

Federal Definition

Historically, giftedness has been defined as children and youth who are identified at the 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. The regulations pertaining to gifted education (pages 25-27 in the policy) are reprinted here.

Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students

Definition: Giftedness is exceptional intellectual abilities and potential for achievement that requires specially designed instruction and/or services beyond those normally provided in the general classroom instruction.

Ability

An eligibility committee will determine that a student is eligible for special education services as a gifted student in grades one (1) through eight (8) when the following criteria are met:

(1) General intellectual ability with a full scale score at the 97th percentile rank or higher on a comprehensive test of intellectual ability with consideration of 1.0 standard error of measurement at the 68% confidence interval;

(2) At least one of the four core curriculum areas of academic achievement at the 90th percentile rank or higher as measured by an individual standardized achievement test, or at least one of the four core curriculum areas of classroom performance demonstrating exceptional functioning as determined during the multidisciplinary evaluation; and

(3) The need for specially designed instruction and/or services beyond those normally provided in the general classroom. Differentiated instruction for gifted students may include enrichment of the content emphasizing the development of higher-level thinking, including critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving skills and/or acceleration of content while the student remains in the chronologically appropriate grade. Related services may include, for example, guidance and counseling. This is not an all-inclusive list.

Achievement



**Policy 2419
continued**

**Special
Considerations
For Eligibility**

**Historically
Under-
represented**

Special Considerations

Intellectual Ability. If the student's general intellectual ability score is unduly affected by performance in one or more composite scores, the evaluator may use, for purposes of eligibility, an alternate general ability index or an individual composite measure as permitted in the test manual or other technical reports. The evaluator must include a statement in the report indicating which score is the better indicator of the student's intellectual abilities and the supporting reasons for this determination..

Historically Under-represented Gifted Population. Historically Under-represented Gifted Population are those students whose giftedness may not be apparent due to low socioeconomic status, a disability in accordance with this policy, or a background that is linguistically or culturally different. If it is determined that the eligibility criteria and/or assessment instruments discriminate against a student because the student belongs to a 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 when the student does not meet the eligibility criteria as described in this policy, 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, rubrics and parent information. The following lists different procedures that the eligibility committee may use in determining eligibility of a student who belongs to a historically under-represented population. This is not an exhaustive list.

- A. Using an alternative assessment to identify giftedness in minority students.
- B. Using a matrix to get a total picture.
- C. Using parent, student, and teacher rating scales to give added information.



**Policy 2419
continued**

**Grades 9-12
Exceptional
Gifted**

**8th-Grade
Review**

**IEP/4-Year and
Transition
Plan**

Exceptional Gifted, Grades Nine through Twelve

Before the end of the eighth grade year, the IEP Team will:

