

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## STAFF NOTE

### Review Item:

Update on gifted and talented education

### Applicable Statute or Regulation:

**704 KAR 3:285, KRS 157.196, KRS 157.224, KRS 157.230, KRS 156.095, KRS158.6453, KRS 158.6456**

### History/Background:

***Existing Policy.*** The gifted and talented population represents all grades and all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. They can have a learning disability, be English Language Learners, or have a physical disability of some nature. In 1990, gifted children were designated a category of exceptional children in the Commonwealth. As defined in KRS 157.200, these exceptional children can be identified in five areas: general intellectual aptitude, academic aptitude in a specific content area (e.g., mathematics, science), creativity, leadership, or in the visual or performing arts. Thus, since 1990, districts have been responsible for identifying and serving children in five areas of giftedness. Kentucky has created a strong infrastructure for educating students (704 KAR 3:285, Programs for the Gifted and Talented). The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), coupled with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), pledged to provide appropriate educational opportunities to all students.

**Student Identification:** Local school districts are required to adopt policies and procedures that provide an ongoing opportunity for all students to be considered for gifted and talented education services through informal screening and selection in the primary program and formal categorical identification in grades four (4) through twelve (12). School personnel are to take into consideration environmental, cultural, and disabling conditions that may mask a child's true abilities that lead to exclusion of otherwise eligible students.

**Service Options:** KRS 157.220 requires an individual education plan for all exceptional students. In gifted education the plan is called a Gifted Student Services Plan (GSSP). Grouping for instructional purposes and multiple services delivery options are to be utilized in the gifted education plans. Ongoing assistance for gifted and talented students is needed to further develop individual interests, needs and abilities. Services must be provided during the regular school day. Local school districts must provide multiple service delivery options, primary through grade twelve (12). Examples of service options include: acceleration options, advanced placement and honors courses, special counseling services, differentiated study experiences for individuals and cluster groups in the regular classroom, distance learning, enrichment services during the school day, independent study and early graduation from high school.

**Using Data to Drive Decision Making:** Significant achievement gaps exist across all populations. Likewise, giftedness cuts across all populations. Students from minority and low socio-economic groups are underrepresented when students are selected or identified for gifted and talented services. Identification of Kentucky's minority gifted and talented young people

formally identified for services should echo the percentage of the minority population in Kentucky schools and current data reflects that there is little evidence this is happening in our schools. Under-identification also occurs with those students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The number of K-3 children selected for Primary Talent Pool services represents a mere fraction recommended by the Kentucky regulations on gifted and talented services. The Primary Talent Pool is currently at 20.9% of the K-3 population while 25% is recommended.

Kentucky requires identification in five areas, but typically only the specific academic aptitude and general intellectual ability are identified consistently across the Commonwealth. The areas of leadership, creativity, and the visual and performing arts are not adequately identified due to insufficient professional learning, fiscal resources, and lack of awareness.

Identification Areas:

General Intellectual	34.4%
Creative/Divergent Thinkers	8.4%
Leadership	13.2%
Specific Academic Language Arts	26.2%
Specific Academic Math	25.9%
Specific Academic Science	13.4%
Specific Academic Social Studies	8.5%
Visual/Performing Arts Music	4.6%
Visual/Performing Arts Visual Art	5.5%
Visual/Performing Arts Drama	2.7%
Visual/Performing Arts Dance	1.1%

Additional Categories:

*Twice-Exceptional	2.5%
English Learners	0.6%
Free and Reduced Lunch	34.6%

\*Twice-Exceptional students are students who are gifted, but also have a formally identified disability.

(Percentage represents % of total gifted students identified, not total district student population.)

**Budgetary Concerns - Legislative Agenda:** The state allocation for gifted and talented education acknowledges that gifted children have unique learning needs that must be addressed. The current allocation of \$6,300,000 has remained at the same level for the past two years, and provides a beginning but does not cover the cost of personnel who are properly certified, professional learning experiences for all district staff, identification, and service delivery options for students.

KRS 158.648 established the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council. This council is charged with making recommendations regarding the provisions of services for gifted and talented students in Kentucky's education system. The council should advise the commissioner of education, the Kentucky Board of Education and the Education Professional Standards Board concerning the development of administrative regulations and education policy regarding gifted and talented students.

A report of the Gifted Advisory Council's activities is found as Attachment A.

Samples of brochures created by the Gifted Advisory Council will be shared at the April meeting.

In December 2012, the Commissioner established a Gifted and Talented Task Force for the purpose of reviewing and giving recommendations for the following:

- Current policies and procedures which impact gifted and talented students
- Successful services and where improvements should be made
- Challenges and barriers to gifted education
- Resource recommendations to the 2014 legislative session

The Task Force recommendations are found as Attachment B.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

On-going professional learning for teachers, comprehensive identification of gifted students, and appropriate delivery of services for gifted students are essential in order for every student to be college- and career-ready.

**Contact Persons:**

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**Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

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