**Section 27.495 Gifted Education Specialist**

a) The competent gifted education specialist, recognizing the learning and developmental differences of students with gifts and talents, promotes ongoing self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth of these students in school, home and community settings to ensure specific student outcomes. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) collects and develops tools and techniques to engage the full range of profiles of gifted and talented students, including students with special needs (e.g., students with disabilities (twice exceptional), English language learners, creatively gifted, visual-spatial learners, profoundly gifted), in identifying their interests, strengths and gifts;

2) assists gifted and talented students in developing their pride in their gifts and talents and encouraging their passion in their areas of interest;

3) develops activities that can be easily tailored to match each student's developmental needs and culture-based learning needs or to compensate for areas of deficit, to include students with special needs;

4) provides a variety of research-based grouping practices for use with gifted and talented students that allow them to interact with individuals of various gifts, talents, abilities and strengths;

5) models respect for individuals with diverse abilities, strengths and goals, including those with atypical gifted profiles (i.e., students with special needs);

6) provides role models (e.g., through mentors, bibliotherapy) for gifted and talented students that match their abilities and interests;

7) identifies extracurricular learning opportunities that match students' abilities and interests, and works to remove barriers to their taking advantage of these opportunities;

8) collaborates with families in accessing resources to develop their child's talents;

9) designs interventions for students to develop cognitive and affective growth that is based on research of effective practices;

10) develops specialized intervention services for underachieving gifted and talented students to accommodate their deficits, remediate barriers to achievement, leverage their gifts and build their community with other gifted and talented students;

11) enables students to identify their preferred approaches to learning, accommodates the students' preferences and expands them;

12) provides students with college and career guidance that is consistent with their strengths; and

13) implements a scope and sequence of the curriculum that contains personal and social awareness and adjustment, academic planning and vocational and career awareness.

b) The competent gifted education specialist has a deep understanding of assessment and its ability to provide information about identification, learning progress and outcomes, and evaluation of programming for students with gifts and talents in all domains. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) identifies gifted and talented students, including those students with special needs who may be underserved;

2) develops environments and instructional activities that accommodate the full range of learning and performing found among gifted populations, and encourages students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness;

3) uses current, research-based assessment strategies appropriate for accurately measuring the progress of all gifted and talented students, including students with special needs;

4) establishes comprehensive, cohesive and ongoing procedures for identifying and serving gifted and talented students; these provisions include informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures for both entry and exit from gifted program services;

5) selects and uses multiple assessments that measure diverse abilities, talents and strengths that are based on current theories, models and research;

6) selects assessments that provide qualitative and quantitative information from a variety of sources, including "off-level" testing (i.e., not designed for the grade level of the student), and are nonbiased and equitable, and technically adequate for the purpose;

7) possesses knowledge of student exceptionalities and collects assessment data while adjusting curriculum and instruction to learn about each student's developmental level and aptitude for learning;

8) interprets multiple assessments in different domains and understands the uses and limitations of the assessments in identifying the needs of gifted and talented students, including those students with special needs;

9) informs all parents and guardians about the identification process, obtains parental or guardian permission for assessments, uses culturally sensitive checklists, and elicits evidence regarding the child's interests and potential outside of the classroom setting;

10) selects and uses non-biased and equitable approaches for identifying gifted and talented students, which may include using locally developed norms or assessment tools in the child's native language or in nonverbal formats;

11) understands and implements district and State policies designed to foster equity in gifted programming and services;

12) provides parents and guardians with information in their native language regarding diverse behaviors and characteristics that are associated with giftedness, including unique characteristics associated with gifted students with special needs;

13) provides parents and guardians with information in their native language that explains the nature and purpose of gifted programming options;

14) uses differentiated pre- and post-performance-based assessments to measure the progress of gifted and talented students;

15) uses differentiated product-based assessments to measure the progress of gifted and talented students;

16) uses off-level standardized assessments to measure the progress of gifted and talented students;

17) uses and interprets qualitative and quantitative assessment information to develop a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of each gifted and talented student to plan appropriate intervention;

