

## **ROCKWOOD AREA SD**

439 Somerset Ave

Gifted Education Plan Assurances (Chapter 16) | 2022 - 2025

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### **CHAPTER 16**

Chapter 16 of the PA Code specifies how Pennsylvania will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. Gifted students are to be provided with quality gifted education services and programs. Requirements for Gifted Education Plans can be found in the Pennsylvania Code (22 Pa Code §16.32).

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.13(e) (relating to strategic plans) and 22 Pa. Code § 16.4, each school district shall develop and implement a gifted education plan every 6 years.

- a. The plan shall include the process for identifying children who are gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, as well as the gifted special education programs offered.
- b. The school districts shall make its gifted education plan available for public inspection and comment for a minimum of 28 days prior to approval of the plan by the school district's board of directors.
- c. Each school district shall provide, as the Department may require, reports of students, personnel and program elements, including the costs of the elements, which are relevant to the delivery of gifted education. (22 Pa. Code § 16.4)

1. Describe your district's public notice procedures conducted annually to inform the public of the gifted education services AND programs offered (newspaper, student handbooks, school website, etc.).

The Rockwood Area School District annually conducts awareness activities to inform the public and parents/guardians of school-age children residing within its boundaries, enrolled both in public and nonpublic schools, about gifted education services and programs, as well as how to request these services and programs. The district distributes information by using a public outreach awareness system that can reach all parts of the community, including parents/guardians of school-age children not enrolled in district schools. Written notice about the district's gifted education services and programs may be provided annually by: 1. Publication in local newspapers and other media. 2. Printing in district publications and/or literature, including student handbooks. 3. Posting on the district website. The annual public notification will include the following: 1. A description of gifted services and programs available from the district, and the needs of children served by these services and programs. 2. The purpose, frequency and processes used in screening activities. 3. A description of how to request that the district initiate screening and evaluation activities for a child. 4. An explanation of the confidentiality protections for information regarding a specific child.

2. Describe your district's process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction.

The Rockwood Area School District will locate and identify all students of school age residing within its boundaries who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The district will screen all students and evaluate those who are thought to be gifted based on information gathered through screenings and other sources of information (e.g., parent input, teacher referral for evaluation). The Rockwood Area School District provides a variety of opportunities for the screening and evaluation of students thought to be gifted. Students in Grade 2 are annually screened using an evidence-based, group cognitive ability screening assessment, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Students throughout the elementary school (K-3) are monitored for superior academic achievement in both literacy and math by a bi-weekly review of student data in an ongoing fashion throughout the school year. Data team meetings to review literacy and math scores for students continue in a bi-weekly schedule for upper elementary students as well (4-6th grades). Throughout K-12, screening process activities within the district may include, but are not limited to: 1. Readiness/Developmental tests. 2. Achievement tests. 3. Ability tests. 4. Group intelligence tests. 5. Anecdotal information – parent/guardian, educator, other. 6. Subject area assessment (i.e., student portfolio). 7. Syllabus-based examination. 8. Curriculum-based assessment. 9. College aptitude test. 10. PSAT/SAT, CLEP test. 11. Extracurricular academic performance/achievements. 12. Rating scales. 13. Interest inventories. 14. Cumulative records. 15. Enrollment records. 16. Parent inventories. 17. Health records. 18. Report cards.

3. Describe your district's procedures for determining ELIGIBILITY (through MULTIPLE CRITERIA) and NEED (based on ACADEMIC STRENGTH) for potentially mentally gifted students (EVALUATION).

Rockwood Area School District utilizes a Gifted Screening and Identification Matrix system in determining eligibility and need for gifted support services for students K-12 within the district. Utilization of a matrix system with multiple criteria for eligibility indicates that determination of gifted ability is not based solely on IQ score alone, which creates a comprehensive evaluation for students who may be in need of specially designed instruction in the form of gifted support services. Additionally, it should be noted that within psychoeducational testing for cognitive ability, deficits in working memory and/or processing speed will not be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted education – variable forms of cognitive ability can be utilized to determine ability, including the General Ability Index (GAI), which rule out the impact of cognitive proficiency on overall ability level/IQ. Determination of gifted support eligibility will include an assessment by a certified school psychologist, using multiple forms of evidence accumulated through a psychoeducational evaluation. Multiple Eligibility Criteria within the Gifted Screening and Identification Matrix that are completed prior to a full psychoeducational evaluation (Levels 1 and 2) for giftedness include:

- Demonstrated Classroom Achievement – Grades across subject areas for the student's current grade level
- Curriculum Based Measures – Achievement – Scores across standards-based assessments administered through the grade level
- Teacher Input and Referral – Teacher input and ratings across various areas of classroom performance commonly correlated with students eligible for gifted support
- Intelligence Screening – Cognitive Screening Measure

Should a student meet criteria within the initial levels of the Rockwood SD Gifted Screening and Identification Matrix, permission for a full gifted evaluation is issued. Additional testing is completed following parent consent for a gifted evaluation. A final report indicating the outcome of the psychoeducational evaluation for gifted support services is provided to parents. Parents/Guardians who suspect their child is gifted may request a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) at any time, with a limit of one (1) request per school term. The request must be in writing, and can be sent to the child's principal and/or the school psychologist. Teachers may also refer students they suspect as being eligible for gifted supports to the school psychologist and/or grade level data team for further review within the Rockwood SD Gifted Screening and Identification Matrix. The school psychologist and/or student data team will issue a permission to evaluate when a parent/guardian suspects that the student is gifted and completes a written request for a gifted evaluation. A permission to evaluation may also be issued to parents should one or more of the following apply:

