

Key Characteristics of Effective Gifted Education Plans

Gifted and talented (G/T) education is important for students and for the local and global community. Students who are challenged to maximize their potential build habits of success that lead to confidence and independence. This in turn prepares them to contribute positively to their local communities and to the larger global community.

Your school district's Gifted and Talented Education Plan guides the process by which you identify and respond to the needs of students who learn at a faster pace, require more complex curricula, demonstrate leadership, think innovatively, and are artistic. Engaging in conversations is an important part of developing this G/T plan. Through shared vision and collaborative discussions, local school district teams can make decisions that respond to the needs of their students and maximize the resources in their communities. The notion that "one size does not fit all" applies to gifted and talented plans as well as to classroom instruction. This means that gifted education may look different from school district to school district. With this in mind, however, there are nine key characteristics that should serve as the foundation for your gifted education plan:

- **Systemic.** Gifted education should be integrated with schoolwide initiatives and programming across all grade levels, K-12. Opportunities should be incorporated into the regular school day and the regular school year.
- **Collaborative.** Gifted education should be the responsibility of all staff members working in a collaborative fashion to meet student needs.
- **Sustainable.** Gifted education should be an integral part of the school district's staffing and funding plans. It should not be dependent on any particular person or funding sources.
- **Responsive.** Gifted education should be responsive to local student demographics, curriculum, resources, and needs.
- **Fluid.** Gifted education should be flexible and continuously adapt to student need. Programming will likely differ based on local needs and community resources. G/T plans may vary from district to district and school to school.
- **Appropriate.** Gifted education should provide opportunities that are in place of, not in addition to, regular classroom instruction and activities.
- **Comprehensive.** Gifted education should consider the "whole child" by encouraging academic, social, and personal growth of the students.
- **Aligned.** Gifted education should have goals that are clear and aligned with state statutes, administrative rule, professional standards, research, and effective practice.
- **Measurable.** Goals in the plan should be specific enough so that progress toward them can be readily evaluated on an ongoing basis.