

Frequently Asked Questions Gifted and Talented Services

1. How does New Jersey Administrative Code define a gifted and talented student?

The regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1) define gifted and talented students as: *"Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities."*

2. How should students be identified?

The regulations require that students be compared to their chronological peers in the local school district. New Jersey does not have state-level criteria such as mandated tests or assessments, grade point averages, or IQ scores. Local school districts must use **multiple measures** to identify students.

3. What does the state mean by "multiple measures?"

District boards of education must make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process for gifted and talented students that includes **multiple measures**, including but not limited to, achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; intelligence testing; parent, student, and/or teacher recommendation; and other appropriate measures. Local school districts should ensure that the identification methodology is developmentally appropriate, nondiscriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered (e.g., using math achievement to identify students for a math program).

4. What services are required?

All public school districts must have a board-approved gifted and talented identification process and provide services for identified students enrolled in the grades of that school district. The regulations require that identification and services be made available to students in grades K-12 should any students meet the requirements.

5. When should districts identify students for giftedness?

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)5 ii requires district boards of education **to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students**. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten or upon entrance to the school or district. There is a misconception that schools are not required to identify students prior to grade three or that students who are new to a district must complete a state-mandated waiting period before they can be evaluated. That information is inaccurate. Additionally, local school districts are not obligated to identify students prior to their enrollment in the public school (e.g., three-year olds, students enrolled in community early childhood programs or private kindergartens). Local school districts are not obligated to identify students attending nonpublic schools.

6. Can a student be gifted in more than one content area?

Yes. If a district uses appropriate and multiple measures to identify students, it is likely that students will be identified as having multiple strengths and services should be provided to address the identified strengths.

7. We don't administer standardized tests until grade three. How can we identify students in grades K-2?

District boards of education are required to identify students in grades K-12. The state does not require the use of standardized tests, including the NJASK-3, as part of the identification process. Local districts can identify students using other assessments, including student products, screening checklists, and other identification methods.

8. Must PreK students be identified? Must a district identify students who are not age-eligible for school entrance?

No, the regulations are applicable to K-12 students who are enrolled in a public school.

9. What types of instructional accommodations must be made for students identified as gifted and talented?

The regulations require that district boards of education provide appropriate K-12 services for gifted and talented students. This includes appropriate curricular and instructional modifications for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environment. District boards of education must also take into consideration the *PreK-Grade 12 National Gifted Program Standards* of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted and talented students. A copy of those standards was sent to every chief school administrator and is available at www.nagc.org. In addition, each curriculum framework developed by the NJDOE provides general, as well as content-specific information on gifted education (e.g., terminology, examples of appropriate practices). The frameworks can be accessed at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/frameworks/> or at www.nj.gov/njded/aps/cccs.

10. Does the state require a specific program or model for elementary or middle-level students?

No, the state does not endorse a particular program or model. Program models might include, but are not limited to, pull-out programs, classroom-based differentiated instruction, acceleration, flexible pacing, compacted curricula, distance learning, advanced classes, or individualized programs.

11. Can honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses be used to satisfy the requirements at the high school level?

While that is a local decision, it is important to note that these courses may not address all areas of giftedness identified prior to high school. High schools must have an identification

process and, as such, may establish certain prerequisites for entrance into honors or AP courses. The state does not define what constitutes an “honors” course.

12. Must gifted services be offered during the school day?

Appropriate adaptations are required in order to assist all students to achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1* states that district boards of education shall ensure that curriculum and instruction are designed and delivered in such a way that all students are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills specified by the Core Curriculum Content Standards and shall ensure that appropriate instructional adaptations are designed and delivered for students with disabilities, for students with limited English proficiency, and for students who are gifted and talented. Meeting the needs of gifted students is not an extra-curricular activity or club but a requirement for all New Jersey public schools.

13. Does the state or federal government provide funding for gifted programs?

The state does not provide specific, dedicated funds for gifted programs; however, district boards of education are required to provide identification and services using state aid and local revenues.

14. Are local school districts obligated to accept the evaluation of a student’s giftedness from another state, school district, or independent service?

No. The district board of education establishes the identification criteria, and students are compared to their chronological peers within the district. Therefore, the district is not obligated to accept an out-of-district evaluation. However, new students, particularly those that have been identified as gifted in another setting, should be evaluated by the district in a timely manner.

15. What is “twice exceptional?”

Students who are identified as twice-exceptional may have learning disabilities that mask their giftedness. These students may require different identification methods and program modifications to reach their full potential. It should not be assumed that students with disabilities cannot participate in gifted and talented programs.

16. How should districts identify limited English proficient students?

Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) may be at a significant disadvantage when using more traditional identification methods. Students from disadvantaged households, ethnic minority students and LEP students are clearly underrepresented in gifted programs. For more information on addressing the needs of diverse student populations, please see <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/newsletter/winter05/winter053.html>.

17. Does the state provide financial aid to K-12 gifted students to attend private schools?

No, New Jersey does not provide financial assistance to attend private schools or specialized programs for K-12 students. However, there are private entities, such as the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, that provide assistance and services for profoundly gifted students. For more information, please go to <http://www.ditd.org/>. In addition, the Center for Talented Youth (CTY) at Johns Hopkins University is another source of specialized programs and assistance. For more information on CTY, please go to <http://cty.jhu.edu/about/index.html>.

18. How should gifted services be documented on a student's transcript or report card?

Student performance should be documented as in any other course using grades, narratives, or other means. Unlike some states, New Jersey does not require the use of an individualized education plan (IEP) for gifted students.

19. Does the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) address the gifted child?

The federal government does not prescribe programs and services for gifted students (unlike special education). NCLB focuses on improving student achievement with particular emphasis on students in high-need schools. Gifted students are not a subgroup population examined under NCLB testing parameters.

20. What state or national organizations support the needs of gifted students? How can I contact them?

The New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC) assists schools, teachers, parents and students. For more information on New Jersey programs, consult the NJAGC Website at www.njagc.org. Additionally, the Gifted Child Society is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1957 by parents of New Jersey to further the cause of gifted children. More information is available on its Website at www.gifted.org.

At the national level, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, teachers, educators, other professionals, and community leaders who unite to address the unique needs of children and youth with demonstrated gifts and talents as well as those children who may be able to develop their talent potential with appropriate educational experiences. For further information on national efforts on behalf of gifted children, go to <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=585&a1>.