

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide an overview of gifted education in West Virginia and to provide information about gifted education in West Virginia for the 2013-2014 school year.



## LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

West Virginia Code §18-20-1 Establishment of special programs and teaching services for exceptional children provides that county boards of education throughout the state establish and maintain special education programs for all "exceptional children." On July 1, 1990, provisions were made for educating the gifted in grades one through eight and the exceptional gifted in grades nine through twelve identified as gifted and at least one of the following: behavior disorder, specific learning disability, psychological adjustment disorder, underachieving, or economically disadvantaged. Each county board of education is mandated to provide gifted education to its students according to guidelines disseminated by the state board of education and consistent with the provisions of Chapter 18 of the state code.

West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students is the legislative rule under which a free appropriate public education, which includes special education and related services to meet their unique educational needs, is extended to all exceptional individuals as a right and not a privilege.

## IDENTIFICATION

Policy 2419 was revised in 2007 to align with the reauthorized and revised federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The revised Policy 2419 defines giftedness as exceptional intellectual abilities and potential for achievement that require specially designed instruction and/or services beyond those normally provided in the general classroom instruction.

An eligibility committee will determine that a student is eligible for special education services as a gifted student in grades one through eight 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;
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, differentiated 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 and specialized nursing procedures. This is not an all-inclusive list.

For exceptional gifted, grades 9 through 12, documentation that a student meets the eligibility criteria for gifted and one or more of the following:

- A. the eligibility criteria for one or more of the disabilities as defined in Policy 2419; and/or
- B. the definition for economically disadvantaged; and/or
- C. the definition for underachieving, which takes into consideration the student's ability level, education performance and achievement levels: and/or
- D. the definition for psychological adjustment disordered as documented by a comprehensive psychological evaluation.

Policy 2419 also provides special considerations for the student whose eligibility criteria and/or assessment instruments discriminate against the student because the student belongs to a historically underrepresented gifted population.

## STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS GIFTED

West Virginia’s Second Month Report, Unduplicated Count by Area of Exceptionality for the 2013-2014 school year indicated that there were 5,350 students identified as gifted and 216 students identified as exceptional gifted. The most common placement options in West Virginia are General Education: Full-Time, wherein the student’s specially designed instruction is delivered outside general education classes for less than 21 percent of the school day. Also used to a lesser extent is General Education: Part-Time, wherein the student’s specially designed instruction is delivered outside the general education classes for at least 21 percent but less than 60 percent of the school day. There are no instances of the Special Education: Separate Class option, wherein the student’s specially designed instruction is delivered outside general classes for more than 60 percent of the school day.

Second Month Report		
Exceptional Gifted	Gifted	GF % of total enrollment
216	5350	1.91%

In West Virginia, the delivery of specially designed instruction in grades one through eight is diverse. Most delivery systems for students identified as gifted offer opportunities for acceleration of the student’s learning pace as well as learning extensions and enrichment to increase the depth and breadth of the student’s knowledge. The most common delivery option is the pull-out/resource room model in which the student is pulled out of a general classroom for some time daily or weekly to work on differentiated curriculum and to interact with other gifted students. Also used in West Virginia but to a much lesser extent is the special class, usually in mathematics and reading/language arts, that is targeted for gifted and above-average learners in those subject areas. Other options include consultation in which the teacher of the gifted provides assistance to the general educator in selecting, modifying, designing materials, providing instructional strategies, providing management and evaluation procedures, and monitoring/evaluating student progress. Another option is co-teaching in which the teacher of the gifted and the general education teacher co-plan, co-teach and co-assess the students in the general classroom.

During the eighth grade year, a reevaluation determination is conducted to determine if a student identified as gifted is eligible for special education services as an exceptional gifted student in grades nine through twelve. If the student is eligible as exceptional gifted, the district must develop an IEP. The specially designed instruction under the IEP is provided by a teacher of gifted education. 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 in grades nine through twelve, including honors/

advanced placement courses when appropriate. Other options for students in grades nine through twelve include: testing-out, early graduation, and dual enrollment.

## GIFTED EDUCATION TEACHERS

West Virginia’s policy requires teachers of students identified as gifted to have certification/endorsement in gifted education. Policy 5202 provides that gifted education endorsement be granted to individuals who hold a professional teaching certificate in a general education field and who have successfully completed any program in gifted education.

The two in-state institutions of higher-education that offer programs in gifted education are Marshall University and West Virginia University. Policy 5100, the policy that approves in-state programs, requires that only individuals who “hold, qualify for or simultaneously complete a specialization in biology, chemistry, early childhood, elementary education, English, general science, mathematics, physics, reading education, reading specialist and/or social studies as recognized on a professional teaching certificate” be admitted to a WV gifted education program.

The determination of a shortage area is made at the county level. A county superintendent may designate an area as a verified shortage area and complete a Form 36 to the West Virginia Department of Education.

## FUNDING

Public school support is now based on an enrollment headcount in each county school district. The level of funding includes the excess costs of special education including gifted education which was previously given a weighted count. The total enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 279,966.

The West Virginia Legislature also allocates \$6,036,822 state monies annually for special education services. This money is distributed to the counties based on their 2nd month enrollment of exceptional students. While this money is not restricted to gifted education, the county school districts may use these state dollars to fund gifted education at their discretion. For the past three years, part of this allocation has been used to fund the special educational costs for students who were placed by WV Department of Health and Human Resources in out-of state facilities.

## STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

the West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children (WVACEEC) was mandated by State Code §18-20-6 and charged in part with advising decision makers regarding the unmet needs of exceptional children which includes students with disabilities and students identified as gifted. The mission adopted by the Council is to influence the State Board of Education, public policy makers, and West Virginia's citizens in ways that continuously improve educational outcomes for children with exceptionalities.

The Council meets monthly in various locations across the state to seek input and gain information about programs and services for exceptional students. Local media, local and regional special education administrators, Parent Educator Resource Centers, principals, superintendents, school board members, school improvement councils, faculty senates and community members are informed about scheduled meetings. The Council produces an annual report to the WV Board of Education with recommendations. More information may be found on the Web site at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/ose/wvadvisorycouncil.html> .