18) communicates and interprets assessment information to gifted and talented students and their parents or guardians;

19) ensures that the assessments used in the identification and evaluation processes are reliable, are sensitive to the needs of special populations, are valid for each instrument's purpose, allow for above grade-level performance and allow for diverse perspectives;

20) ensures that the assessment of the progress of gifted and talented students uses multiple indicators that measure mastery of content, higher-level thinking skills, achievement in specific program areas and affective growth;

21) assesses the quantity, quality and appropriateness of the programming and services provided for gifted and talented students by disaggregating assessment data and yearly progress data and making the results public;

22) provides the necessary time and resources to implement an annual evaluation plan developed by personnel with expertise in program evaluation and gifted education;

23) ensures that the evaluation plan is purposeful and evaluates how student-level outcomes are influenced by one or more of the following components of gifted education programming: identification, curriculum, instructional programming and services, ongoing assessment of student learning, counseling and guidance programs, teacher qualifications and professional development, parent and guardian and community involvement, programming resources, and programming design, management, and delivery; and

24) disseminates results of the program evaluation, orally and in written form, and explains how results will be used.

c) The competent gifted education specialist applies the theory and research-based models of curriculum and instruction for gifted and talented students and responds to his or her students' needs by planning, selecting, adapting and creating culturally relevant curriculum materials or curricula and by using a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) uses local, State and national standards to align and expand curriculum materials or curricula and instructional plans;

2) designs and uses a comprehensive and continuous scope and sequence to develop differentiated plans for gifted and talented students in prekindergarten through grade 12;

3) adapts, modifies or replaces the core or standard curriculum to meet the needs of gifted and talented students and those with special needs;

4) designs differentiated curricula that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive and complex content that can be modified to meet the needs of all gifted and talented students, including students with special needs;

5) uses a balanced assessment system, including pre-assessment and formative assessment, to identify students' needs, develop differentiated education plans and adjust plans based on continual progress monitoring;

6) uses pre-assessments and paces and differentiates instruction based on the learning rates and needs of each gifted and talented student, accelerating and compacting learning as appropriate;

7) uses information and technologies, including assistive technologies, to individualize instruction for gifted and talented students, including those who are twice-exceptional;

8) collaborates with school service personnel and special educators to design and deliver curricula in cognitive, affective, aesthetic, social and leadership domains that are challenging and effective for gifted and talented students, including students with special needs;

9) uses meta-cognitive models to meet the needs of gifted and talented students;

10) selects, adapts and uses a repertoire of instructional strategies and materials that differentiate instruction for gifted and talented students and respond to diversity;

11) uses school and community resources that support differentiation;

12) provides opportunities for gifted and talented students to explore, develop or research their areas of interest and/or talent;

13) uses critical-thinking strategies to meet the needs of gifted and talented students;

14) uses creative-thinking strategies to meet the needs of gifted and talented students;

15) uses problem-solving model strategies to meet the needs of gifted and talented students;

16) uses open-ended inquiry models to meet the needs of gifted and talented students;

17) develops and uses challenging, culturally responsive curriculum materials or curricula to engage all gifted and talented students;

18) integrates career exploration experiences into learning opportunities for gifted and talented students (e.g., biography study, speakers);

19) uses curriculum materials or curricula for deep explorations of cultures, languages and social issues related to diversity; and

20) demonstrates the ability to identify and leverage sources for high-quality resources and materials that are appropriate for gifted and talented students.

d) The competent gifted education specialist creates learning environments that foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership in the 21st century to ensure specific student outcomes. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) maintains high expectations for all gifted and talented students, as evidenced in meaningful cognitively and creatively challenging activities;

2) recognizes, accommodates and helps to remediate the limitations of gifted students with special needs in meeting production demands;

3) provides opportunities for self-exploration, development and pursuit of interests and development of identities supportive of achievement (e.g., through mentors and role models);

4) creates environments that support trust among diverse learners;

5) provides feedback that focuses on effort, evidence of potential to meet high standards and mistakes as learning opportunities;

6) provides examples of positive coping skills and opportunities to apply them;

