



The Gifted Evaluation Process

It is our goal to support schools as efficiently and equitably as possible, and to service our Gifted and Talented students with high-quality, meaningful programming. To that end, we have worked to create a process that:

- Is effective in identifying gifted students from diverse backgrounds and experiences;
- Is clearly understood by parents and school staff;
- Highly values stakeholder feedback;
- Is aligned to state regulations and gifted best practices.

The Gifted Evaluation Process is an in-depth process which requires the input of multiple people and departments. Because so much time and care goes into reviewing each student's profile, we ask that schools and parents **wait at least 6 weeks after the start of the school year to start a Gifted Evaluation** as teacher input is highly valued during this process. It is difficult for teachers to give valid feedback on students they don't know that well. Additionally, we want to be sure we are using the most up-to-date data for students; often last year's grades and test scores are truly outdated.

Pittsburgh Gifted and Talented Support Office | 1400 Crucible Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15205
Phone: 412-529-3082 | Fax: 412-928-0576 | www.pghschools.org

What is a Gifted Identification?

In Pennsylvania, mentally gifted is defined as “...students demonstrating outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.” (22 Pa. Code §16.1)

The term “mentally gifted” includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher, or meets ‘multiple criteria’ as set forth in Department Guidelines indicating gifted ability. Multiple criteria that are indicative of giftedness include but are not limited to:

- *Achievement*
- *Rate of Acquisition and Retention*
- *Early skill development*
- *Intervening Factors*

It is important to note that a Gifted Identification is considered a **Special Education Identification**.

Pennsylvania School Law includes gifted students as “children with exceptionalities” who need specially designed instruction. A student is identified as gifted if they demonstrate a strong need for specially designed instruction. There are a number of factors that the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team considers for each child, and we look at each student’s profile individually.



I Believe My Child May be in Need of Specially Designed Instruction... What Do I Do?

Step One

When a student is recommended for a Gifted Evaluation or a parent request and evaluation for Gifted services, the Parent or Guardian will complete and sign a Permission to Evaluate (PTE). This initiates a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) that is conducted by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT). Once the school receives the signed PTE, the school counselor or social worker will gather information on the student including: current assessment data, grades, attendance, teacher evaluations and parent information. A school psychologist will schedule and conduct a psychological evaluation. This information collected by the school counselor along with the psychological evaluation is compiled and a Gifted Written Report (GWR) is developed. The GMDT will review the GWR and make a recommendation regarding a need for specially designed instruction. The GMDT Team include: parents and/or guardians, certified school psychologist, current teachers(s), person's familiar with the student's educational experience and performance. Team members may be present at the meeting or they may submit information in writing to the GWR.

**TIMELINE: 60 days from receipt of signed Permission to Evaluate
District must give parents at least 10 days notice prior to the meeting**

Step Two

If the team does find that the student is in need of Gifted Support Services, a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) is written within 30 days of the parent receipt of the GWR. A GIEP is a written plan describing the specially designed instruction to be provided to a gifted student. The initial GIEP should be based on the results of the evaluation and should be developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 16. Parents will approve the GIEP, and sign a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA). If a student is found not to be in need of Gifted Support Services, the student will remain in a regular education placement. The parent will be issued a NORA to approve the recommendation that the student remain in regular education.

TIMELINE: Parents have 10 days to return the NORA (5 days to change their minds if they attended the meeting and signed the NORA then). If the NORA is not signed at the meeting or returned within 10 days, the District will send another copy certified mail. *Initial placement for gifted services cannot begin without a signed NORA.*

What is Gifted Education?

Under Pennsylvania law, gifted education is:

- Conducted in an **instructional setting**
- Provided in an instructional or skill area
- Provided at no cost to the parents
- Provided under the authority of a school district, directly by referral or by contract
- Provided by a state educational agency
- **Individualized to meet the educational needs of the student**
- Reasonably calculated to **yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress**
- Provided in conformity with a Gifted IEP

The GIEP:

1. Will be based on the **unique needs of the gifted student**, not just on the student's classification.
2. Enables the gifted student to participate in **acceleration or enrichment programs, or both**, as appropriate, and to receive services according to the student's intellectual and academic abilities and needs

The gifted education program will be completely developed before the GIEP team decides where the program will be provided.

The placement must:

- Enable the provision of **specially designed instruction** based on the student's need and ability
- Ensure the student is able to **benefit meaningfully** from the rate, level, and manner of instruction
- Provide opportunities to participate in **acceleration or enrichment, or both**. These programs must go beyond the program the student would receive as part of his or her general education.

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Specially designed instruction for students should be varied and be designed to meet the needs of the individual student. These programming options can include but are not limited to:

- Centers for Advanced Study (CAS)
- Self-Designed or Independent Study
- Above Grade Level Texts
- Mentorships/Apprenticeships
- Pull-out, Small Group Instruction
- Grouping with other High-Achieving Students
- In class acceleration or compacting
- Differentiated Assignments
- Self-Selected Projects
- Mentoring

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Important Terms

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)

When the district's screening process indicates that a student has potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted, a performance level which exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom, or if a parent/guardian requests an evaluation in writing, the district will initiate a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE). This Evaluation is the process of gathering information in order to determine that a child is mentally gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The evaluation includes information relevant to the child's academic functioning, learning strengths and educational needs, such as grades, standardized test scores, teacher and parent feedback, and any intervening factors which may mask giftedness. This evaluation is conducted the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT—see below). Parents may request an evaluation once per school year.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT)

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT) performs the GMDE. This team includes a school Psychologist, the student's Principal or district representative, the classroom teacher(s), and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and any other person familiar with the child's educational performance and experiences. The GMDT generates and reviews a Gifted Written Report (GWR) and makes a recommendation as to whether the student is demonstrating a need for specially designed instruction through gifted support services.

