

Ohio Federation Input on Draft Gifted Operating Standards

The Ohio Federation is concerned about the current proposed version of the Operating Standards for Gifted Students. Our concerns are consistent with our general notion that there need to be standards in place that allow *reasonable* flexibility from district to district. We are opposed to flexibility that can lead to money saving measures that do not serve students well. Any flexibility should be in place in a way that allows for student learning to be enhanced. Here are some of the issues that need to be addressed:

Funding - All mention of any funding for gifted services is eliminated. There is no guidance on a reasonable expenditure to service gifted students in a meaningful way. As written, it is not unlikely that a district would only identify and serve gifted students if there is "funding available." Most assuredly, in these times of tight budgets this is likely to lead to many students being left unserved or served in a cursory fashion. We recommend adding language to the standards reflecting the need for adequate funding and replacing the language that funding can be withheld if gifted students are not being served in a meaningful way.

Quality of service - With the removal of standards for time, class size, and case load, LEAs are able to provide perfunctory services designed to comply with the need to "offer services" without the assurance that the services are of the quality that leads to meaningful student learning.

Further, without the mention of outputs, it is unclear what the state would consider a meaningful result for gifted students. How will the state determine if gifted programs are effective? We would recommend that the state work with the state and/or national organizations for gifted students to determine research based best practices around time, class size, and case load that can be included in the standards.

Preparedness of General Education Teachers/Gifted Coordinators - The removal of the requirement for ongoing supports and trainings for general education teachers providing service to gifted students in their classrooms means that general education teachers will be servicing students without adequate preparation to make the decisions that can enhance gifted learners. On page 10 of the draft document, Section 4.b.(b) it outlines some of the skills and knowledge a general educator should possess, but who will be determining if the teacher has them or provide training to them if they do not possess these skills?

This leads to the issue of gifted coordinators no longer needing any specialty training. On page 16, the qualifications of a gifted coordinator are: Ohio administrative specialist license; only if the coordinator is to supervise teachers and documented training in the gifted operating standards. This is not sufficient to fulfill the litany of responsibilities outlined in operating standards. How, for instance, would someone with no training in teaching and working with gifted students be able to: assist in the design of gifted educational services; assist in developing written education plans for gifted students; consult with school personnel in ways to adapt school curriculum materials and teaching strategies for gifted students; provide teaching demonstrations to model appropriate teaching practices or classroom management strategies for gifted students; or evaluate gifted intervention specialists and general educators who serve gifted students?

These are just a few of the responsibilities that will be assigned to a person that may have no

gifted background. How can we assure quality service to enhance student learning if this is the case?

We hope you will consider these comments and, should you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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