

## Guidelines for GIEP Teams Considering Acceleration

### Definitions:

Single-subject acceleration – the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student’s age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas

Whole-grade acceleration – the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student’s age on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities

### I. Single-Subject Acceleration

- a) A gifted student may be referred by any member of the GIEP team for possible single-subject acceleration.
- b) If the GIEP team believes single subject acceleration is appropriate based upon information already in its possession, the team may recommend single subject acceleration through a revision to the student’s GIEP and no additional action is needed. Please see (I)(h) for considerations.
- c) In situations where a parent has requested single-subject acceleration and the GIEP team determines that it has adequate information already in its possession indicating that single-subject acceleration is inappropriate or unnecessary to meet the student’s needs, the team will document this determination through the issuance of a Notice of Recommended Assignment (“NORA”).
- d) If the GIEP team determines that additional information is necessary to consider single-subject acceleration, the student may be required to complete additional assessments to determine the appropriateness of the request. In such instances, the parent or guardian of the student will be notified and such assessments will be administered within sixty days of the request for single-subject acceleration.
- e) The following sources of data may be considered when making a determination for single-subject acceleration:
  - i) Multi-disciplinary evaluation results in the Gifted Written Report (GWR);
  - ii) Performance on district and state assessments and benchmarks;
  - iii) Performance on curriculum-based assessments in the current grade level/course;
  - iv) Performance on curriculum-based assessments in the grade level/course to which the student may be accelerated;
  - v) Performance on other assessment tools deemed necessary to gain information about the student’s ability in that area;
  - vi) Student’s academic performance relative to grade-level peers and peers in the course to which the student may be accelerated;
  - vii) GIEP team input regarding social and emotional maturity of the student, student’s willingness to accelerate, independence and motivation of the student;
  - viii) Observation of the student in the class or classes in which the student is currently enrolled by a School District representative;
  - ix) Teacher, parent and other team member input.
- f) If the team determines that single-subject acceleration or other changes to the GIEP are appropriate, those recommendations will be documented through revisions to the student’s GIEP.

- g) For students in grades 9-12, graduation requirements will not be waived. A student may exercise other educational options to complete graduation requirements such as enrollment in Advanced Placement courses approved by the College Board or dual enrollment courses subject to administrative approval and meeting necessary prerequisites as outlined in the Program of Studies.
- h) While actual decisions about acceleration should always be guided by a thorough review of data on an individual basis, it can be reasonably expected that students for whom acceleration is recommended will demonstrate:
  - (1) Consistently superior academic performance in the current grade level as compared to peers;
  - (2) Mastery of the content to which the student may be accelerated as determined by out of level testing;
  - (3) Superior performance on group and individual achievement measures;
  - (4) Social and emotional maturity comparable to students in the course to which the student may be accelerated.

## II. Whole Grade-Level Acceleration

- a) A gifted student may be referred by any member of the GIEP team for possible whole grade-level acceleration.
- b) If the GIEP team believes whole grade-level acceleration is appropriate based upon information already in its possession, the team may recommend whole grade level acceleration through the student's GIEP and no additional action is needed. Please see (I)(h) for considerations.
- c) If the School District determines that additional information is necessary to consider whole grade-level acceleration, a Notice of Intent to Reevaluate will be issued. The notice will specify the assessments to be used in the evaluation. The data collected may include, but is not limited to, data sources specified in (I)(e) of this document.
- d) In situations where a parent has requested grade-level acceleration and the GIEP team determines that it has adequate information already in its possession indicating that whole grade-level acceleration is inappropriate or unnecessary to meet the student's needs, the team must document this determination through the issuance of a NORA.
- e) The School District shall allow ten school days to pass after the sending the Notice of Intent to Reevaluate before beginning the gifted multi-disciplinary re-evaluation unless a parent has provided consent for the re-evaluation to proceed. Once it has begun, a gifted multi-disciplinary re-evaluation must be completed within sixty days (excluding summer break). State regulations limit parents to one gifted multidisciplinary evaluation request per school year.
- f) Within thirty days of the issuance of the gifted written report, the GIEP team shall convene to review the report and, if necessary, develop or revise the GIEP pursuant to 022 Pa. Code § 16.32.
- g) For students in grades 9-12, graduation requirements will not be waived. A student may exercise other educational options to complete graduation requirements such as enrollment in Advanced Placement courses approved by the College Board or dual enrollment courses subject to administrative approval and meeting necessary prerequisites as outlined in the Program of Studies.

### III. Acceleration Requests for Students Not Identified as Gifted

- a) If a student not identified as gifted is referred for single-subject or whole grade level acceleration, the school team will review data and determine if data indicates that the student may be mentally gifted. If the school team determines that an evaluation for giftedness is necessary, a Permission to Evaluate form will be issued that specifies the assessments to be used in the evaluation. Such assessments may include, but are not limited to, tests of intelligence, ability and achievement and other assessments specified in (I)(e) of this document.
- b) A gifted multi-disciplinary evaluation will be conducted no later than sixty days (excluding summer break) after the District receives a signed PTE in accordance with 022 Pa. Code § 16.22. State regulations limit parents to one gifted multidisciplinary evaluation request per school year.
- c) Within thirty days of the issuance of the gifted written report, the GIEP team shall convene to review the report and, if necessary, develop a GIEP pursuant to 022 Pa. Code § 16.32. The GIEP may or may not include recommendations for acceleration based upon the results of the report.

### IV. Special Rules of Interpretation Applicable to these Guidelines

- a) This document is intended to establish guidelines in the implementation of Chapter 16 for school-aged students who are or are thought to be mentally gifted. The Guidelines are not intended to establish legally binding norms or enforceable rights or causes of action in any individual, including children who are or are thought to be mentally gifted. The Director of Special Education and her/his designee(s) shall have the authority to waive adherence to any requirement of these Guidelines, including but not limited to timelines for the completion of certain actions, that are not specifically mandated by statute, regulation, or final administrative or judicial order.
- b) The intent of these Guidelines is to enable the District to comply with Chapter 16 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code as it applies to school-aged children who reside within the District. To the extent that any provision of these Guidelines is determined to violate any law, that provision only shall be deemed void, and the remainder of these Guidelines shall remain in effect consistent with subsection (a) of this section.