

# *South Eastern School District*

## **Gifted Education Information for Parents**



Updated Fall 2023



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## **Contact Information**

### **District Gifted Coordinator**

Sandra K. Ness, Ed.D., Director of Pupil Services

[nesss@sesd.k12.pa.us](mailto:nesss@sesd.k12.pa.us)

717-382-4843 x6891

### **Teacher of the Gifted - Elementary K-6**

Kathryn Curry

[curryk@sesd.k12.pa.us](mailto:curryk@sesd.k12.pa.us)

### **Teacher of the Gifted - Secondary 7-12**

Carl Dietrich

[dietrichc@sesd.k12.pa.us](mailto:dietrichc@sesd.k12.pa.us)

### **Administrative Support**

Melissa Glackin, Pupil Services Administrative Assistant

[glackinm@sesd.k12.pa.us](mailto:glackinm@sesd.k12.pa.us)

717-382-4843 x6893



## **SESD Mission Statement**

Providing progressive education to strengthen the global community.

## **Our Why**

The SESD exists to INSPIRE and IMPACT learners. We do this by providing a comprehensive, innovative, and personalized educational experience that removes barriers.

## **SESD Vision Statement**

We envision a community of learners engaged in a continuous improvement that will meet the challenges of the 21st century; graduates will be confident and well prepared to excel in a complex, interconnected, changing world.

## **SESD Shared Values**

- We believe that every child can learn when placed in a safe, secure learning environment that is student-centered, collaborative, future-focused, and resource rich.
- We believe in a standards based curriculum with measurable goals that is constantly evolving, and instruction designed to meet individual student learning needs that is informed by ongoing assessment.
- We believe in active student engagement in the learning process, activities that require problem solving and critical thinking, as well as those that foster creativity and innovation.
- We believe that technology integration and cultural diversity are essential to prepare students for success in the 21st century.
- We believe in the strength of community, in the power of school and community partnerships, the value of open communication between teachers and parents, and in helping children reach their full potential.



## **Definitions of Terms Related to Gifted Education**

**Ability Grouping** - Arranging students by ability to meet various instructional purposes. These groups are specific to the educational goal to be achieved and can be flexibly formed and reformed as needed. Ability grouping is NOT synonymous with “tracking.”

**Above Level Testing** - Also called out-of-level testing – Administering a test level that is designed for an older student. For example, a 5th grader might take chapter tests from the 6th or even 7th grade placement tests to demonstrate knowledge.

**Acceleration** - Access to higher level learning activities and skill development than typically provided in regular education to students of the same age. The pacing, complexity and depth of planned coursework are modified as indicated by individual needs. Acceleration may include: planned course compacting/telescoping, subject acceleration, specially designed instruction, credit by examination or performance, interdisciplinary planned courses, distance learning courses, higher education level courses, independent or self-directed study.

**Achievement Test** - An objective assessment that measures educationally relevant skills or knowledge about academic subjects.

**Adaptations** - Using the curriculum and adjusting it to meet the needs of the student.

**Advanced Placement Courses** - Planned courses of study in which secondary regular education students may gain college credit and/or advanced college placement. Credit is earned by successfully meeting criteria established by higher education institutions on a nationally given and scored advanced placement examination.

**Assessment** - In psychology, it means comparing the tested measures of a student’s mental characteristics (e.g., intelligence, personality, self-esteem) to a norm, or average.

**Chapter 16** - State Board of Education regulations for special education of gifted students (22 Pa. Code Chapter 16).

**Cluster Grouping** - Ability grouping within a heterogeneous classroom.

**Compacting** - Elimination of content that the student has already mastered allowing a faster paced learning progression based on the student's rate of acquisition/retention of new materials and skills.

**Content** - The specific information that is to be taught in the unit or course of instruction.

**Continuous Progress** - Students receive appropriate instruction regularly and move ahead as they master content and skills.



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*Cooperative Learning Groups* - Grouping students with varying ability levels often reflecting the full range of student achievement and aptitude to complete a common task and/or project. Misuse of the process occurs when some children are constantly assigned to help others learn rather than being allowed to advance at their own pace and/or the common task/project provides neither little or no challenge nor learning opportunity appropriate to each child's abilities.

