
Manheim Township Gifted Education Guide
Grades K-12



Manheim Township School District
450 Candlewyck Road
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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Mission of the Gifted Program	3
Glossary of Terms	4
Glossary of Acronyms	6
Characteristics of the Gifted Student	7
Gifted Education	8
Criteria for Eligibility	8
Gifted Screening Process	9
Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation	10
Referral	10
Teacher Referral	10
Parent Referral	10
Gifted Evaluation	11
The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team	11
Tools for Evaluation	12
Gifted Written Report	13
Identification	13
Dual Exceptionalities	14
Gifted Individualized Education Plan	14
Components of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan	15
Present Levels of Educational Performance	15
Annual Goals	15
Short-term Learning Outcomes	15
Specially Designed Instruction	16
Support Service	16
Dates	16
Notice of Recommended Assignment	16
Are Signatures Required	16
When to Convene to GIEP	16
Gifted Education Timelines	16
Student Transfers	17
Independent Educational Evaluation	17

Introduction

This Gifted Education Guide is designed to provide parents and guardians an overview about the regulations that govern gifted services in Pennsylvania and how these services are implemented specifically in the Manheim Township School District.

The gifted education of each student is based on the need for programs and services not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. Parents are important and valued members of the school team that help to determine the need for support and services through the evaluation process and each year through the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Program.

The Manheim Township School District strives to help students reach their full potential of educational achievement and develop the whole person in order to accomplish his or her personal best.

We welcome this opportunity to work with you.

Mission of the Gifted Education Program at Manheim Township School District

The Manheim Township School District's Gifted Education Program will provide all identified students with differentiated learning experiences that will enrich, extend, and enhance the core learning for gifted students through challenging learning experiences. Activities support personnel development, responsible citizenship, and life-long learning among our students by:

- Encouraging higher-order thinking skills
- Enhancing creativity and stimulating initiative
- Promoting positive attitudes towards self and others
- Emphasizing the processes of learning



Glossary of Terms

Acceleration:	Access to higher level learning activities and skill development than typically provided in regular education to students of the same age. The pacing, complexity, and depth of planned coursework are modified as indicated by individual needs.
Chapter 4:	State Board of Education regulations for academic standards and assessments.
Chapter 14:	State Board of Education regulations for special education of students with disabilities (22 Pa. Code Chapter 14).
Chapter 16:	Regulations and rules regarding gifted students in Pennsylvania.
Enrichment:	In-depth learning experiences that provide interaction with new ideas, skills and topics that enhance the curriculum. These experiences are based upon individual student strengths, interests, and needs.
Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP):	A GIEP is an academic and strength based document developed by a student's GIEP team, when the student is found to be mentally gifted and in need of specially designed instruction.
Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE):	A systematic process of testing, assessment, and other evaluative processes used by a team to develop a recommendation about whether or not a student is eligible for and in need of gifted education.
Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT):	The GMDT consists of a team of educators, other professional individuals, and the student's parents. The GMDT reviews all formal testing of a student and other relevant evaluation materials and must issue a written report that recommends whether a student is gifted and in need of gifted programming.
Gifted Student:	A student who is exceptional under section 1371 of the school code (24 P.S.S. § 13-71) because the student meets the definition of "mentally gifted" in this section, needs specially designed instruction beyond that required in chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment).

**Notice of Recommended
Educational Assignment
(NORA):**

A Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) must be completed at the conclusion of each Gifted Individualized Education Plan review and any time that a significant change has been made to the Gifted Individualized Education Plan. (22 Pa. Code §16.61(2)). A NORA is also completed when a student is not found to be eligible for or in need of gifted programming.

**Specially Designed
Instruction (SDI):**

Adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum for students who are gifted.