Gifted Written Report (GWR)

The GWR is a written report that includes information and findings from the evaluation regarding a student's strengths and needs. This report includes a review of grades, test scores, a psychological evaluation, teacher and parent feedback, and any factors that might mask gifted ability. A team of people (GMDT) contribute to this report and this report is used to make a determination as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction and a Gifted IEP.

Gifted Individual Education Program (GIEP)

A Gifted IEP is a written plan describing the specially designed instruction to be provided to a gifted student. The initial Gifted IEP shall be based on and responsive to the results of the evaluation and shall be developed and implemented in accordance with Chapter 16 (22 Pa. Code§16.31(a)) Gifted IEP's are reviewed/ revised at least annually.

The GIEP Team includes:

- one or both parents;
- the student if 16 years of age or older (or younger and the parents choose to have student participate);
- a representative of the district who serves 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;
- one or more of the student's current teachers;
- other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or the district.

Members of the GIEP Team may submit feedback in writing and may not attend the meeting in person.

Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA)

A document that states whether or not a student is in need of gifted support services. This document is signed at the conclusion of the initial GWR meeting and at each GIEP review/revision meeting if a child is receiving specially designed instruction through gifted support services

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Frequently Asked Questions

I have questions about the status of my child's evaluation – who should I call?

- For questions regarding grades K-4 students please contact Barb Bradley at bbradley1@pghschools.org / (412) 529-3820.
- Grade 5-8 and private school students please contact Amy Primm at aprimm1@pghschools.org / (412) 529-3037.
- Dilworth, Grandview and all grade 9-12 students please contact Kashif Henderson at khenderson2@pghschools.org / (412) 529-3082.

My child attends a private/parochial school, can my child receive services at the Gifted Center?

We are not able to offer any “dual enrollment” opportunities for non-PPS students at the Gifted Center.

My child was tested and identified as mentally gifted, but chose to attend a private school instead. Does my child need to be retested to receive gifted services when they enroll in a Pittsburgh Public School in the future?

This depends on how long ago your child was tested, and if your child has a current GIEP. Typically, a re-evaluation should take place every two years for students without an active GIEP. This decision tree may help you determine whether your child needs to be re-evaluated.

1. Does the student have a previous GIEP?

- Yes (if yes, move to **step 2**)
- No (if no, move to step 3)

2. End Date of the most recent GIEP _____

More than 2 years old on December 15th of the current school year?

- Yes (if yes, move to **step 3**)
- No (if no, no new evaluation is needed if your student is enrolling for gifted services during the current or next school year)

3. Date of most recent psychological exam _____

More than 3 years old?

- Yes (if yes, your student needs to be re-evaluated)
- No (if no, please submit a supporting portfolio)



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If I move from out of state and my child was identified as gifted, do I need to have my child retested?

This depends on the measures that were used to determine whether the child was in need of specially designed instruction, and when the evaluation occurred. Members of the Gifted and Talented Office will review the out-of-state evaluation and let you know about next steps.

If I move from another school district in Pennsylvania will my child receive gifted services?

If a student moves from one school district in Pennsylvania to another, the new district must implement the existing GIEP to the extent possible and must provide the services and programs specified in an interim GIEP agreed to by the parents until a new GIEP is developed and implemented. A reevaluation may be necessary prior to developing a new GIEP.

I am not sure when my psychological evaluation is—who should I contact?

Please contact psychological services at: **412-529-3132**

When and where can I get the results of evaluation?

The psychologist that evaluates your child will contact you to share with you the results of the psychological assessments. It is important to keep in mind that the psychological results are only a part of the total Gifted Evaluation. The determination of whether there is a need for gifted services is made by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team and the final recommendation will be issued by the Gifted Support Office. After your child has been tested and all of the necessary forms compiled, a team reviews the information and a recommendation is made. If your child attend Dilworth and Grandview, the Gifted Resource teacher at your child's school will contact you regarding the recommendation. If your son or daughter is in grades K- 8 at any other school, you will be contacted by the Gifted Center staff regarding the recommendation. If your child is in grades 9-12, the Gifted Support Office will contact you regarding the recommendation. Summer testing results will typically be available in September of the same year; however, summer days do not count against the deadline for conducting an evaluation. The evaluation, identification and GIEP development process can take up to 90 days.

How is a child tested and placed into the gifted program?

A recommendation for the gifted program can be initiated in several ways: a parent can request that their child be tested, a teacher can recommend that a student be tested, or the Gifted and Talented office may contact you about your child's achievement and recommend testing. The process begins with a Gifted Evaluation. Parents must sign a Permission to Evaluate form before a Gifted Evaluation is initiated. This form is accessed through the home school counselor, or by your private/parochial school liaison. Once the parent or guardian fills out and returns this form to the home school, the home school begins compiling information for the Gifted Written Report (GWR), which includes a psychological test conducted by a certified psychologist, teacher checklists, parent checklists, and other relevant information. All of the



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information is compiled and sent to the Gifted Support Office for review. Once the GWR is complete a determination is made as to whether or not the student is mentally gifted *and* the student requires gifted educational services.

What happens if my child qualifies for gifted educational services?

If a child is identified as requiring gifted services, the parents or guardians will be invited to attend the Gifted Individual Educational Plan (GIEP) meeting. At this meeting, the results of the testing are shared and a GIEP is written. Also, a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is issued and the parent must sign the NORA to authorize services. This establishes, by law, the student's right to gifted educational services and the District's obligation to provide those services.

What happens if my child does not qualify for gifted services?

Your child will continue to receive regular education services. If you disagree with the recommendation you should consult the procedural safeguards notice issued with the NORA, which sets forth your procedural rights.

How often can my child get tested if they don't qualify?

One time per school year.