

District Gifted Identification and Service Model Decision-Making

Topic Overview Video (link) 



Why:

According to [Gifted Education in the United States](#), only thirty-eight states mandate gifted services and only four fully fund them. Some mandate identification without providing guidance for services. Additionally, sometimes the identification method does not match the service model. For example, some districts may use a verbal test for identification but then serve students in a math-based model. According to [The Fordham Institute's National Working Group on Advanced Education](#), we must equitably and accurately identify advanced learners because:

- “Every child deserves to be challenged”
- “The country needs advanced learners, particularly students from racially underrepresented or low-income backgrounds, to be highly educated to ensure its own long-term competitiveness, security, and innovation”
- “Accessible advanced education strengthens our society and democracy.”

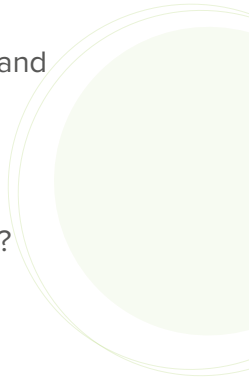
Instructional Implications:

- ☉ Align instructional needs with services
- ☉ Demonstrate growth as an outcome of services
- ☉ Honor the rights of each student to learn and grow to become successful and fulfilled individuals
- ☉ Differentiate instruction to meet every gifted learner's needs

Guiding Questions:

- What is our current gifted identification and service model? Does our state have any specific mandates for gifted identification?
- Are the demographics of gifted identified students representative of our district as a whole? If not, where is the gap?
- Do we already offer any specialized programming such as STEM or STEAM?
- What are the district academic priorities?
- How is CogAT data used for gifted identification? How is it used to inform instructional decisions?
- What do our most advanced or high-achieving learners excel in? Do we have specialized programming for that area? What challenges exist between instructional need and delivery?

- What assessments do we already use? Do any of them align with the needed services? If not, what assessment would align?
- How are *CogAT* and achievement data correlated to drive decisions about gifted services and instruction for all students?
- Does the chosen assessment provide instructional information?
- How can we create a continuum of services that builds on itself through the grades?
- How can our system of identification and services support required accountability systems?
- How can our system of identification and services support Board goals?



3 Best Practices:

- 1** Directly align identification and services to create a continuum of services
- 2** Shift intervention strategies from deficit thinking to strengths-based thinking
- 3** Focus on growth instead of bright-line achievement goals

Resources:

Gentry, M., Gray, A., Whiting, G.W., Maeda, Y., & Pereira, N. (2019). Gifted Education in the United States: Laws, access, equity, and missingness across the country by locale, Title I schools status, and race. Authors. <https://education.purdue.edu/geri/new-publications/gifted-education-in-the-united-states/>

Texas Education Agency. (2021). District or Campus G/T Equity Representation. *Texas Education Agency*. <https://gtequity.tea.texas.gov/sites/gtequity.tea.texas.gov/files/2021-08/GT%20Representation%20Index%20%281%29.pdf>

The National Working Group on Advanced Education. (2023). Building a wider, more diverse pipeline of advanced learners. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*. <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/building-wider-more-diverse-pipeline-advanced-learners>

District Gifted Identification Worksheet

Directions: Use these guiding questions to explore opportunities to leverage conversations in your district or school to advance the needs of your gifted program.

1 What is your district profile?

	K-5	6-8	9-12
Enrollment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Number of Schools	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

% American Indian or Alaska Native	% Asian	% Black or African American	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	% White	% Economically Disadvantaged	% Multilingual	% Special Student Services / 504
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Does your district have specialty programs? If so, describe them below.

STEM/STEAM

Advanced academics

Choice programs

Magnets

State Accountability Data

How did the district perform relative to peer districts?

What campuses had outlier or unexpected results?

What trends are represented across campuses or grade levels?

Other Assessment Data

What other assessment data is available?

How does this data correlate or align to the state accountability data?

How is student academic growth considered in these measures?

Board of Trustees Goals

How does the Board of Trustees set goals for the district?

What are the goals

What are the current systems in place to achieve the goals?

2

Advanced Learner Profile: Using the district information above, develop the profile of an advanced learner in your district

What are the areas in which advanced learners currently do not have opportunities in your district?

What instructional needs are most challenging to meet in the general education classroom?

3

Determine the best opportunities for advanced learners in your district.

4

Assessments

What assessments are currently used in your district?

What other assessments are needed for the identification of gifted and/or advanced learners?

5

Assessment and Identification Alignment

Does the chosen assessment align with the chosen service model?

(For example, if your service model is for math acceleration, ensure you are using an assessment that identifies students with an instructional need for math acceleration.)

Does the assessment also provide instructional information?

