



Response to the Education Management Groups Call to Delay the Gifted Operating Standards and the List of Their Concerns.

November 11th, 2016

On November 8th, the education management groups sent a letter to State Board of Education members requesting a delay in action on the gifted operating standards in order to do a fiscal analysis of the impact of the standards. They also outlined several concerns. OAGC strongly opposes delaying these standards. This rule has been under discussion for over three years. There has been no other issue before the board that has been more fully debated. To delay any further is both unnecessary and unhelpful to districts and children. The concern that there are new fiscal burdens placed on the district based on the new standards is unfounded. Gifted services are not mandated, and no district is required to provide gifted services, even though each district receives gifted funding.

The group letter states that two service options with a maximum caseload requirement of 80 students should be analyzed for the potential cost if these models were “implemented for all Ohio’s students who are currently identified as gifted.” This statement indicates that the education management groups do not understand these standards fully. The two service models, co-teaching and resource rooms, make up a very small percentage of a menu of services that can be used by districts. To apply these particular ratios for all gifted students to measure fiscal impact makes no sense. Again, the ratios are in the current standards and do not increase any burden on districts. These standards are no more prescriptive than the current standards, and in many cases they are less so. The new standards release districts from many current ratios and caseload maximums. There are waivers for relief from the few ratios that were maintained. Finally, the new innovative gifted service proposal will allow districts to serve gifted students with the ultimate flexibility which would be fettered only by the limits of their creativity.

Superintendents and administrators asked for flexibility, which is fully provided in the current draft of the standards. But they also begged for clear direction on what to do. These standards provide that clear direction. Gifted students, gifted staff, and district staff cannot continue to work in a state of limbo. These standards need to be passed now so that districts can prepare for next year.

OAGC strongly urges the achievement committee members to vote these standards out of committee next week and ensure they go to the full board with an intent to adopt in December, at the latest.

OAGC’s responses to the specific concerns of the education management groups are as follows:

1. Objection: The requirement of having a gifted intervention specialist as the teacher in the service settings of self-contained classroom, single subject, co-teaching model, and resource room.

Response: It appears that the education management groups believe that there should be *no* service model available utilizing a fully-trained gifted intervention specialist. One can only assume that, again, there is misunderstanding of how these standards work. These specific service models are part of a full menu of many options. There is no requirement to use these models. The models

referenced are required by ORC, and they exist in the current standards. They are not prescribed now, nor are they prescribed in the current draft and present no additional burden to districts.

2. Objection: Maximum caseload requirements of 80.

Response: This caseload is based on research-based national standards and input from gifted professionals. Again, the caseload exists in the current standards, and there are waivers available.

3. Objection: The statement that all students who meet the requirement for district services be provided those services.

Response: This is required by law and is an equal access issue. Without this statement, districts can pick and choose which students are included in services. Research shows this leads to fewer minority and economically disadvantaged students being served. This requirement has been in the standards going back to 2000. Districts do not have to provide services to all students. They *can* set the criteria for placement to ensure that the resources they have available to match the number of students meeting the criteria. What they cannot do is choose specific students who all meet the same standard. Removing this requirement opens the door to bias in selecting students for services.

4. Objection: Professional development requirements of regular classroom teachers serving gifted students in the general education classroom.

Response: Based on research, Ohio specific surveys and input from the field, it is clear that some parameters around gifted professional development are warranted. It is a disservice to teachers who are tasked to provide services to gifted students and the students themselves, if appropriate training is not provided. The professional development requirement and the topics to be covered are based on extensive research. A summary of this body of research is included in the OAGC high quality professional development position paper, which can be found [here](#). Most teachers are required to document 180 hours of training every five years to renew a license. If districts appropriately group gifted students with classroom teachers who welcome this training, it is not unreasonable to ask that they are provided with a minimal level of specific gifted professional development. Research shows that general educators are not effective in providing services to gifted students, so we need to ensure that guidance provides as much integrity to the model as possible. If districts do not want to provide appropriate training to classroom teachers, than they do not need to do so. They should also then not report those students as served, because they won't be. But districts that do choose the regular classroom to serve gifted students need to ensure that those classroom educators are prepared to actually provide services.

5. Objection: Students should not be provided services if the parent doesn't provide a signature.

Response: This is an equal access issue. Districts currently are not required to have a parent signature on a written education plan, and many do not. OAGC supports ODE's language that requires districts to request a parent signature so that they understand what services are to be provided to their children. But if a signature is *required* for services, many poor and minority children will not be served. Parents are always allowed to opt their children out of services.

6. Objection: Gifted coordinators having an administrator license.

Response: Gifted coordinators do not have to have an administrator license. They need to have an administrator license if they are supervising and evaluating staff, just as all others are required to do. This is unchanged from the current rule.

7. Objection: Concerns with the risk assessment criteria for gifted audits with no specific criteria.

Response: OAGC asked for more specific criteria, and ODE staff wanted the flexibility to develop it within the agency. We respect ODE's wishes on this issue.

8. Objection: Withholding gifted funds for districts out of compliance with the gifted law and rule.

Response: This is required as part of ORC and is in the current standards.

9. and 10. Objection: Removal of language allowing any staff with experience to supervise the writing of WEPs and to provide professional development

Response: ODE staff indicated that this language was mis-drafted in terms of their intent. OAGC supports ODE's decision to revise that language. "Experience" can mean as little as an hour of gifted professional development and unspecified qualifications for the supervision of writing WEPs and providing professional development. We would never allow this for students of disabilities. It is equally and highly inappropriate for gifted children.

If you have any questions or concerns about OAGC's response, please feel free to contact me.

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