*Credit by Examination* - Students receive credit for a course upon satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination.

*Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA)* - Assessment that is tied directly to the curriculum. Procedures for determining the instructional needs of the student based upon the student's ongoing performance within existing course content.

*Diagnostic Test* - An in-depth evaluation process to determine the specific abilities or learning needs of individual students.

*Differentiation* - An organized, yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching content, process, product or environment to meet students where they are and help them to achieve maximum growth as learners.

*Distance Learning* - A format that provides for communication via video technology, synchronously (at the same time), from one to many delivery points. The best practice use of distance learning is interactive live broadcasting.

*Educational Placement* - The overall educational environment in which gifted education is provided to a gifted student.

*Enrichment* - In-depth learning experiences that provide interaction with new ideas, skills and topics that enhance the curriculum. These experiences are based upon individual student strengths, interests and needs.

*Flexible Grouping* – Arranging students by interest and/or need.

*Flexible Pacing* - Provisions that place students at an appropriate instructional level and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills.

*Gifted education*—Specially designed instruction to meet the needs of a gifted student that is: (i) Conducted in an instructional setting, (ii) Provided in an instructional or skill area, (iii) Provided at no cost to the parents, (iv) Provided under the authority of a school district, directly, by referral or by contract, (v) Provided by an agency, (vi) Individualized to meet the educational needs of the student, (vii) Reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress, (viii) Provided in conformity with a GIEP.

*Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP)* - A yearly written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student.



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*Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)* – A systematic process of testing, assessment, other evaluative processes and information that describes a student's academic functioning, learning strengths, learning problems and educational needs and is used by the Gifted Individualized Education Plan team to make a determination about whether or not a student is gifted and needs specially designed instruction.

*GMDT*—Gifted Multidisciplinary Team. Multidisciplinary evaluations are conducted by GMDT. The team is formed on the basis of the student's needs and is comprised of the student's parents, a certified school psychologist, persons familiar with the student's educational experience and performance, one or more of the student's current teachers, persons trained in the appropriate evaluation techniques and, when possible, persons familiar with the student's cultural background. A single member of the GMDT may meet two or more of these qualifications

*Gifted student*— (i) A student who is exceptional under section 1371 of the School Code (24 P. S. § 13-1371) because the student meets the definition of “mentally gifted” in this section, and needs specially designed instruction beyond that required in Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment), (ii) The term applies only to students who are of “school age” as defined under § 11.12 (relating to school age).

*Gifted Written Report (GWR)* – A written report that brings together the information and findings from the evaluation concerning the student's educational needs and strengths.

*Group Investigation* - Students working in small groups on multi-step projects such as: Future Problem Solving, History Day and Odyssey of the Mind.

*Heterogeneous Grouping* - Grouping by chronological age level and without regard for the diverse needs of students, their learning styles or their interests.

*Higher Level Questioning Strategies* - Questions and activities using analysis, synthesis, evaluation or other critical thinking skills.

*Homogeneous Grouping* - Grouping by common criteria such as the student's interests, special needs or academic abilities.

*Honors Course* - A secondary level planned course designed to be advanced in content, process and product and usually requiring regular education students to meet prerequisite criteria before course entry.

*Inclusion* - Refers to the education of each student in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate.

*Independent Study* - Allowing students to follow individual or self-selected areas of interest by designing and implementing their own study plans. Also called Guided Independent Study or Self Directed Study.

*Individualized Instruction* - Content and pacing of instruction geared toward the student's strengths, abilities, needs and goals.



## ***South Eastern School District Gifted Information for Parents***

**Instructional setting**—A classroom or other setting in which gifted students are receiving gifted education.

**Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.)** - A measure of intellectual aptitude at a given point in time based on comparison of children of the same chronological age. It is one of the many ways to measure a student's academic potential.

**Learning Contract** - Student and teacher jointly develop a plan for the accomplishment of learning goal(s), which both sign and follow.

**Learning Environment** - The environment where learning is taking place including physical location and/or student grouping.

