



## **Recommendations of the Committee on Special and Gifted Education Pertinent to Gifted Education**

The Committee on Special and Gifted Education conducted a series of statewide public roundtables to solicit perspectives on the current Chapter 16 regulations (Special Education for Gifted Students). The roundtables were convened to fulfill a commitment made by the Board, per 22 Pa. Code 16.6(c), to conduct periodic reviews of its regulations governing gifted education as part of the ongoing supervision of how Chapter 16 is interpreted and applied.

Public roundtables were held in Homestead on October 3, 2018, in Norristown on October 9, 2018, and in Harrisburg on November 1, 2018. More than 90 individuals participated in the discussions, including parents of gifted students, gifted educators, gifted coordinators, school psychologists, pupil services directors, special education directors, Intermediate Unit staff, and higher education faculty. The Committee also invited members of the public who were unable to participate in a roundtable to submit comments on Chapter 16 in writing to provide all interested stakeholders with a forum to provide input on the regulation.

Through these proceedings, various concerns were brought to the Committee's attention concerning qualifications of gifted educators, compliance monitoring, screening and evaluation for gifted identification, gifted individualized education plan requirements, use of acceleration for delivering gifted services, caseload assignments, and a lack of dedicated state funding for gifted education. The Committee provided a report of the policy issues identified by stakeholders to all State Board members for review in January 2019.

Stemming from its required periodic review of Chapter 16, the Committee endorses the following:

- During our statewide roundtables, the Committee heard concerns from the field about the lack of dedicated state funding to support gifted education. As noted in the State Board of Education's *Master Plan for Basic Education*, state policy cannot disregard the importance of capacity to ensure successful implementation of its goals. The Committee recognizes that many of the concerns presented by stakeholders during our roundtables, and the ability to address them effectively, are impacted by the resources available to each school district. Thus, the Committee encourages a discussion of "adequacy" as it relates to school funding, followed by the provision of adequate resources for efficient management at state and local levels.
- The Department of Education should create guidance for definitions of acceleration and enrichment.
- The Department of Education should create guidance for comprehensive planning that promotes the use of evidence-based models to deliver services for gifted education.
- The Department of Education should create guidance on differentiation of GIEP requirements for students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

*As adopted by the Special and Gifted Education Committee on March 13, 2019*

- The Department of Education should create guidance on the implementation of the Evaluation and Reevaluation provisions at 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 14, §14.123(b) and §14.124(b) and the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Gifted Multidisciplinary Reevaluation provisions at 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 16, §16.22(j) and §16.22(d) as they pertain to students who may be twice exceptional. The guidance should encourage school districts to follow best practice in conducting both evaluations during a simultaneous 60-calendar day period.
- The Committee requests that the Department of Education maintain timely gifted education resources on its website. During our roundtables, it was brought to the Committee's attention that the compliance monitoring schedule posted on the Department's website was out-of-date. This has been corrected and the Committee appreciates the Department's attention to making this information current.
- The Committee recommends that each school districts post its gifted education plan, developed per 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 16, §16.4, on its website for public access.
- The Department of Education should hire an advisor dedicated to professional development for gifted education. Responsibilities assigned to this individual should include providing professional development to school district and Intermediate Unit staff as designed through a yearly professional development plan.
- The Committee should transmit concerns presented by stakeholders related to qualifications of gifted educators to the Board's Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Committee and should work in collaboration with that Committee to consider these issues as part of the current review of Chapter 49 (Certification of Professional Personnel). Among these concerns were suggestions that all classroom teachers and school administrators receive required training in gifted education that addresses the delivery of gifted services, the psychology of the gifted, and recognizing students who potentially are gifted for identification with training provided either during preservice education, as part of the credits required to earn Level II certification, or through ongoing professional education. Other concerns raised by stakeholders included a suggestion that educators who deliver gifted services be certified in Gifted Education or requiring that teachers of the gifted at least are certified at the level in which they are delivering services.
- The Department of Education should include school districts that have been approved for experimental models in cyclical monitoring.
- The Department of Education and local school districts should update terminology in documents pertaining to gifted education that reference "dual exceptional students" and replace that with the term "twice exceptional students."
- The Department of Education should make a progress report to the State Board of Education on its implementation of recommendations that fall under its purview in the spring of 2020.