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Gifted and Talented Students Program

The Newtown Board of Education (Board) recognizes its responsibility to identify gifted and talented students within the school district and to provide these students with appropriate instructional adaptations and services. The Board is committed to providing identification and assessment which is responsive to students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, disabling conditions and cultural diversity.

For purposes of this policy, "gifted and talented students" means a each child identified by the Screening Team as (A) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (B) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the general education program in order to realize the child's intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts.

For purposes of this policy "outstanding talent in the creative arts" means a child identified by the Screening Team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts.

The Newtown Public Schools (the "District") shall provide educational programs for the gifted and talented, within budgetary constraints, which include a broad spectrum of learning experiences which increase knowledge and develop skills necessary for the student to function successfully in society while encouraging students to excel in areas of special competence and interest.

Though early identification of the gifted and talented is important, it is essential that the identification of these students be recognized as a continuing process in that special abilities and skills appear at different times in the lives of many children and new children are regularly being enrolled in the system.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures for an ongoing kindergarten through grade twelve identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity or a specific academic area.

Multiple measures may include, but are not limited to, tests of academic achievement, aptitude, intelligence, and creativity; achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; samples of student work; parent, student, and/or teacher recommendations; and other appropriate measures. The identification methodology will include consideration of all students, including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or Section 504 Plans, shall be developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered by the District.

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The final determination in the identification of students as gifted and/or talented must be done by a Screening Team. The Screening Team charged with this responsibility shall be composed of a group of certified or licensed professionals representing each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs, who participate equally in the decision making process.

Upon the identification of a student as gifted and talented, the District shall provide a paper copy and electronic notice of such identification to the parent/guardian of such student. Such notice shall include, but need not be limited to:

1. an explanation of how such student was identified as gifted and/or talented;
2. the contact information for the District's employee in charge of the provision of services to gifted and talented students, or, if there is no such employee, the District's employee in charge of the provision of special education and related services;
3. the contact information for the employee at the State Department of Education who has been designated as responsible for providing information and assistance to Boards of Education and parents or guardians of students related to gifted and talented students, pursuant to section 10-3e of the General Statutes; and
4. any associations in the state that provide support to gifted and talented students.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the results of the evaluation conducted by the Screening Team, the parent/guardian has a right to a hearing.

As per state statute, the District may identify up to ten (10) percent of the total student population for the District as gifted and talented.

The school district shall utilize the guidelines, developed and promulgated by the State Department of Education (SDE), for providing gifted and talented-related services to those eligible students. The guidelines include best practices for the district to consider for (1) addressing the intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students in schools and (2) providing teacher training and professional development on gifted and talented students.

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-76a-(e) Definitions.
10-76d-(e) Duties and powers of Boards of Education to provide special education programs and services.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76xx Notification of students identified as gifted and talented. Adoption of policy re equitable identification of gifted and talented students.
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Sections 10-76a-1–10-76l-1.
Connecticut State Department of Education Guidance Regarding Identification and Service. SDE Guidance, March 2019,
P.A. 21 199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Section 2