**Mentally gifted**—Outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.

**Mentorships** - Matching a student on a one-to-one basis with an adult member of the community who can provide expertise and or advice in a field of study or other community endeavor. Both mentor and student have predetermined goals and outcomes. This process is especially effective where portfolio/performance assessment is in place.

**Modifications** - Changing the objectives within the curriculum to meet the needs of the student.

**Norm-Referenced or Standardized Test** - A test used to determine a student's status with respect to the performance of other students on that test. A "norm" group is the large number of examinees who have taken a particular test and whose scores form the basis of the norms. Such a test may be based on national, state or local norms. At every level of educational test usage, it is necessary to match the scope of the test with the purpose that test is supposed to perform.

**On-line Learning** - A form of distance learning that uses computer-networking technology to provide interaction of teacher to learner.

**Pace** - The speed at which content is presented and instruction delivered. Pacing which matches the student's rate of learning is optimal.

**Planned Course** - The common knowledge and skills in a subject area to be learned by all regular education students of a particular age/grade/level as determined and approved by a local school district within the state mandate.

**Portfolio Assessment** - A collection of student products used to measure student progress and achievement. Such assessment allows for the demonstration of a wide variety of abilities and talents that do not lend themselves to traditional measures.

**Pre-test** - A test given before instruction to determine current level of performance in a specific skill area.

**Process** - How the student will acquire the content information.





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**Product** - How the student will demonstrate their understanding of the content.

**Regular classroom**—A specific instructional grouping within the regular education environment.

**Regular education environment**—The regular classroom and other instructional settings in which students without a need for gifted education receive instructional programs and the full range of supportive services normally provided to these children.

**School day**—A day in which school is in session.

**Screening and evaluation process**—The systematic determination of whether or not a student is gifted or needs gifted education.

**Skills Inventory** – An instrument used to describe the student's aptitudes in areas such as leadership, creativity, communication, etc.

**Specially designed instruction**—Adaptations or modifications to the general curriculum, instruction, instructional environments, methods, materials or a specialized curriculum for students who are gifted.

**Standardized Test** - A form of measurement that has been normed against a specific population.

**Support services**—Services as required under § 16.33 (relating to support services) to assist a gifted student to benefit from gifted education. Examples of the term include: (i) Psychological services, (ii) Parent counseling and education, (iii) Counseling services, (iv) Transportation to and from gifted programs to classrooms in buildings operated by the school district.

**Tiered Instruction** (also called scaffolding) - Use of varied level of activities to ensure that students explore ideas at a level that builds on their prior knowledge and prompts continued growth within the same unit, lesson or theme of instruction



## **STATUTES, POLICIES AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

The following provides a brief description of statutes and policies that constitute the basis and structure for The South Eastern School District's Gifted Education Program

### **State Requirements**

#### **[Title 22, Chapter 16](#)**

Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code specifies how the Commonwealth will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. The intent is that gifted students be provided with quality gifted education services and programs.

#### **[Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular](#)**

The Basic Education Circular (BEC) entitled *Gifted Individual Education Plan Meeting* was last reviewed in April 2010. The purpose of this circular is to clarify the function of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) team.

#### **[Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular](#)**

The Basic Education Circular (BEC) entitled *Cyclical Monitoring Schedule for Gifted Education* was last reviewed in April 2010. The purpose of this Circular is to outline the cyclical monitoring process for gifted education and to publish a monitoring schedule.

#### **[Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Program Guidelines](#)**

These guidelines, published in May of 2014, provide a practical framework to assist school districts in identifying mentally gifted students and implementing comprehensive programs to meet their needs.

#### **[Pennsylvania Department of Education Gifted Education Frequently Asked Questions](#)**

Revised in August of 2014, this document addresses some of the most common issues and questions regarding gifted education in Pennsylvania.

