to help facilitate differentiated education in a variety of different grade level subjects. Additionally, the gifted support teacher provides classroom teachers with resource materials and ideas for class enrichment and acceleration.

The elementary gifted program services students both inside, and outside, of the classroom as deemed necessary by each student's gifted individualized education plan. Gifted students are provided with a flexible schedule that allows them to move in and out of classrooms/grade levels/buildings to ensure that studies are academically appropriate and challenging. Placement is determined by reviewing leveled math, reading and writing assessments administered throughout the school year.

Students in the elementary gifted support program engage in complex reading, writing, vocabulary, science, technology, and current events exploration. Additionally, the curriculum allows students to delve into real-world and futuristic problem-solving, address global concerns, develop statistic and accounting skills, investigate career options, discover the arts, and hone critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Students receiving gifted support services complete enrichment activities and projects based on individual strengths and interests. Personal interest projects are a collaborative effort between student and teacher and are scored according the guidelines and rubrics established and agreed upon by both parties. Projects vary depending on student interests and may include, but are not limited to the following: writing or producing a play, implementing a community project, developing an invention, creating a model, designing a board game, teaching a skill to other students, presenting a personal hobby or interest, sharing a talent, filming a documentary, or delivering a presentation that addresses world or personal concerns. These projects are typically shared with peers, parents and/or the community.

## **Middle School Program**

Students identified as gifted receive comprehensive literacy instruction in grades six through eight for two class periods each day. This instruction has as its foundation a curriculum that encompasses the Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The content is covered at an accelerated rate, allowing time for a higher level of development than the regular curriculum. In addition this acceleration provides time for enrichment opportunities both at the group and individual levels.

As the foundational level of a three-year program, the sixth-grade curriculum is an introductory-level course that focuses on building a knowledge base. As the second phase, the seventh-grade curriculum extends this base by moving up the critical-thinking hierarchy, focusing on the analysis of communication. Communication in all its forms is broken down, and the various components are examined for identification, usage, and effectiveness. As the culminating phase, the eighth-grade curriculum extends the development of communication skills to the synthesis and evaluation levels of the critical-thinking hierarchy. A strong focus is placed upon taking the information acquired through language analysis and utilizing it to create more effective and refined means of communicating that are unique to each student's style.

Students who require advanced coursework in mathematics, social studies, or science will be accelerated and/or receive enrichment according to their individualized needs in this area.

Students also participate in various national-level competitions and are encouraged to seek publication of their writing. The eighth-grade students write and publish the middle school newspaper, and an in-class talent show is held annually to encourage the arts and the development of performance skills. Other middle school activities that provide outlets for students with special interests and talents include middle school band, high school marching band, jazz band, student council and Environmental Club.

## **High School Program**

The main goal of the high school gifted program is to ensure that students are learning material at a level that coincides with their academic needs. The program consists of numerous ways that pupils can achieve their potential while also engaging in enrichment opportunities that will allow them to add breadth and depth in disciplines of their choosing.

First and foremost, students will be placed in courses that are commensurate with their abilities. This is generally completed through the customary scheduling process at the high school as students register for advanced level classes. Many students select college classes through the district's Dual Enrollment offerings. If a student demonstrates high levels of achievement and ability in a particular course, the teacher of the gifted—in conjunction with the student, parents, regular education teacher, and administration—may devise a plan whereby the student completes the course's requirements through acceleration or compaction. Credit by examination, course exemption, course compaction, individualized in-or out-of-class assignments and differentiated instruction in the regular classroom may be appropriate options. Online courses are occasionally recommended so that the student may attain the necessary credits for the course while freeing up his or her schedule to include electives or more challenging work in other interests. Independent study may also be an option considered for students within the high school's gifted support program. Independent study is identified on the student's transcript, listed as an "Independent Study Course" as most educational institutions look favorably on this type of course as it demonstrates initiative, discipline and personal time management. All of these options as well as more individualized plans may be considered, with the specifics to be determined the GIEP meeting.

Standardized testing instruments such as SAT, ACT, GRE, and the Cornell Critical Thinking Exam will be used to gather data regarding the student's aptitude and placement. Advanced Placement testing takes place through the gifted program. The high school offers on-site AP courses in English, Calculus, and Physics. Students who wish to take AP exams in other subjects work with the gifted support teacher to prepare for the test.

Transition services, which take place all four years, are an integral aspect of the gifted curriculum. As a freshman, the pupil will complete an inventory that provides data in several educational clusters such as scientific, the arts, social, and business. They are also exposed to interest instruments that reveal their strengths and needs in areas such as logic, mechanical, numerical, social, and others. This information is used as students examine career possibilities. During the sophomore year, students research careers based upon the transition information gathered the previous year. The junior year introduces students to college majors that will complement the careers they have explored. In addition, students may have an opportunity to complete a career shadowing placement and explore internship opportunities. They may also consult with the gifted support teacher in writing effective and compelling essays for their college applications.

