



## Portage Area School District



### **Screening, Evaluating and Programming for Gifted Students**

#### ➤ **Child Find**

In compliance with Chapter 16, (Pa. Code 16.21(b)), the Portage Area School District is responsible for locating, identifying, and educating school-aged students requiring specially designed gifted programs or services.

#### ➤ **Definition of Mentally Gifted**

According to Pennsylvania's Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students, Mental giftedness can be defined as outstanding intellectual and creative ability that requires specially designed programs or support services beyond the general education curriculum.

Cognitive or mental giftedness has been historically associated with an overall Intellectual Quotient (IQ) of 130 or above. However, Pennsylvania's Gifted Guidelines specifically indicate that the determination of mental giftedness should not be based on an IQ score alone. Intellectual ability should be a reflection of a range of assessments that identify a student's performance, potential, interests, and needs.

#### ➤ **Referral and Evaluation Procedures (K-12)**

##### • *Parent referral*

- A parent can, at any time, make an oral or written request that their child be evaluated for the Gifted Services. Parents should contact the building principal or School Psychologist/ Special Education Coordinator to provide a written request for a gifted evaluation.
- Upon receipt of an oral or written request, the school will respond within 10 days with a "Permission to Evaluate" form.
- The gifted evaluation will be completed within 60 days of the receipt date of the "Permission to Evaluate" form.

##### • *Teacher referral*

- If a teacher would like to refer a student for a gifted evaluation, he/she should complete a "Gifted Referral Form" with ALL requested information. The form can be sent to the School Psychologist by the referring teacher.
- The School Psychologist will review the teacher referral form and the student's educational history, including but not limited to: classroom grades, local assessment data, and state assessment data.
- The parent will be contacted to discuss the referral information and whether he/she would like the student to receive a gifted screening or a gifted evaluation.

##### • *Gifted Screening*

- Students who are identified as potentially gifted based on the referral information and academic history may be screened prior to initiation of a full gifted evaluation.

- In addition to a review of academic performance and teacher input, the School Psychologist will administer the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test – Second Edition (KBIT-2), which is a brief, individually administered test of intelligence that results in an estimate of an individual's overall cognitive potential, verbal intelligence, and nonverbal intelligence. *Parental permission should be obtained prior to administering the KBIT-2 since it is an individually-administered assessment.* If a student's performance on one or more of the KBIT-2 indices (Verbal, Nonverbal, or IQ Composite) fall at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher (Standard score of 125 or greater), the student may be considered for a full, multidisciplinary gifted evaluation.

## ➤ **Multidisciplinary Gifted Evaluation**

### • ***General Guidelines***

After a student has been identified as needing a full gifted evaluation, a gifted Permission to Evaluate form should be sent to the parents. Upon return of the permission, the School Psychologist can begin collecting further information/data for the evaluation. The evaluation may include the following information:

- A psychometrically valid and reliable IQ test (e.g., WISC-V, WAIS-IV, etc.)
- Performance in a range of academic areas as measured by a nationally-normed, standardized measure of achievement (e.g., WIAT-III, KTEA-3, etc.)
- Parent input
- Teacher Input
- Classroom observation by School Psychologist
- Classroom, local, and state assessment data (e.g., PSSA scores, CBM scores, etc.)
- A psychometrically valid and reliable gifted rating scale (e.g., SIGS)
- Report on rates of retention and acquisition (Chuska Scales for Acquisition and Retention)

### • ***Consideration of Multiple Criteria***

The term “mentally gifted” historically refers to an individual who demonstrates a full-scale IQ of 130 or higher. However, no student shall be precluded from eligibility for gifted services on the sole basis of an IQ of less than 130. Pennsylvania code requires the consideration of multiple criteria when a multidisciplinary gifted evaluation is being conducted. The following criteria should be considered in addition to a comprehensive cognitive assessment:

- *Achievement*
  - Excellence in achievement as demonstrated through performance that falls at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in one or more skill or subject areas, as measured through a standardized, nationally normed achievement test
  - Demonstrated achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by excellence of products, exceptional interest and motivation in specific areas, or criterion-referenced team judgment. (e.g., Teacher/parent completion of a standardized gifted rating scale)
- *Rates of Acquisition and Retention*

- Rates of acquisition can be defined as the speed at which a student is able to acquire, understand, and demonstrate mastery of new knowledge or skills. Rates of retention can be defined as how many repetitions the student needs before he/she can demonstrate mastery of new knowledge/skills and apply the information/skills independently. This data can be obtained through the reports of parents and teachers by completing checklists and/or rating scales. (e.g., Chuska Acquisition/Retention Rating Scales).

○ *Early Skill Development*

- Early and measured use of high-level thinking skills, creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest, communication skills, and any expertise in specific areas (e.g., technology or foreign language) should be assessed through inventories or checklists completed by teachers and parents. Data from curriculum-based measurements (CBM) or assessments may also be considered when a student demonstrates significantly higher levels of performance in comparison to grade-level expectations (e.g., Consistent performance at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on CBM assessments).

○ *Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness*

- There should always be consideration of whether a student may be demonstrating or experiencing intervening factors that could potentially mask his/her gifted ability. This information can be collected through observations, parent input, teacher input, or demographic information. For instance, one's ethnicity, socio-economic status, English language proficiency, or demonstration of another type of disability should not preclude one from being eligible for gifted services. Those factors should be taken into consideration when determining a student's specially designed instructional needs.

• ***Special Considerations***

○ *Full-Scale IQ of less than 130*

- Consider whether the student demonstrates a significant difference between verbal and nonverbal indices (e.g., potentially gifted in verbal abilities)
- Due to standard error measurement (SEM), one should always take confidence intervals (CI) into account (e.g., does a student's FSIQ fall at or above 130 when CI is considered?)
- Consider whether the student is demonstrating advanced academic performance (Greater than 95% of same-age peers) in one or more areas, which may require specially designed instruction in the form of gifted education

○ *Student demonstrated relative weaknesses in his/her processing speed and/or working memory (relative to other cognitive indices)*

- Consider the General Ability Index (GAI), which is an estimate of a student's general reasoning abilities that are less impacted by working memory and processing speed
- If the GAI is statistically and clinically significantly different from the FSIQ, one may want to report and consider the GAI in addition to the FSIQ

➤ **Gifted Education Programming**

At the Portage Area School District, gifted programming is differentiated based on the needs of each gifted student. There are currently two gifted education teachers in the district. One teacher serves each school building. Gifted programming includes opportunities for acceleration, enrichment or both. The following are examples of gifted programming offered by the Portage Area School District:

- Grade or subject advancement
- Independent study
- Online courses
- Opportunities for gifted students to work with their peers in a resource room
- Incorporation of appropriate community-based educational experiences
- Enrichment in content/interest areas
- Internships and field experiences/job shadowing designed to meet performance level and career interests.
- Dual Enrollment