### **District Requirements**

#### **[SESD Policy #114 - Gifted Education](#)**



## **Gifted Education Philosophy**

The South Eastern School District provides an instructional program for students in grades K-12 who are identified as mentally gifted. In compliance with Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania School Code, the South Eastern School District's gifted program is planned to provide specially designed instruction and experiences to address each individual gifted learner's need for acceleration, enrichment, or both and to accommodate the student's individual academic abilities. The program is based on the following principles:

- The gifted student possesses special characteristics that significantly affect that student's ability to learn. In order to provide a meaningful benefit, the gifted student's curriculum must be appropriately modified on an individual basis.
- The key to challenging the gifted student is the connection between instruction and individual cognitive and affective behaviors. The emphasis in special programs for these students should be on the stimulation of the cognitive processes of creativity, originality, problem solving and complexity (increasing content depth and sophistication).
- A Gifted Individualized Education Plan is a written plan describing the education to be provided to a gifted student. The Gifted Individualized Education Plan must be based on and be responsive to the results of evaluation data and student assessment and performance data. Individualized plans should include a range of acceleration and enrichment options appropriate for the student's needs. The regular education curricula and instruction must be adapted, modified or replaced to meet the individual needs of the gifted student.
- Gifted education programming must be an integral part of the instructional school day. Gifted students are not just gifted for a specific time each day or week. Responsibility for development and implementation of each Gifted Individualized Education Plan is shared between regular education teachers, gifted education teachers and administrators.
- The continuum of services that exists for the gifted student must be based on sound research and best practice. Research studies from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented support flexible grouping for gifted students across grade levels and content areas. The research studies also indicate that ability grouping, coupled with acceleration and differentiated curricula, provides maximum instructional benefit to gifted students. Incorporating homogeneous grouping of the gifted with systematic and continuous provisions in their K-12 educational planning offers gifted students opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge through interaction with their intellectual peers.



## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

### **Enrichment**

Enrichment provides an opportunity for students to keep pace with the rest of their classmates, but also to explore topics of interest with more depth and breadth at their own level of academic ability. Students can remain with their chronological peers and still be academically challenged on their own level. Often, gifted students require less practice time than their peers to achieve proficiency. Understanding this, educators can provide the opportunity for students to show proficiency early, thus allowing time for enrichment, capitalizing on and further developing student's initial understanding of the concepts being studied. This model allows gifted students to access advanced course materials, explore content more deeply, and show their learning in a variety of ways. In the classroom, sometimes, educators may utilize student groups in order to facilitate opportunities for gifted students to access content at appropriate academic and complexity levels as well as develop important social-emotional skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and communication. These groups are often flexible and targeted, providing an opportunity for students to participate or not depending on the topic and skill level.

Academic enrichment may include interest-based projects, extension activities, independent study, and/or study contracts and a menu of options. Enrichment opportunities may also be provided outside the regular classroom through clubs, special activities or opportunities, seminars, etc.

### **Acceleration**

Acceleration is when a student moves through traditional curriculum at faster rates than typical. It provides an opportunity to match the level and complexity of content with the readiness and motivation of the student. Acceleration could be whole year acceleration such as early admission to post secondary education, grade skipping, or telescoping (completing more than one year of content in one calendar year). Acceleration could also be subject based acceleration such as Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses, or higher level math classes. Subject based acceleration often allows gifted students to engage in academically challenging and complex content (above-level course work) as well as interaction with a chronological peer group (age-level class) who also shares similar interests and drive.

Each form of acceleration has a different pattern of academic, social, and psychological outcomes for students. Therefore, decisions to accelerate a gifted child must be made on an individual basis. Attention should be placed on matching the student to the forms of acceleration that reflect his or her learning, social, and psychological characteristics and needs.

All students, whether they skip grades, work ahead in one subject or stay with their peers, need enriching experiences. They need content that is relevant to their lives, activities that cause them to process important ideas at a high level, and products that cause them to grapple with meaningful problems and pose defensible solutions.

### **Dually Exceptional Students**

Some students are considered "dually exceptional" or "twice exceptional". This means the student demonstrates characteristics of giftedness and has a disability which requires special education. Like other students who receive special education, students with dual exceptionalities must be provided an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which includes an appropriate combination of gifted and special education services designed to meet their unique educational needs. Students who are dually exceptional must have their gifted needs and strengths addressed in the same IEP that is written for their special education needs.