1. A request for evaluation has been made by the student's parents/guardians, as described above.
2. The student is thought to be gifted based on the district's screening of the student, which indicates high potential consistent with the definition of mentally gifted, or a performance level that exceeds that of other students in the regular classroom.
3. A hearing officer or judicial decision orders a GMDE.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE): Prior to conducting an

initial GMDE, the district will comply with the required parental notice and consent requirements through a permission to evaluate issued by the district. The district will make the Permission to Evaluate form readily available for the purpose of parent/guardian requests. If a request is made orally to any professional employee or district administrator, that individual will provide a copy of the Permission to Evaluate form to the parent/guardian within ten (10) calendar days of the oral request. A GMDE will be conducted by a Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT) formed on the basis of the student's need and comprised of the following: 1. Student's parents/guardians. 2. Certified school psychologist. 3. Individuals familiar with the student's educational experience and performance. 4. One or more of the student's current teachers. 5. Individuals trained in appropriate evaluation techniques. 6. Individuals familiar with the student's cultural background, when possible. A single member of the GMDT may meet two (2) or more of these qualifications. 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. GMDE procedures will include opportunities to acquire sufficient information to make a determination as to whether a student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The evaluation process will include information from parents/guardians, and others who interact with the student on a regular basis, and may include information from the student if appropriate. The GMDE may include but is not limited to, information from: Ability tests; Nationally normed individualized standardized achievement assessments; Classwork samples; Curriculum-based assessments; Cumulative review tests; Performance-based skills, as demonstrated in portfolios, products, competitions, or other demonstrations; Teacher observation; Noteworthy achievements; Parental input (should include student's abilities, interests, and needs as they relate to the instructional setting). Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability outlined within the comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation and gifted eligibility matrix include: 1. Scores falling at or above the 95th+ percentile on nationally-normed and validated achievement tests, completed with the school psychologist. 2. An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills, which may be derived through teacher input and observation. 3. Demonstrated achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by the excellence of products, portfolio, or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment. Achievement at the gifted level is expected to fall at or above the 95th percentile. 4. Evidence of early skill development and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communications skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise. This information is often derived through teacher input and observation, teacher ratings, and work samples. 5. Documented, observed, validated, or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English Learner status, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8, gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities. Parents and teachers are given the opportunity to provide information related to these factors within the evaluation. Upon completion of the full psychoeducational evaluation for gifted support services, a report outlining the student's scores within the matrix is issued to parents.

Should the student present with a need for specially designed instruction, a Gifted Individual Education Plan (GIEP) is developed by the district's gifted support teacher, and a meeting is held with all GIEP Team Members to outline a plan of supports and programming for the student.

4. Describe the gifted programs\* that are offered to provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment, or both. \*The word "programs" refers to the CONTINUUM OF SERVICES, not one particular option.

Gifted Programming The goal of the gifted support program in Rockwood Area District is to encourage the development of intellectual and/or creative ability for the exceptional student and to provide special services and programs not ordinarily provided in regular education. Programming options are based upon the individual strengths and needs of each student identified as gifted, as outlined in their Gifted Individual Education Plan (GIEP). These options are agreed upon by the GIEP team prior to implementation at the team meeting described above in the evaluation/eligibility section. Rockwood Area Elementary Instructional Supports for Gifted Students: Gifted instruction provides students with opportunities to enrich learning and develop knowledge of core content. Instructional pull-out during the school year for all gifted students is one full day of gifted instruction per month. The Gifted Educator develops and implements the gifted support instruction during these time frames. Instruction is based on the individual student areas of strength which require specially designed instruction, such as literature and/or mathematics. Students also participate in extension activities that are tied to the goals of instruction. Classroom instruction is modified by the regular education teacher, through support of the gifted support teacher and other GIEP team members, to meet the needs of gifted students throughout the school day in the regular education classroom. Students at the elementary level can be provided with acceleration or advancement in grade and subjects, a compacted curriculum, and online advanced placement opportunities that will transfer to higher learning at the elementary and middle school level. The elementary pull-out program allows students to interact with peers of similar abilities while pursuing enrichment activities based on their individual educational programs and interest. Pull-out offerings range from interdisciplinary units on subjects, such as historical periods or figures, architecture, space, environmental science, or other areas including major conceptual themes to single-subject study units. Problems solving activities, such as puzzles, thinking games, and similar deductive reasoning activities are offered, as well as experience with problems in authentic situations (e.g., brainstorming ideas for vacant city buildings). Teachers respond to enrichment needs by providing activities that integrate and correlate aspects of math, science, reading, history, creative writing, literature analysis, communication through oral and written expression, skills of researching, and application of learning to new situations. For students in grades 7-12, Rockwood Area School District offers enrichment through a wide range of courses, programs, and extracurricular activities to challenge academically gifted students. Secondary

students may choose among various college preparatory courses in each department, and, if they qualify, may take advanced level courses. College in High School courses are offered to those students who qualify and who wish to acquire college credits and/or exemption from introductory college courses for course work taken in high school. Courses in world languages offer options for cultural and linguistic growth. Art electives further develop a student's creativity and imagination. The Music Department offers instrumental and vocal performing opportunities. Students interested in computers or other technical areas may take advantage of special programs offered through the Somerset County Technology Center. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, the student newspaper, yearbook, Student Council, forensics/debate, theatrical experiences, honor societies, as well as many sports teams, which allow students to develop leadership and character skills. Support services also include counseling concerning scheduling, testing (PSAT, SAT, etc.), study skills, career guidance and assistance with college applications, financial aid, and many scholarship opportunities.

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Date