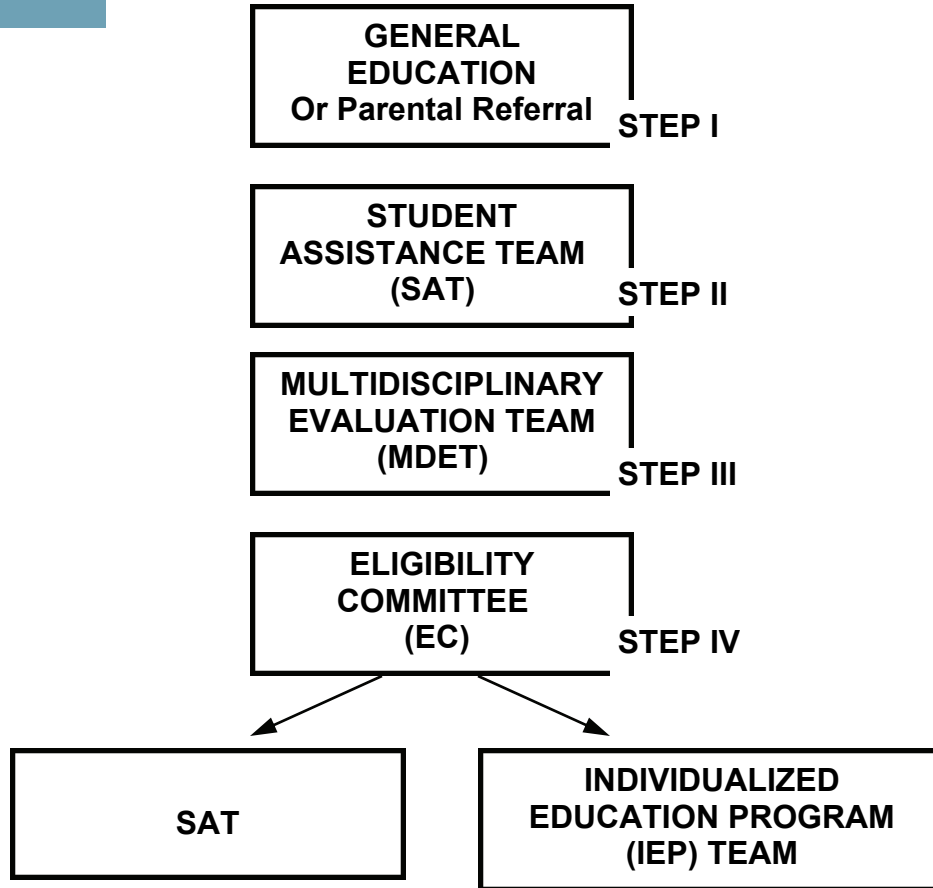
1. Conduct a re-evaluation determination to review existing evaluation data which includes the following:
 - Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the students;
 - Current classroom-based assessments and observations; and
 - Observations by teachers and related service providers; and
2. On the basis of that review, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine that a student is eligible for special education services as an exceptional gifted student in grades nine through twelve using one or more of the following criteria:
 - The eligibility criteria for one or more of the disabilities as defined in this section; and/or
 - The definition for economically disadvantages; and/or
 - The definition for underachievement, which takes into consideration the student's ability level, educational performance and achievement levels; and/or
 - The definition for psychological adjustment disorder as documented by a comprehensive psychological evaluation.
3. 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 must write a four-year transition plan that appropriately addresses the student's educational needs. The four-year education plan replaces the Individualized Student Transition Plan (ISTP) and, includes honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes that must be provided for the student in grades 9-12. The implementation and annual review of this plan are required of the district. The review team must include the student, parent and school representative.



Identification Process At A Glance

The following flow chart takes the identification process from General 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



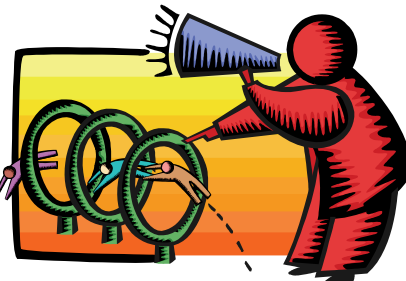
Pre-Referral

Common Behaviors Associated With Giftedness

Looking for Giftedness At Home or In School

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.



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.

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

- 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”

IDENTIFICATION

Pre-Referral

Gifted Students In Some Cultures May Be Overlooked

The Historically Underrepresented Gifted Population

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.



Historically Under Represented

CHART 1.4

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).



**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 him-self/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 Lennon School Ability*, the *Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale*, and the *Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction*.

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

**Bright
Or
Gifted?**

The SAT provides a team problem-solving process for meeting the needs of all students in a heterogeneous classroom. When teachers feel that the support provided in the general classroom for a student who is potentially gifted does not meet the needs of the student, they should refer that student to the SAT, which determines whether additional support is needed or whether the student should be referred to a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team to initiate evaluation.

**Student
Assistance
Team (SAT)**

The Student Assistance Team (SAT)

Referrals Made By a Parent

Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET)

The Initial Evaluation

Before initiating evaluation, the school personnel are required to

- Provide parents with a copy of the Procedural Safeguards brochure
- Review existing data **from general education**
- Provide Prior Written Notice of intent to conduct an initial evaluation, and
- Obtain informed written consent for the proposed action

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 Procedural Safeguards brochure
- Provide Prior Written Notice of intent to conduct an initial evaluation
- Obtain informed written consent within 10 days of receipt of the written referral

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.

After obtaining informed written consent to conduct the initial evaluation, members of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET), consisting of the student's general education 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, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) 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