Glossary of Acronyms

AP	Advanced Placement
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment
FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
GIEP	Gifted Individualization Education Plan
GMDE	Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation
GMDT	Gifted Multidisciplinary Team
GWR	Gifted Written Report
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
IU	Intermediate Unit
LEA	Local Education Agency
MDE	Multidisciplinary Evaluation
NORA	Notice of Recommended Assignment
PAGE	Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education



Characteristics of the Gifted Student Versus the High Achiever

Gifted students are not always the students with the highest achievement or best grades. The following provides a comparison of common traits for gifted students and high achievers (Szabos, J., 1989).

High Achiever	Gifted Student
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail
Is in the top group	Is beyond the top group
Listens with interest	Has strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Has synchronous development	Has asynchronous development



Gifted Education

Gifted Education is defined in Chapter 16 of the School Code, which defines the rules and regulations concerning gifted education in Pennsylvania. Gifted education is defined as follows:

Specially designed instruction to meet the needs of a gifted student that 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, by referral or by contract*
- *Provided by an 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 GIEP.*

Criteria For Eligibility

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) defines a “gifted student” as a child “with outstanding intellectual and creative ability that require specially designed programs and/or supports not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.” Specifically, a gifted student is “a child with an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to the gifted program when other educational criteria in the profile of a person strongly indicate gifted ability.

Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include:

- 1) A year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects as measured by nationally normed and validated achievement tests able to accurately reflect gifted performance. Subject results shall yield academic instruction levels in all academic subject areas. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (1))
- 2) An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability. (22 Pa. Code§16.21(e) (2))
- 3) Demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by excellence of products, portfolio or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (3))
- 4) Early and measured use of high level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communications skills, foreign language aptitude or technology expertise. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (4))

- 5) Documented, observed, validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability), gender or race bias, or socio-cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities. Pa.Code. §16.21(e) (5))

Gifted Screening Process

The Manheim Township School District engages in a number of formal processes annually to identify potential candidates for gifted education services. This systematic screening process fulfills the District's obligation to conduct child find activities for students who may need services or instruction not ordinarily provided in the general education curriculum. Currently, all students are universally screened in grades 1 and 3 based on grade-level reading and math assessments as well as teacher input regarding characteristics associated with gifted learners. The first grade screening is completed in February, and the third grade screening is completed in December. For all other grades, the gifted screening process is initiated through parent request and/or teacher recommendation. Once a student has been recommended for a gifted screen, the following steps are implemented.

1. The school counselor contacts the student's parents about the screen and sends home the Permission to Screen for gifted, which includes a brief cognitive assessment and teacher completion of a gifted rating form.
2. Once the signed permission is returned, the school counselor administers a brief cognitive assessment and gives the classroom teacher a gifted rating form to complete.
3. Scores from the cognitive assessment, gifted rating form, and school grades are entered into a Gifted Screen Matrix to determine whether or not further gifted evaluation is indicated.
 - a. Students with an IQ score of 130 or higher are referred on for further evaluation.
 - b. Students with an IQ score between 120 and 129 may be referred on based on school grades and teacher ratings.
4. The school counselor shares results with the student's parents/guardian over the phone and completes a Gifted Screen Report, which is sent to parents and placed in the student's cumulative file.
5. If the student is recommended for further testing, the school counselor notifies the school psychologist who then initiates the Gifted Evaluation Process.
6. If the student is not recommended for further testing, the parent is notified that they still have the right to request a comprehensive gifted evaluation and must submit their request in writing to the building principal.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation

Chapter 16 defines the referral and evaluation process for determining if a student meets the criteria for mentally gifted and needs specially designed instruction (§16.22).

Referral

A student's teacher, administrator, or parent/guardian may refer students in any grade level for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE). The process generally starts with the gifted screen but can begin at the formal evaluation level, particularly if the child has already been through the screening and/or evaluation process.

Teacher Referral

A teacher referral for a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation occurs when the student, regardless of any disability, is suspected of being gifted due to the student demonstrating characteristics consistent with the definition of mentally gifted; or a performance level, which exceeds that of other students in the general education classroom. The referral should be submitted to the school counselor who then initiates the gifted screening process. If the student does not qualify for further testing but the teacher feels additional evaluation is warranted, the teacher should notify the school counselor who will consult with the school psychologist to determine whether or not there may be factors masking gifted ability and if further evaluation is warranted. If further evaluation is warranted, the school psychologist will initiate the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) process.