## *South Eastern School District Gifted Information for Parents*

# **PARENTS**

Parents are vital members of GMDT and GIEP teams. We need to work together to make positive impacts on the education of our students and to improve and strengthen the gifted program at SEDS. It is our responsibility to encourage and empower parents to:

- Understand gifted regulations, parental rights and procedural safeguards.
- Be knowledgeable of timeline changes brought about by accelerative options and plan for the challenges that grade or subject acceleration may bring.
- Be knowledgeable of the school district's board policy on gifted education.
- Participate in planning and evaluating the learning experiences of their child through Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Gifted Individualized Education Plan processes.
- Monitor the implementation of their child's gifted services.
- Advocate for the continuation and improvement of the district's gifted services.
- Provide objective criteria when referring their child for possible placement in the district's mentally gifted services.
- Volunteer as a resource and provide information about special materials, equipment and facilities to help meet gifted students' needs.
- Encourage and support students in the process of selecting and participating in learning alternatives that promote excellence.
- Investigate and provide a variety of learning opportunities over the year, which will broaden the educational experiences of their child.
- Be knowledgeable of current plan modification and learning alternatives appropriate to gifted students.
- Attend district, regional and state in-service programs or conferences.
- Collaborate with school district personnel regarding transitional stages from elementary through postsecondary education.

### [The Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education - PAGE](#)

The mission of Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) is to advocate for mentally gifted children by working with parents, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and the community to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners.

PAGE Helpline 888-736-6443

PAGE, Inc.

P.O. Box 15350

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

### [National Association for Gifted Children, NAGC](#)

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.



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR GIFTED MATERIALS AND INFORMATION**

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Telephone: 800-933-ASCD (2723)

[www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)

Belin-Blank Center, Gifted Education and Talent Development

<https://belinblank.education.uiowa.edu/>

Center for Creative Learning

Telephone: 941-351-8862

http: <http://www.creativelearning.com/>

Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary

Telephone: 757-221-2362

<http://cfge.wm.edu/>

Council for Exceptional Children

TAG Division (The Association of the Gifted)

Telephone: 1-888-CEC-SPED (232-7733)

[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

Center for Talent Development (Northwestern University)

[www.ctd.northwestern.edu](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu)

Corwin Press, Inc.

Telephone: 805-499-9774

[www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com)

Creative Learning Press, Inc.

Telephone: 888-518-8004

[www.creativelearningpress.com](http://www.creativelearningpress.com)

Davidson Institute for Talent Development

[www.ditd.org/public/](http://www.ditd.org/public/)

Duke University Talent Identification Program

<https://tip.duke.edu/>

Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Telephone: 800-735-7323

[www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)

Future Problem Solving Program

Phone: (800) 256-1499

[www.fpsp.org/](http://www.fpsp.org/)



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Future City Competition

<https://futurecity.org/>

Gifted Development Center

[www.gifteddevelopment.com](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com)

Gifted Education Press

Telephone: 703-369-5017

[www.giftedpress.com](http://www.giftedpress.com)

Great Books Foundation – Junior Great Books

Telephone: 1 800 222 5870 x 210

[www.greatbooks.org/](http://www.greatbooks.org/)

Johns Hopkins University - Center for Talented Youth

[www.jhu.edu/gifted](http://www.jhu.edu/gifted)

Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company

Telephone: 800-228-0810

[www.kendallhunt.com](http://www.kendallhunt.com)

MATHCOUNTS

[www.mathcounts.org/](http://www.mathcounts.org/)

National Geographic Kids Network

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented – NRC-G/T

University of Connecticut

Telephone: 860-486-0283

[www.gifted.uconn.edu](http://www.gifted.uconn.edu)

Odyssey of the Mind

[www.odysseyofthemind.org](http://www.odysseyofthemind.org)

Pieces of Learning

Telephone: 800-729-5137

[www.piecesoflearning.com](http://www.piecesoflearning.com)

Prufrock Press

Telephone: 800-998-2208

[www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)

Riverside Publishing

[www.riverpub.com/index.htm](http://www.riverpub.com/index.htm)

SAT

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

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SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted)

<http://www.sengifted.org/>

Synergetic

<http://www.synergeticpress.com/>

Teachers College Press

Teachers College, Columbia University

Telephone: 800-488-2665

[www.teacherscollegepress.com](http://www.teacherscollegepress.com)

Touchstones Discussion Project

[www.touchstones.org](http://www.touchstones.org)