



FAQ's on Gifted Education

Why do students who are gifted need services?

Whether or not a student needs services is a determination that is made by the IEP team after the student has been evaluated and met the established criteria. For those students who do demonstrate need, they most often have not been challenged by the curriculum that is offered at their grade level. The services that are determined to be needed can be delivered in the classroom with appropriate supports and services, in a pull-out program, in another classroom for specific subjects, or in a self-contained classroom setting. It is a determination of the IEP team what services are needed, where they will be delivered, and by whom.

Why address the social/emotional needs of students who are gifted?

Child development is often not a level process for many children. For children who are gifted the difference between their intellectual ability and their emotional development may be significant. There is a level of frustration that can exist between what they know and what they can accomplish. The IDEA regulation CFR 300.532 (g) states that, "The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities." The regulation does not say they must be, but if the student is demonstrating difficulty that may be attributed to their social/emotional needs, those needs should be assessed and addressed. The IEP team may request a psychological evaluation, and write IEP goals and objectives that will address the need.



How are children identified as gifted in the state of New Mexico?

New Mexico has guidelines that determine the need for services outside of the regular classroom curriculum. They must be assessed in intellectual ability and qualify and qualify in one other area: academic achievement, creativity, and/or critical thinking. The specific regulations that dictate how we determine eligibility can be found on the Public Education Department website at: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/> which you can use to connect to the state regulations on special education or you can directly access the document through: <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title06/06.031.0002.htm> and look for section 6.31.2.12 - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

The Public Education Commission (PEC) regulations currently elaborate on what constitutes eligibility and are listed in the citation above. We are also piloting two alternate identification instruments that also assess in these four areas (intellect, achievement, creativity, and critical thinking) and hopefully will enable us to more accurately identify and serve our underrepresented populations.

How long should it take for my child to be identified and receive services for gifted education?

The IDEA regulations that speak to the length of time that should transpire between referral, testing, identification and the beginning of service should be “reasonable.” The specifics of that timeline may be spelled out in the district policies. Whatever policies the district implements as a timeline for the determination of eligibility should be uniform for all referrals to special education.

At what age should my child be tested?

The regulations state that a continuum of services must be available for Kindergarten through 12th grade. When your child should be referred and possibly tested is a determination made by the school and the parent.



Is a student who is gifted a straight “A” student?

Not necessarily. There are gifted students whose academic achievement crosses all areas (language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science). There are many who may excel in only one or two areas. There are students that are gifted and have qualified outside of academic achievement that may not have any particular academic strength but use their intellectual ability in other ways. These students display exceptional ability(s) in the visual or performing arts or have critical thinking skills that they demonstrate through problem solving opportunities. Another type of student that may qualify for gifted services may also have a disability that interferes with their ability to perform well in certain curricular areas.

What’s the difference between a high achiever and being gifted?

Students who are high achievers are those who typically are good students, do what is expected of them, please teachers with their attention, and like school for what it is. Gifted students are often more of a challenge to teachers, by always asking questions, questioning what is being offered, and may be less inclined to do what is asked of them. The attached document - *Note the Difference* - will give you more of an idea of the difference.



What is the least restrictive environment for a student who is gifted?

A continuum of service is required in each district. This means that services may be provided solely in the regular education classroom with appropriate aids and services all the way to a full day self-contained classroom. The individual student needs will dictate how, where and by whom the services are provided. There is research that supports the idea that the students who are gifted need to be in contact with others of like ability a portion of their time in school. This provides an opportunity to share ideas and interests that may be different or more in depth than their general education classmates.

What kinds of services are available for students who are gifted?

The services that a gifted student needs will be a determination of the IEP team as they write the IEP. Some of the most common ways to serve gifted students is through compacting and telescoping of curriculum, pull-out programs that address academic strengths, enrichment, acceleration, grade-skipping, mentorship, and concurrent enrollment. In some cases, acceleration means content acceleration, which brings more complex material to the student at his or her current grade level. In other cases, acceleration means student acceleration, which brings the student to the material by shifting placement.

Is there any funding to serve gifted students?

Gifted students in New Mexico are under the special education umbrella and are funded according to their level of service. The only difference between disabled student funding and gifted funding is that a portion of the disabled student funds comes from the federal government. As with all special education students, gifted students are funded first as a regular education student and then additional funds are provided depending on the level of service that is required to meet their identified needs. *The total add-on funds allocated to the district are the same for all students who have been identified for special education services.*



Submit other questions for posting on this site to: psutcliffe@ped.state.nm.us