

THOMPSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF PUPIL SERVICES and
CURRICULUM OFFICE



GIFTED AND TALENTED GUIDEBOOK AND
PROCEDURES

Adopted October 2017

Thompson Public Schools Mission and Vision Statements

District Vision Statement

The Thompson Public Schools will be the highest performing public school system in Northeast Connecticut.

District Mission Statement

To that end, the Thompson Board of Education is committed to ensuring that every student is prepared for success in life in the 21st century.

We accomplish this by: Providing dedicated leadership; Encouraging community involvement and support; Hiring and retaining an engaged, enthusiastic, focused, and professional staff; Providing state of the art instruction; Maintaining a safe and caring environment that fosters lifelong learning; Embracing our differences; Striving to help every student reach his or her potential.

Pupil Services Department Mission and Vision Statements

Pupil Services Vision Statement

We are a school district that provides an inclusive education environment for students with special needs by ensuring the maximum amount of our students are spending the majority of the time accessing the curriculum with their general education peers. We meet the unique needs of our learners through a robust and rigorous set of supports that provides high quality academic, emotional and physical support. We engage our parents and community partners as vital members of our children's successes. Through multi-leveled supports we will decrease the achievement gap between our general education population and our students of highest need.

Pupil Services Mission Statement

To provide academic, emotional and related service programming for students of special needs while maintaining and ensuring compliance according to state and federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regulations

Purpose of Gifted and Talented Education

1. To identify the specific talents and abilities of these students and nourish those abilities through placing students in appropriate curricula
2. To provide an appropriate education based upon the specific abilities of each student
3. To challenge these students by providing educational programming that meets their academic and intellectual needs.

(Thomas, A and Grimes, T, 1995)

In order to meet the needs of these students, it is important to have an understanding of gifted and talented students and to have proper procedures in place to identify these students.

Thompson Public Schools adheres to the state laws regarding the identification of Gifted and Talented students.

The Identification of Gifted and Talented Children in Connecticut: The Law and Its Implications

What is the Law?

The identification of gifted and talented children is required under Connecticut special education law. Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 10-76d(a)(1) states "...each local or regional board of education shall provide the professional services requisite to the identification of school-age children requiring special education, identify each such child within its jurisdiction, determine the eligibility of such children for special education pursuant to sections 10-76a to 10-76h, inclusive, prescribe suitable educational programs for eligible children, maintain a record thereof and make such reports as the commissioner may require...":

Section 10-76a(5) of the state statutes defines "children requiring special education" as follows:

(5) "Children requiring special education" includes any exceptional child who...(B) has extraordinary learning ability or outstanding talent in the creative arts, the development of which requires programs or services beyond those ordinarily provided in the regular school programs but which may be provided through special education as part of the public school program.

The state regulations define "gifted and talented", "extraordinary learning ability", and "outstanding creative talent" as follows. Regulations Concerning State Agencies (RCSA) at Sec. 10-76a-2 state:

(b) "Gifted and talented" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (1) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (2) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the regular school program in order to realize their intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts as defined by these regulations.

(a) "Extraordinary learning ability" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of either performance on relevant standardized measuring instruments, or demonstrated or potential achievement or intellectual creativity or both. The term shall refer to the top five per cent of children so identified. (Note: The term means 5% of the children so identified as gifted and talented within the district.)

(j) "Outstanding talent in the creative arts" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts. The term shall refer to the top five per cent of children so identified. (Note: The term means 5% of the children so identified as gifted and talented within the district.)

While identification is mandated under state law, programming is permissive under Section 10-76d(c) of the state statutes: “(c) Each local or regional board of education may provide special education for children requiring it who are described by subparagraph (B) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a and for other exceptional children for whom special education is not required by law.” The State Regulations further require that “each board of education provide identification, referral and evaluation for gifted and talented children”, see Section 10-76d-1(b).

What Does the Law Mean?