7) understands the needs of gifted and talented students for both solitude and social interaction;

8) provides opportunities for gifted and talented students to interact with intellectual and artistic and creative peers, as well as with chronological-age peers;

9) provides students with special needs with opportunities to interact with both intellectual and emotional-age peers and with other gifted and talented students with special needs;

10) assesses and provides instruction on social skills needed for school, community and the world of work;

11) establishes a safe and welcoming climate for addressing social issues and developing personal responsibility;

12) provides environments for developing many forms of leadership and leadership skills;

13) promotes opportunities for leadership in community settings to effect positive change;

14) models appreciation for and sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds and languages;

15) censures discriminatory language and behavior, and models appropriate strategies for addressing social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping;

16) provides structured opportunities to collaborate with diverse peers on a common goal;

17) provides opportunities for advanced development and maintenance of first and second languages;

18) provides resources to enhance oral, written and artistic forms of communication, recognizing students' cultural context; and

19) ensures access to advanced communication tools, including assistive technologies, and use of these tools for expressing higher-level thinking and creative productivity.

e) The competent gifted education specialist is aware of empirical evidence regarding the cognitive, creative and affective development of gifted and talented students, and programming that meets their concomitant needs. Competent teachers use this expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement and effectively manage comprehensive services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) regularly uses multiple alternative approaches to accelerate learning;

2) regularly uses enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting;

3) regularly uses multiple forms of grouping, including clusters, resource rooms, special classes or special schools;

4) regularly uses individualized learning options, such as mentorships, internships, online courses and independent study;

5) regularly uses current technologies, including online learning options and assistive technologies, to enhance access to high-level programming;

6) demonstrates support for gifted programs through equitable allocation of resources and demonstrated willingness to ensure that gifted and talented students receive appropriate educational services;

7) collaborates with educators in gifted, general and special education programs, as well as those in specialized areas, to collaboratively plan, develop and implement services for gifted and talented students;

8) regularly engages families and community members for the purposes of planning, programming, evaluating and advocating;

9) tracks expenditures at the school level to verify appropriate and sufficient funding for gifted programming and services;

10) develops thoughtful, multi-year program plans in talent areas relative to students in prekindergarten through grade 12;

11) creates policies and procedures to guide and sustain all components of the program, including assessment, identification, acceleration practices and grouping practices, that are built on an evidence-based foundation in gifted education;

12) provides professional guidance and counseling for individual student strengths, interests and values; and

13) facilitates mentorships, internships and vocational programming experiences that match student interests and aptitudes.

f) The competent gifted education specialist formally assesses professional development needs related to standards, develops and monitors development plans, systematically engages in training to meet identified needs and demonstrates mastery of standards through the assessment of relevant student outcomes. The competent gifted education specialist:

1) participates in ongoing, research-supported professional development that addresses the foundations of gifted education, education of gifted students with special needs, characteristics of students with gifts and talents, assessment, curriculum planning and instruction, learning environments and programming;

2) provides professional development for teachers that models how to develop environments and instructional activities that encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness;

3) stays current regarding key issues affecting gifted students, such as anti-intellectualism, and trends in gifted education, such as equity and access;

4) provides human and material resources needed for professional development in gifted education (e.g., release time, funding for continuing education, substitute support, webinars, mentors);

5) expands the support system for gifted and talented students and their families by connecting them to organizations and publications relevant to gifted education;

6) assesses his or her instructional practices on an ongoing basis and, based on these assessments, continues his or her professional development related to gifted education through the school district's staff development, professional organizations and higher education settings;

7) assesses evidence of the impact of new instructional approaches both on teacher practice and student learning;

8) leverages multiple modes of delivering professional development, including online courses, online gifted-related communities, workshops, professional learning communities and book "talks";

9) identifies and addresses areas in his or her professional development plans for personal growth in the teaching of gifted and talented students;

10) responds to cultural and personal frames of reference when teaching gifted and talented students; and

11) complies with rules, policies and standards of ethical practice.

(Source: Added at 37 Ill. Reg. 16764, effective October 7, 2013)