

Gifted Education

The Why, How, and When of Moving Downingtown Area School District's
Gifted Education Services into Compliance

The Audit

- March 17-18, 2015
- May 2015: Gifted Corrective Action Verification Report
 - Strategic Plan and Policy....YES (after appeal)
 - In-Service training appropriately prepares and trains personnel to address the special knowledge, skills and abilities to serve the unique needs of gifted students....NO
 - For students who are eligible for gifted individualized services under Chapter 16 and also for special education services under Chapter 14, the School District must demonstrate compliance with all requirements of Chapter 14....NO
 - The School District demonstrates compliance with annual public notice requirements and has an appropriate screening and evaluation process....NO
 - The School District demonstrates that educational placement and instruction is based on each gifted student's needs in accordance with Chapter 16....NO
 - The School District will demonstrate compliance with the gifted education procedural safeguard requirements of Chapter 16....NO
 - The School District has developed gifted multidisciplinary evaluation reports and gifted IEPs as required under Chapter 16 and has provided parents with procedural safeguards....NO

The Audit

- May 2015: Gifted Corrective Action Verification Report Letter
 - Deferment of the disbursement of state or federal funds
 - Reduction of the amount of funds for per pupil expenditures
 - Disciplinary action against administrators and educators who refuse to provide appropriate (compliant) gifted education services
- September 2015: Parent Notification
 - “New state guidelines have created a programming shift such that gifted education now requires a school district to focus on extending and/or accelerating the general education, standards-aligned curriculum to meet the needs of all high achieving learners. ... The emphasis in programming for these students should be on the stimulation of the cognitive processes of creativity, originality, problem solving and complexity (increasing content depth and sophistication) which are extensions of the general curriculum while aligning the activities to PA common core academic standards.”

Corrective Action Taken

- In-service training
- Procedures/paperwork
- New matrix, screening protocol, notifications
- Procedural safeguards
- GWRs
- Individualized service delivery

Corrective Action Release

- November 2016
 - Dr. Curl revisited Downingtown
 - File review
 - PD records
 - Matrix and matrix results
 - Gifted Strategic Plan responses
 - 5-year plan moving forward
- November 30th: Letter releasing Downingtown from Corrective Action

5-Year Plan

Beginning Vision (taken from IB vision statement, because the STEM Academy model, which utilizes the IB curricula, was repeatedly singled out throughout the audit and corrective action process as providing a framework that met the needs of gifted students):

1. “Develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect ... through challenging programs and rigorous assessment.”
2. “Encourage active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

Year 1: 2015-16

- Change in supervisory leadership
- Began record review/document corrections using Tanya Morret and Cheryl Everett as resources
- Created and began testing K-5 matrix
- Extensive Professional Development
 - Board/BCC
 - Principals
 - Gifted education teachers
 - Faculty meetings
 - DAGEN

Year 2: 2016-17

- Elementary

- Test K-5 matrix and refine as needed to ensure accurate identification of students who are gifted and in need of specially designed instruction
- Work with elementary gifted ed teachers to solidify goal language
- Create and maintain a google doc reference for teachers to use to select appropriately written goals, STLO, and SDIs
- Work on document writing to ensure continued compliance with required documents, meeting attendees' signatures
- Look at and establish subject and grade acceleration protocol

Year 2

- Middle level: Grades 6-8
 - Build and test 6-8 matrix
 - Discontinue pullout class (MC6) and move to cluster grouping gifted students to provide manageable push in-pullout support
 - PD for reg ed ELA teachers to understand differentiation
 - Create and maintain a google doc reference for teachers to use to select appropriately written goals, STLO, and SDIs
 - Work on document writing to ensure continued compliance with required documents, meeting attendees' signatures, deadlines
 - Look at and establish subject and grade acceleration protocol
 - Have gifted ed teachers begin learning ELA and math curricula to develop understanding of purpose of resources and how/where to provide enrichment within the curriculum (DMS, LMS)
 - Work with MS administration to look at creating a math elective

Year 2

- High School
 - Reallocate HS gifted staff to provide increased support at DHSE and DHSW
 - Have gifted ed teachers begin learning Honors English curricula to develop understanding of purpose of resources and how/where to provide enrichment within the curriculum
 - Clean up document processes and documents to exit students who do not need enrichment/acceleration/combination of both
 - Pitch AP Seminar to MS gifted students (early entry to college-level thinking/work)
 - Create a 4-year plan template to help 8th/9th graders manage their high school career with an eye on what it takes to be competitive post-secondary

Year 3: 2017-18

- Elementary
 - Work on expanding differentiation opportunities
 - Begin to move away from worksheets and move toward project based learning opportunities that include social studies and science unit topics
 - Expand universal identification process to rescreen students in grade 3 for second consecutive look for gifted/need for SDI

Year 3

- Middle level: Grades 6-8
 - Have gifted ed teachers begin to learn social studies and science curricula to develop understanding of purpose of resources and how/where to provide enrichment within the curricula (MC6, DMS, LMS)
 - PD for reg ed math teachers to understand how to more seamlessly incorporate differentiation (MC6)
 - Algebra I offered at MC6
 - Discontinue gifted pullout course (DMS, LMS)
 - Introduce cluster grouping (DMS, LMS)
 - Begin providing in-course differentiation with gifted support in math and ELA (DMS, LMS)
 - PD counselors to support students seeking early entry to AP courses/higher level course planning & selection (DMS/LMS)

Year 3

- High School
 - Discontinue 21st Century Leadership course
 - Begin differentiating Honors English curricula for students whose needs exceed the rigorous course parameters
 - Work with HS administrators (DEHS, DWHS) to delineate acceleration pathways for 9th graders seeking early entry into AP science courses
 - PD counselors to support students seeking early entry to AP courses/higher level course planning & selection
 - Launch AP Capstone courses in both high schools using gifted ed teachers to support staffing needs

Year 4: 2018-19

- Elementary
 - Continue to grow differentiated opportunities
 - Look at adding staff (ultimate goal is one gifted ed teacher @ each ES)
 - Expand universal identification process to rescreen students in grade 4 for third consecutive look for gifted/need for SDI

Year 4

- Middle level: Grades 6-8
 - Continue to grow differentiated opportunities (MC6)
 - Institute differentiation of social studies and science curricula (MC6, DMS, LMS)
 - PD reg ed teachers on differentiation
- High School
 - Solidify accelerated placement opportunities and protocol
 - College-level work available in all core content areas 9-12
 - Gifted resource supports

Year 5: 2019-20

Steady the ship!!