



# IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED STUDENTS



## A POSITION PAPER

The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) periodically publishes position papers that deal with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. All position papers approved by the CAG Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's philosophy and mission, and the current research in the field.

The position papers support the organization's belief in the value and uniqueness of all individuals, its respect for diversity present in our society, and its commitment to honoring the similarities and differences among all students. CAG encourages the provision of educational opportunities that are appropriate to challenge and nurture the growth of each child's potential. The organization is especially mindful of the need for advocacy for individuals who have developed or show the promise of developing intellectual abilities and talents at high levels.



# IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED STUDENTS

## **Recommended Practices for Identification**

A student's giftedness creates specific learning needs. The purpose of identification is to find those students who require educational modifications to meet those needs. To achieve this purpose, educators and researchers have provided recommendations for the processes used in the identification. Among these are:

- Identification procedures must be based on a broad and well-defined conception of giftedness to ensure appropriate service.
- Identification and placement must be based on student need, rather than on the number of students who can be accommodated by a program or a pre-specified percentage of students.
- Multiple criteria that include standardized and non-standardized instruments, process and performance indicators, and multiple sources of data must be used in the identification of gifted learners. A single criterion is not adequate and does not meet the requirements of the law.
- Identification strategies and instruments must be used that are appropriate for each different area of giftedness that the program is designed to serve.
- The instruments selected for the identification process must be reliable and valid for the abilities they are expected to measure.
- Scores of unlike assessments must not be totaled, as this practice not only masks the student's strength, it makes placement more difficult.
- Appropriate instruments and non-traditional methods of identification should be considered to identify underserved populations. These instruments must take into account the different aspects of giftedness exhibited in different cultures (e.g., rapid acquisition of the English Language in comparison to their peers, leadership, problem solving abilities, assuming family responsibilities at an early age).



## **The Process Leading to Identification: Search, Screen, Identify, and Place**

The first step in identification is the **search** for gifted learners and the development of a list of possible candidates. To consider the values and resulting practices within each culture represented in the district, and to be sure as much information as possible is considered, nominations should be encouraged from many sources including parents, teachers and other school personnel, peers, and the student.

The next step is to **screen** the listed candidates for students who need the services of a gifted program. The information collected on each candidate must now be analyzed to develop a profile or case study for identification of giftedness and determination of appropriate differentiated services. Screens that could be used for all areas of ability include nomination forms from school and home, student work, testing, evidence of achievement, family history and student background.

The **identification** of students who will be a part of the district's gifted program is step three. The purpose of identification is appropriate placement in a gifted program. Actual identification is best done by a group of professionals representing a variety of areas of expertise, such as the principal, a teacher, a counselor or psychologist, and the program coordinator.

The final step is to **place** the selected student in the gifted program **and** then **modify** the student's educational experiences, according to the options defined by the education code; these include cluster grouping, part-time grouping, special day class, and special schools. Parent involvement in this process is recommended and parent permission for placement is necessary.

The identification of gifted students must lead to appropriate service that should be defined in the program design. Because giftedness can be expressed in many ways, intellectually, academically, creatively, and through leadership and visual and performing arts, it is necessary to develop the gifted program with a wide range of learning opportunities. These learning experiences must be able to appropriately address as many emerging and advanced areas of giftedness as possible as early as possible.

The California Association for the Gifted believes that gifted programs should continue to search out the extraordinarily talented in all social and cultural groups by using the available techniques that are most sound. We should continue to do what we do best and what no other education program attempts to do: provide a wide array of educational opportunities for exceptionally able children so that they may continue to grow academically, intellectually, and emotionally. CAG believes that all children are eligible for the nomination process regardless of their socioeconomic, linguistic, or cultural background and /or exceptionalities.



It is CAG's position that by following the steps in the identification process outlined above, all children will be well served and the identification of gifted children best implemented. Identification, when appropriately done, is the key to educational placement that leads to the realization of gifted potential.

## References

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