- (1) The provisions relating to the identification of gifted and talented children are found in the state special education laws. The procedures used to identify and evaluate children who may be gifted or talented are similar to those used to identify and evaluate children with disabilities. Only the state requirements are followed for the identification, evaluation and referral of gifted and talented children. *The federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, does not provide for gifted and talented children.*
- (2) The parents must be notified in writing that a referral to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) has been made to determine a child’s identification as either gifted or talented. A PPT is a “group of certified and/or licensed professionals, who represent each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs and who participate equally in the decision making process.... These shall be persons knowledgeable in the areas necessary...” (RCSA Sec 10-76a-1 (p)).
- (3) The PPT must process the referral for an evaluation. The PPT must review existing data to determine if the child may be eligible as gifted and talented. If the PPT determines that sufficient information exists to determine eligibility, further evaluation is not necessary. The parents may challenge the refusal of the PPT to find a child gifted and talented by requesting due process, discussed further below.
- (4) Parents must be notified in writing when the student is referred to the PPT for a consideration of identification of gifted and talented and, after the PPT has reviewed the assessment information, notified in writing if the student has met the criteria for eligibility as gifted or talented.
- (5) If the district recommends further evaluations and uses an individual assessment procedure (e.g., an individual intelligence test), certain procedural safeguards must be followed. Individual assessment requires proper notice and informed consent as described in Section 10-76d-8 of the State Regulations. Parents must be notified that their child has been referred for evaluation and written consent for the evaluation must be obtained. Parents must be informed of the results of the evaluation and informed whether or not the child has been identified as gifted and talented.
- (6) If group assessment procedures are used to identify gifted and talented students, consent to perform such assessments may not be required. Group assessments (e.g. achievement tests) given to all students within a school district are nonspecific and, therefore consent is not

required. If a group of students are to be evaluated specifically to determine identification as gifted and talented, notice and consent are required.

- (7) Parents have the right to review and inspect any educational records related to their child. This includes records related to the determination of a child's identification as gifted and talented.
- (8) If at any time in the evaluation process the parents disagree with the decisions of the PPT, the parents have the right to challenge those decisions. For example, if the parents disagree with the district's refusal to evaluate the child, the parents may request either a mediation or due process hearing to challenge this refusal. If the PPT determines that the child is neither gifted nor talented, the parents may challenge this determination by requesting either mediation or a hearing. Parents may request an independent educational evaluation to challenge the evaluations conducted by the district.
- (9) Parents have the right to obtain an independent evaluation of their child, conducted by a certified person not employed by the board of education (CGS Sec. 10-76d-9(c)(1)).
- (10) Parents have the right to an independent evaluation at public expense if they disagree with an evaluation obtained by the board of education. "Public expense" means at no cost to parents. However, the board of education may initiate a due process hearing to show that the evaluation is appropriate (CGS Sec. 10-76d-9(c)(2)).
- (11) School districts are not required to provide programming for children identified as gifted and talented. Instead, programming is permissive. Parents, then, can ask for educational services that accommodate the educational needs of their children, but districts are not required to provide such special educational services.

Resources

Gardner, H. (1985). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
Sternberg, R. J. (1984). Toward a Diarchic Theory of Intelligence. *Behavioral and Brain*

Myths about Gifted Children

- **Gifted children rise to the top of the classroom**
Not necessarily. These children can have hidden learning disabilities that go undiscovered because they can easily compensate. Hence care screenings and diagnosis is critical.
- **Gifted children are so smart they do fine with or without special programs**
They may appear to do fine but without proper challenge, they can become bored or unruly. As they grow older, they may face difficulties with challenges since they have not faced them previously.
- **Children off task, inattentive or hyperactive must be ADHD**
There is no rule that states children who exhibit behaviors that are associated with ADHD must be ADHD. A gifted child may simply be bored and amusing themselves. They may also appear ADHD as their minds are fast moving.
- **Gift and bright mean the same thing**
Children who score in the high ninety percentiles are not necessarily gifted. Such high scores will mean high achievers but not necessarily gifted. Further, there is no rule that gifted students should be achieving to high standards in the classroom.

www.ri.net/gifted_talented/character.html

High Achiever or Gifted and Talented (some examples)

High Achiever	Gifted and Talented
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Interested	Highly Curious
Attentive	Mentally and Physically Involved
Has Good Ideas	Has Wild Silly Ideas
Works Hard	Plays Around Yet Tests Well
Answers the Questions	Discusses in Detail
Listens with Interest	Strong Feelings and Opinions
Top Group	Beyond Top Group
Learns With Ease	Already Knows
Understands Ideas	Constructs Abstractions

(Szabos, J, 1989)

The above chart may be used as an observation and/or an observation tool for the purpose of a pre-screening but should not be used as the sole criteria for determining if a student is Gifted/Talented.

Guidelines about the Identification Process

The guidelines below were developed by the State Department of Education to ensure equitable and defensible identification procedures that foster open communication with parents.

