



Definition and Rationale for Gifted Education

What is "gifted"? The term is specifically defined in some state codes, but may be called "high ability," "talented," or other designation. The field of study devoted to understanding these children and how to provide for their development is called "gifted education."

NAGC definition: "*Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains.*" (<http://www.nagc.org/WhatisGiftedness.aspx>)

NOTE: In schools, the term gifted recognizes exceptional ability in aptitude or achievement that requires appropriately differentiated services in order for the student(s) to develop to their potential.

Rationale: Regardless of the state and the varying code and rule requirements

- Developing and nurturing high performance supports the future prosperity of our nation, state, community, and of individuals.
- Most gifted students are not developing to the level their potential would indicate is possible. (http://edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2011/20110920_HighFlyers/Do_High_Flyers_Maintain_Their_Altitude_FINAL.pdf)
- In the normal distribution of ability and/or of achievement, 68% score near the mean; students far from the mean require different educational experiences to develop optimally or at all.
- All children deserve the opportunity to learn something new each day.
- Schools have a responsibility to meet the learning needs of all students. Gifted children are found in all income, cultural, and racial groups; gifted children may also have one or more disabilities.
- Most teachers say their brightest students are bored and under challenged. (<http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/high-achieving-students-in.html>)
- Most teachers have no training in working with gifted learners. (http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2008/200806_highachievingstudentsintheeraofnochildleftbehind/20080625-farkas-pp.pdf)
- In classroom observations, most learning activities are not differentiated for gifted learners. (<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=538>)

Considerations

- Multifaceted systems are necessary for identification to find *all* students with advanced potential from *all* income, racial, and cultural groups to be certain we are accountable to developing their potential.
- It is unrealistic to expect high school students with advanced potential to perform at high levels if they have not had previous and continuous opportunity to work at an advanced level. (<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddleSummary.pdf>)
- Identifying students with advanced potential and providing services beginning in Kindergarten is needed or high performance from many is lost. (www.jkcf.org/assets/files/0000/0084/Achievement_Trap.pdf)
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be modified to meet the needs of gifted learners.
- Assessment systems need to be designed to measure growth for all students, including those capable of above-grade level achievement.
- The performance of advanced students needs to be monitored to ensure continued learning gains.

Implications: The responsibility is shared

- States: expect and monitor annual growth of all student groups, including the gifted, and report that growth by the disaggregated group.
- Districts: design appropriate policies, services, and professional development for teachers of the gifted.
- Buildings: implement services and assess teacher effectiveness in developing potential of gifted students.
- Teachers: provide appropriately differentiated learning experiences for gifted students.
- Parents: become educated about how to develop talents and good work habits in gifted children.