Parent Referral

When parents suspect their child is gifted, they may request in writing an evaluation at any time, with the limit of one (1) request per calendar year.

When this request is made, parents are informed about the screening process and asked if they are willing to start with a gifted screen. If so, the gifted screening process is initiated; otherwise, the gifted evaluation process is initiated.

As per, 22 PA. Code § 16.22 (c), if a parent makes the request for a gifted evaluation verbally, the school district must inform them to put their request in writing to the building principal or the Director of Pupil Services. When the District receives the written request, the parents will receive Permission to Evaluate form within ten (10) calendar days of the written request. The District must receive a parent's signature on the form in order to continue with the evaluation process. Parents will also be asked to provide information that will be included in the evaluation including a gifted rating form and questionnaire.

Gifted Evaluation

When the District's screening process indicates that a student has potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted or a performance level which exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom or a parent(s) suspects their child is gifted and requests an evaluation in writing, the District will initiate a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) as described in Title 22 Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 16 to be conducted by the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT). The GMDE must be sufficient in scope and depth to investigate information relevant to the student's suspected giftedness, including academic functioning, learning strengths, and educational needs.

The evaluation process must take into consideration any Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness. "Documented, observed validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a Second Language, learning disability, physical impairment, emotional disability, gender or race bias, or socio-cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities." (22 PA. Code §16.21 (e) (5))

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT)

Multidisciplinary evaluations are conducted by GMDTs. The GMDT is anyone with information about the student's educational needs and strengths and consists of the student's parents, a certified school psychologist, other professionals familiar with the student's educational experience and performance, one or more of the student's current teachers and, when possible, persons familiar with the student's cultural background.

"The GMDT has the responsibility of contributing information to the GMDE that:

- *Assures that comprehensive data has been collected on the student to indicate academic instructional levels, thinking skills and other learning skill levels, rate of acquisition/retention for mastery of new content/skills, academic interests/strengths, and, as appropriate, developmental levels (young students) and career goals.*
- *Provides clarifying information about the ability of children who score below IQ 130 (within the standard of measurement for the test) and have strong indications of gifted performance.*
- *Determines if additional assessment, such as out-of-level academic testing, is needed. When normed and validated individualized standardized testing is used, a clear explanation of subtest results should be part of the Gifted Written Report. Such explanation may include:*
 - *Mastery level*
 - *Functional/instructional level and frustration level*
 - *Grade level equivalencies*
 - *District performance criteria for competency*

- *Mastery and excellence of output*
- *Comprehensive developmental levels in subtests*
- *Implications in the learning process of the student*
- *Recommends whether a student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction.*
- *Recommends appropriate integrated programming for a student if there is more than one area of exceptionality.*
- *Provides information about the student's adaptive and social behavior if this is appropriate.*

The Gifted Written Report (GWR) should be compiled based on a complete evaluation and carry the recommendations of all individuals participating, whether or not the individuals are in concurrence. The determination of giftedness, i.e., eligibility under Chapter 16, resides with the GMDT, which includes the parents.” (Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Guidelines August 2010, pages 13-14).

Tools for Evaluation

A gifted evaluation is a multidisciplinary process which considers information from multiple sources including school records, parent input, teacher feedback, and standardized assessments of the student’s cognitive abilities and academic achievement. Eligibility decisions are based on a compilation of the data rather than based on a single test score or piece of data.

