

## **Gifted Programming**

### **Process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction:**

Students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction are referred to the Student Assistance Program. Teachers or parents can make the request to initiate the SAP process. The SAP Team is composed of school personnel who are versed in the multidisciplinary needs of the whole child; academic, medical, behavioral, personal, social and emotional. Participants include the school counselor, general education teacher, special education director, and the parent/guardian. Other team members may include related services providers, school climate control director, school nurse, the school social worker, and the student. An informal review of available data and information will be discussed at the meeting. This includes the student's academic record, teacher observations, parent observations, results on STAR benchmark assessments in both ELA and mathematics, and current PSSA scores. For students who are demonstrating performance that exceeds grade level expectations in one or more academic areas, the possibility of the need for specially designed instruction will be communicated with the team. A permission to evaluate is shared with parents if an evaluation is deemed necessary by team members. Parents are informed of their rights in this process including:

**Prior Written Notice:** The public school must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement requested by a parent. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the reasons for the proposal or refusal, the options considered, if any, and the reason why such options were rejected.

**Consent:** Discovery Charter School cannot proceed with an evaluation or with the initial provision of special education and related services without the written consent of the parent. Discovery may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of a parental consent to an initial placement in special education. Discovery may override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer or judge following a hearing. If the parent fails to respond to a written request for permission to re-evaluate, however, the public school may proceed with the proposed re-evaluation without consent.

**Protection in Evaluation Procedure:** Evaluations to determine eligibility and current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. Evaluations cannot consist of a single test or assessment and testing must be a valid measure of the psychological, social, emotional or other learning characteristic or behavior that the school is using it to measure. Testing and assessment must be administered in

accordance with professional standards and the criteria established by the publisher. It must be administered in the native language of the child.

**Confidentiality:** The records and documents that are part of the evaluation and screening process are confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). School districts, intermediate units, and charter schools maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under FERPA. The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information. For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to FERPA.

**Procedures for determining ELIGIBILITY (through MULTIPLE CRITERIA) and NEED (based on ACADEMIC STRENGTH) for potentially mentally gifted students (EVALUATION).**

The school district requests parental consent in writing to conduct a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation. Parental Consent is required to initiate the process.

In the evaluation, the school investigates information relevant to the child's suspected giftedness, including academic functioning, learning strengths and educational needs as shown by present levels of educational performance, assessment results, classroom observations and information from the parent. The team also looks for an indication of demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more academic areas. Specific types of tests and procedures that will be used in the evaluation are communicated with the parent.

The multidisciplinary evaluation process will include information from parents or others who interact with the student on a regular basis, and may include information from the student if appropriate.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team will determine whether your child is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. This information will be outlined in a *Gifted Written Report*. If the team determines your child is eligible for specially designed instruction the *Gifted Written Report* will be given to the GIEP team. As a parent(s), you are also a member of the GIEP team. You will be invited to all team meetings. The

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation is to be completed and the *Gifted Written Report* is to be delivered to parents within 60 calendar days of receipt of their consent to evaluate.

Parents are also provided with the *Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Students*, which includes parent resources such as state or local advocacy organizations.

**Gifted programs\* that are offered to provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment, or both:**

A gifted IEP will be developed for students who are eligible for gifted services, as determined by the Gifted Written Report. During the GIEP meeting, team members will discuss the student's academic and cognitive strengths, achievement results, aptitude, interests, specialized skills, products and evidence of effectiveness in other academic areas, and classroom performance. Annual goals, short term objectives, and specially designed instruction are developed in consideration of special areas of interest and expertise that are unique to the particular gifted student. Appropriate objective criteria, assessment procedures and timelines for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the goals and learning outcomes are being achieved is included within the GIEP. Specially designed instruction for gifted students is defined as adaptations or modifications to: The general curriculum; Methods of Instruction, Materials, OR, Instructional environments, and A specialized curriculum for students who are gifted. Examples of specially designed instruction may include: Individualized pacing, Shadow studies, Mentorships, Independent study, Distance learning, Course compacting, Individual enrichment/acceleration, Development of higher order thinking and problem-solving skills and special activities. Appropriate community agencies that can also afford the student experiences related to their areas of interest and expertise will also be contacted and partner with the school when possible to provide the student with direct experiences with the knowledge and skills included to accomplish goals established by the GIEP team. While some gifted programming may take place outside of the regular education classroom, gifted students will continue to participate in the general education setting with supplementary aids and services as determined appropriate by the GIEP team.