1. Identification should be systematic and ongoing.
2. Identification needs to go beyond the traditional, narrow definition of ability and talent. New work by researchers and theorists such as Gardner (1985) and Sternberg (1984) has resulted in the general acceptance of the belief that traditional intelligence tests fail to capture the multi-faceted nature of human potential.
3. Identification instruments should match the district definition of giftedness. If a district proposes to identify students with both musical and mathematical ability or potential, then separate identification procedures need to be established in each of the domains.
4. The identification process should be based on the use of multiple criteria including, but not limited to: teacher recommendations, student work samples, a portfolio review, teacher checklists, a parent-nomination, peer or self-nomination, parent-nomination, and/or standardized assessment scores.
5. Identification instruments need to be sensitive to underserved and culturally diverse populations. Standardized tests, used carefully and cautiously, can yield helpful data in assessing the potential of traditionally underserved or underachieving students. They should not be used exclusively, however. In these cases especially, greater emphasis needs to be placed on parent, teacher, peer, or self-rating scales. Additionally, portfolios and performance rating scales may be more direct assessments of student potential or accomplishment.
6. Identification plans should be written and communicated to all parents in languages that reflect the demographics of the community.

The Thompson Public Schools will use a “multiple criteria” process to identify its gifted/talented students. The process will be as follows:

- A referral (Form I) will be made by teachers, parents or others that have a direct knowledge of the child. Information required will include grades, academic performance on district and state assessments, differentiated work samples from the classroom, and other anecdotal information from other school personnel such as guidance counselors, social workers, etc.
- Once the referral is submitted to the gifted/talented teacher or case manager in the building, a Gifted and Talented checklist will be completed by the referring party and/or the parent. Once all the information is completed, a PPT will be held to review the information. The team should include an administrator, regular education teacher, the gifted and talented teacher, classroom teacher and parent. *A special education teacher will be asked to attend if the child is identified as having a disability or if there is question regarding one. An ESL teacher will be invited if English is the second language.*
- At this meeting further information will be gathered and the team will determine if the student should have further evaluation for the purpose of determining if the child is Gifted/Talented and requires specialized instruction.
- If further evaluation is needed then an evaluation plan is designed, presented to the parents, and the parents must agree to the evaluation. Evaluation tools must be sensitive to cultural and other factors. Information must be explained in the parent’s native language.

Identification

General Intellectual and Academic Areas:

Academically capable students make outstanding progress in one or more of the disciplines. They acquire basic skills quickly, have high academic success in a special interest area, and demonstrate advanced memorization and comprehension abilities. Student scores should be at the 95% level or the equivalent of three years above grade level expectations.

Requirements for Referral Packet:

Standardized Tests Scores *
Rating Scales/Inventories by Parent, Teacher and/or Others #
Products and/or Portfolios
Demonstrated Performance
Completion of Referral Form by Parent, Teacher and/or Others
Completion of the checklist

*>95th percentile on NWEA/MAP or SBAC

Appropriate Rating Score on the “Scales for Identifying Gifted Student” (SIGS)

Visual/Performing Arts, Leadership and Creativity:

Students who exhibit outstanding ability in expressing self, feeling, moods, etc., through art, dance, drama and music. Students demonstrate a keen sense of spatial relationships and a strong sense of creative expression.

Requirements for Referral Packet:

Rating Scales/Inventories by Parent, Teacher and/or others*
Products and/or portfolios
Demonstrated Performance
Completed referral
Completed checklist
Letter(s) of Recommendation

*SIGS: >95th percentile

PPT Meeting:

Further evaluation could include other assessments such as individual achievement tests (eg; Woodcock Johnson) and/or an IQ test may be determined appropriate. The IQ score must be 130 or higher. The team must be sensitive to ESL issues and cultural bias of certain assessments. Bilingual instruments should be considered if appropriate.

Once it is determined that the student qualifies as a Gifted/Talented student, a “Gifted Individual Education Plan” (GIEP) is developed. The plan outlines the following:

- Recommendations for programming
- Parent and Student input/concerns
- Present Levels of Academic/Other Areas Performance
- Accommodations/Modifications to General Education Curriculum
- Goals and Objectives (at least one goal and two objectives)

Progress on the Goals and Objectives will be done within the time frame of the report cards and updated on an annual basis.

Note: If the PPT recommends movement of a student into an upper grade level course and/or the movement of a student to an upper grade-this recommendation is brought to the Superintendent of Schools or designee who will approve or disapprove of this recommendation.

PROGRAMMING OPTIONS