- School records: progress reports, state/local assessment data (PSSA scores, GRADE scores, CDT scores)
- Parent input: developmental history regarding early and measured use of high level thinking skills, behaviors observed that are associated with mental giftedness (gifted rating scale), motivation and persistence for learning, interests, foreign language and/or technology proficiency
- Teacher input: student performance in regard to grade level expectations, rates of acquisition and achievement, accommodations in place (i.e., classroom enrichment), behaviors or characteristics associated with mental giftedness (gifted rating scale). Before providing information for the evaluation, the teacher should have worked with the student for at least (1) month.
- Standardized norm-referenced assessment of cognitive ability, which is administered and interpreted by the school psychologist. There are multiple instruments that can be selected based on characteristics of the student, situation or examiner preference. Possible measures include but are not limited to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-V, Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-IV, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Test-IV, Stanford Binet Intelligence Scales-V, Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities-IV, Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales-2, Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children-II, and Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability.

- Standardized norm-referenced assessment of academic achievement, which is administered and interpreted by the school psychologist. There are multiple instruments that can be selected based on characteristics of the student, situation or examiner preference. Possible measures include but are not limited to the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-III, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-III, Woodcock Johnson Tests of Academic -IV.
- Curriculum based assessment of math and language arts may be administered by the school psychologist, school counselor, gifted teacher, and/or the classroom teacher.

Gifted Written Report

Gifted Written Report - The Gifted Written Report (GWR) brings together the findings from the evaluation or reevaluation concerning the student's educational needs (strengths). *"The report must make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, indicate the basis of those recommendations, include recommendation for the student's programming, and indicate the names and positions of the members of the GMDT."* (22 PA. Code § 16.22(h)).

A copy of the Gifted Written Report must be presented to parents no later than 60 school days after parent permission is received.

Identification

According to federal and state guidelines, determination of gifted ability must be based on multiple sources of information and cannot be based on IQ score alone.

The term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria as set forth in this chapter and in Department Guidelines indicate gifted ability and demonstrate a need for specially designed instruction. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. Deficits in memory or processing speed, as indicated by testing, cannot be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted special education. The determination of mentally gifted must include an assessment by a certified school psychologist (22 Pa. Code §16.21(d)). A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability utilizing the following multiple criteria below:

Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include:

- A year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects as measured by nationally normed and validated achievement tests able to accurately reflect gifted performance. Subject results shall yield academic instruction levels in all academic subject areas. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (1))
- An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (2))
- Demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by excellence of products, portfolio or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (3))
- Early and measured use of high level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communications skills, foreign language aptitude or technology expertise. (22 Pa. Code §16.21(e) (4))
- Documented, observed, validated or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English as a second language, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability), gender or race bias, or socio-cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities. Pa.Code. §16.21(e) (5))

The Manheim Township School District utilizes a matrix as well as clinical judgement when determining eligibility for gifted education. The matrix includes cognitive ability assessment data, which accounts for 70% of the matrix points, academic achievement assessment data, which accounts for 18% of the matrix points, gifted rating scale data, which accounts for 7% of the matrix points, and classroom grades which account for 6% of the matrix points. Students earning 70% of the points or more on the matrix are found eligible for gifted education. Clinical judgement is used when there are factors masking gifted ability such as English language proficiency or anxiety.

Dual Exceptionalities

The term dual exceptionalities refers to a child who is identified as gifted under Chapter 16 and as a student with a disability under Chapter 14. If a student is both gifted and eligible for special education, the procedures in Chapter 14 take precedence. For students who are identified as twice exceptional, the needs established under gifted status must be addressed and fully outlined in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) along with the needs established as part of the student's disability. In cases such as this, Manheim Township School District educational teams take great care to ensure that the both the giftedness and the disability are fully addressed as part of the student's educational program.

Gifted Individualized Education Plan

The Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) is a yearly summary document that includes all curricular areas in which a gifted child is to receive education that is adapted and modified to meet his/her individual needs. The GIEP is a strength based document only. Acceleration or enrichment, or both, are appropriate options for a GIEP. The options provided to gifted students must enable them to learn at different rates, to learn difficult material earlier, and to think at a level different from their classmates.

GIEP meetings must be held at least annually. In addition, a GIEP meeting must be held when a parent or teacher requests a meeting to develop, review, or revise a student's individualized education program. The school district must take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of the student attend the GIEP meeting or have the opportunity to participate. An invitation to the GIEP meeting must be provided to the parents at least ten (10) calendar days in advance of the meeting. The meeting should be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

How can parents can contribute to the GIEP process?