The enrichment option includes opportunities for students to engage in activities that will add dimension to their academic needs and desires. Students select from a wide range of short-term and long-term activities that are not offered in the regular curricula. Enrichment can provide extra challenges and stimulate interest in new areas. The choices usually require some time out

of the student's regular education courses in order to complete the activities. Time out of class is alternated so that students are not consistently missing the same class. Activities fall into several categories. Many are prestigious nationally-recognized competitions, thereby enhancing the student's high school record.

**Math:** ASMA, AMC 10/12, Lehigh University Math Competition

**Reading:** Great Writers Series, Four-year College Reading Plan

**Communication:** Creative writing competitions, essay writing competitions, Voice of Democracy, Scenario Writing competition, Shakespeare Competition, debates, Rosetta Stone Latin, Rosetta Stone Italian

**Problem Solving:** Future Problem Solving, Let's Get Real, Community Problem Solving

**History and International:** History Day, Model United Nations, Language in Motion

**Science:** Rocketry competition, Penn State Science Symposium, Physics Bowl, Chemistry Bowl

**Miscellaneous:** Guest speakers, Knowledge Masters Open, Scholastic Scrimmage

Students identified as gifted who have study halls meet at least once per cycle with the gifted support teacher to discuss and complete their individualized goals. They may also engage in an independent study, research, or project on a topic that is not introduced in regular education. In other cases, some scholars become interested in a topic that was included in a scheduled class and want to explore in more depth.

## Glossary of Terms

**Chapters 14 and 342:** Regulations and rules regarding students with disabilities in Pennsylvania.

**Chapter 16:** Regulations and rules regarding gifted students in Pennsylvania.

**Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP):** The plan written by the GIEP team (including parents) that specifically describes the education to be provided to a gifted student.

**Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE):** The evaluation process used to gather information that assists in determining if a child is mentally gifted according to the state definition and in need of special education. The evaluation should look at information relevant to the student's suspected giftedness including academic functioning, learning strengths, and educational needs.

**Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT):** A team of educators, other professional individuals, and the child's parents that reviews all formal testing of a child and all other evaluation material. The GMDT must issue a written report recommending whether the child is gifted and making suggestions about the programs and services needed.

**Gifted Student:** A student who is exceptional because the student meets the definition of "mentally gifted" and needs specially designed instruction beyond that required in regular education.

**Gifted Written Report (GWR):** The report that is compiled and written by the gifted multidisciplinary evaluation team (which includes parents) following a multidisciplinary evaluation. It contains all of the information gathered by various team members, as well as the results of assessment. It makes recommendations to the GIEP team regarding eligibility for gifted programs.

**Mentally Gifted:** 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.

**Specially Designed Instruction:** Adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum for students who are gifted.

## **Huntingdon Area School District Child Study Team**

The Child Study Team (CST) works in cooperation with teachers, administrators and parents in providing the necessary special programs and related services to help students realize their potential in school. The CST is a group of professionals who provide consultative, evaluative (screening/child find), and prescriptive services to teachers and parents.

The Child Study Team is comprised of a Regular Education, Special Education and/or Gifted Teacher, a School Psychologist, Guidance Counselor, Building Leader and/or Principal and the Director of Student Services. These individuals provide a variety of services to the staff, parents, and students. Services may include intervention, monitoring, consultation, identification, assessment, program planning, educational placement, enrichment plans, individualized building plans and agency referrals. In addition to the basic CST members, licensed psychiatrists, physicians, neurologists, speech-language specialists, occupational and physical therapists, and other administrators are consulted when necessary.

The mission of the Child Study Team is to maximize individual student success in the regular education classroom and to also serve as a screening mechanism for students who may be in need of specialized services. The team works in collaboration with students, teachers, and parents to make school an academically successful and pleasant experience for all children. The team has a special concern for the whole child (socially, emotionally, and academically). The primary goal is to provide appropriate services and specially designed programs, or both, to better meet each individual's needs.

If parents are concerned about their child's progress or school program, they should feel free to discuss such issues with their child's teacher, guidance counselor and/or principal. In addition, parents have the option of making a referral to the Child Study Team to discuss plans and/or interventions to assist their children in school.

A referral to the Child Study Team may be made by a parent or a teacher. Meetings are held on Wednesdays and/or by appointment on a weekly basis. If you would like to make an appointment for a CST meeting, you may contact either your building principal or the Office of Student Services at 641-2104.

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