The parents of a gifted student are expected to be equal participants, along with school personnel, in developing, reviewing, and revising the student's GIEP. The parents, with the child's involvement, can contribute to the GIEP process by providing the following information:

- Child's academic strengths.
- Child's talents and creative abilities.
- Evidence of leadership.
- Educational activities child pursues outside of school - projects, studies, experiments.
- Expertise the child demonstrates.
- Interests of the student.
- Special experiences - honors.
- Number of repetitions necessary to learn new skills.

Components of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan

Present Levels of Educational Performance establishes the extent of gifted potential, academic functioning levels, the child's rates of acquisition/retention, and performance levels. Information would include the child's intellectual/academic assessments, grades, aptitudes and abilities, strengths, interests, and needs.

Annual Goals are to be developed from the present levels of performance and be reasonably calculated for the student to meaningful educational benefit and progress within one year.

Short-term Learning Outcomes are the actions and activities that will help the child reach the annual goals, evaluation criteria to determine when the child has achieved the annual goals, and the timelines. The outcomes should include what the student will produce, how he/she will apply the skills, or what real outcome will be achieved as a result of their engaging in a study, activity, or subject.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) are the adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials, or a specialized curriculum. Specially designed instruction consists of planning and implementing varied approaches to content, process, and product modification in response to the student's interests, ability levels, readiness, and learning needs.

Support Service is any service that is needed to help a gifted student benefit from or gain access to gifted education. Support services could include, but are not limited to the following services: career guidance, counseling services, transportation, technology education, and flexible grouping.

Dates indicate when the services will begin and the anticipated duration, not to exceed one year.

Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) must be issued at the conclusion of each GIEP meeting and any time significant changes have been made to the document. The NORA provides the parent/guardian with opportunity to agree or disagree with the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of gifted education as written in the GIEP.

Are Signatures Required on the GIEP?

No. Signatures are not required on the GIEP. Chapter 16 regulations do not require a signature on the GIEP, on the names and positions of the participants. The NORA indicates if parents/guardians agree or disagree with recommended program.

When to Convene a GIEP

The building level team must convene a GIEP meeting when the following occurs:

- An evaluation has just been completed.
- The team must meet annually (more frequently if necessary) to review the GIEP of each gifted student.
- A reevaluation has just been completed.
- A member of the GIEP team -parent, teacher, counselor, or administrator - has requested a meeting.

Gifted Education Timelines

- The GIEP shall be developed within 30 calendar days of the Gifted Written Report (GWR).
- The GIEP must be implemented no more than 10 calendar days after it is signed or, if a new GIEP, at the start of the following school year if completed less than 30 school days before the last day of scheduled classes.
- Parents have 10 calendar days to respond to a NORA sent by mail or 5 calendar days to a NORA presented in person at the GIEP conference.
- If parents receive the notice in person and approve within 5 calendar days, the district may not implement the GIEP for at least 5 calendar days.
- IEP meetings are at least yearly and more frequent if needed. Any GIEP team member can reconvene a GIEP meeting at any time.

Student Transfers

If a student moves to the Manheim Township School District from another Pennsylvania school District, Manheim Township will implement the existing GIEP to the best extent possible or will provide the services and programs specified in an interim GIEP agreed to by the parents until a new GIEP is developed and implemented.

However, if a student who has been identified gifted in another state moves into the district, Manheim Township will conduct a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation.

Independent Educational Evaluation

Parents have the right to an independent educational evaluation of their child at their own expense. This evaluation must be conducted by a qualified professional who is not an employee of the school district. The results of the independent evaluation must be considered by the school district in any decision made with respect to the provision of a gifted education. The independent evaluation by itself is not sufficient to determine gifted ability and need. The procedures for collecting data from a multidisciplinary team will be followed and the school district will compile a gifted written report.

