

**Florida Department of Education
Division of Public Schools and Community Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services**

**Gifted Rule Meeting
1707 Turlington Building
Tallahassee, Florida
July 29, 2002**

Meeting Minutes and Notes

Participants: Sandy Akre for Barbara Slaga, Maria de Armas, Roosevelt Johnson, Martha Kesler, Joe Orr, Peter Roos, Connie Sorice

Bureau Staff: Shan Goff, Iris Palazesi, Michele Polland, Donnajo Smith

USF Consultants: George Batsche, Curtis Richardson

Observers: Susan Barnes, Bernardo Garcia, Connie Tzovarras

S. Goff provided a welcome, reviewed rule activities since the last meeting on April 30, 2002, including the rule revision that eliminated race as a consideration in Plan B, and identified parameters for the continued work on rule revision.

Parameters:

- Gifted is part of Exceptional Student Education (ESE), which means that there are protections and requirements
- Federal regulations re: selection of instruments
- Individual planning
- Procedural safeguards
 - Complaint
 - Due process
 - Replicable decisions
- Designed for children in need of services to benefit from education
- Gifted not talented
- Weighted funding
 - ESE guaranteed allocation
- 4.0-4.3% statewide gifted population

I. Palazesi identified recommendations that emerged from the April 30, 2002 meeting.

All evaluations must:

- Be reliable and valid
- Be unbiased
- Be applicable to all students

- Be appropriate for students from underrepresented populations
- Include multiple sources of data
- Allow district flexibility

I. Palazesi presented current rule concepts based on the feedback from the spring regional rule workshops and April 30, 2002, rule workgroup meeting. This included ideas regarding

- Definitions
- School district obligations including teacher training, parent information, and student screening
- Documentation required for referral including evidence of need and mastery of age appropriate grade level state standards
- Criteria for eligibility based on a student's need for services and demonstrated abilities in academic achievement and general intellectual functioning
- Instructional services

Following the presentation, the workgroup identified concerns.

- Emphasis on replicability
- Superior intellectual functioning and academics
- Multiple professionals and multiple tests
- Heavy reliance on testing
- Standardization of assessment procedures
- What is the intent?
 - How do we assure that we are meeting the needs of the students who have been identified? How do we document the need?
- List the assets!
 - How do we identify underachievers if we are identifying by standard of achievement?
- Definition must address who the program is intended to serve
- Can't ignore the highly gifted
- Twice exceptional?
- Patterns of achievement and accomplishment are note-worthy
- A valid process by which we identify giftedness as a disability

The workgroup separated into two small groups to discuss and make recommendations regarding the concepts.

Group 1

- Purpose – Issues
 - Some students demonstrate need beyond general education program; very superior cognitive functioning
 - An efficiency issue to use IQ tests
 - There are students who don't test well; others only do well on the tests

- Removing language relating to IQ may have impact on some students (who would otherwise not be identified)
- If we would look at talent development, more resources are needed
- Student should have need for the program
 - How do we define need?
- To enhance academic performance and how do we measure it?
- How to change mindset that high IQ does not equal need?
- Student progress – should it be measured to ensure that students are benefiting and continue to need the program?
- Any way to avoid the use of IQ tests?
- Two groups:
 - Students who are not performing at the expected level (underachieving students)
 - Those students who have high performance (who have traditionally been served in the program)
- Need for the program is critical
 - Gifted program would meet the need better than any other program
- Underachievement – need criteria on underachieving (then should monitor)
- Rate of learning is important to consider
- Purpose
 - To provide specially designed instruction for students who demonstrate a need for differentiated experiences, beyond what is provided in the general curriculum, in order to progress at levels commensurate with their superior abilities
- School district obligations
 - Provide “comprehensive” information with information so that parents understand their rights
 - Be more specific about training and screening
 - Screening – purpose is to ensure that students who would not be obvious are screened
 - Gifted plan modeled on LEP plan
 - Specific mandates that school districts must do to reach out to minorities – include training on characteristics of minority kids
 - More clarity of screening for all students with emphasis on minority students
 - Look for ways to “screen-in” not “screen-out”
 - Language related to screening – students have equal access to an unbiased evaluation process
 - Consider requiring screening at or by specific grade level (s) (e.g. – all children at 2nd grade level) – to look for giftedness with an instrument that is sensitive to the ways that students from different groups show giftedness
 - Be more specific re: training (more specific than on last draft)
 - Provide parents with information and training so that parents understand their rights, including how to access services for gifted students

- Additional resources are needed so that fair screening and assessment occur – if there are no new funds, reallocate the current funding to ensure this happens
- Early identification – there are issues related to environment and early development – need to be careful about predictive power of students entering kindergarten identified as gifted
- Does uniform kindergarten screening provide information that can be used? Investigate utility of data from screening for gifted screening
- Concerns about screening – who, when, how
- Ensure there are numerous opportunities for screening – address issue related to mobility
- Screening should be sensitive to students from diverse backgroups – plans should address aggressive outreach in the community
- Primary screeners are parents and classroom teachers (training should focus on these people)
- Referral:
 - Clarify difference between screening and referral
 - Is referral section needed? Referral is important to document that child needs special services
 - If child is referred, will the child be evaluated?
 - Clarify the purpose of the screening process (i.e. to gather more information)
- Need section on evaluation procedures (vs. criteria)
 - Need will be addressed during the evaluation process
- Criteria for eligibility
 - Use professional judgment that student has need for the program based on intellectual potential – would require well-trained personnel
 - Develop rubrics or matrix (criteria and levels of performance)
 - Clearly articulated need
 - Differentiated services to meet the need can be identified
 - Student demonstrates superior or potential for superior cognitive performance
 - Demonstrates superior or potential for superior rates of learning
 - Not limited to academic achievement

Group Two

- Purpose
 - Should we state the purpose for gifted services?
 - What do other programs do?
 - No other ESE program states a purpose
 - Agreed – not necessary
 - Consistency: superior / very superior
 - 96% or 98% - if we go to 96% will we double the numbers?
 - P.B. – low SES whites were more often identified than other groups [with Plan B]
- Need

- What has the regular education teacher done to meet the needs of this student?
- What issues have already been addressed?
- Strategies used?
- Requirement is to meet academic needs (FCAT focus) – What does that mean for enrichment programs?
- When the need is not addressed the students drop out or become discipline problems. There is a need for an academic challenge.
- What changes do we need?
 - Need clarification of “academic achievement” – grade level?
 - Academic AND intellectual abilities
- Will that cut out underrepresented populations in particular?
 - In particular LEPs?
- The challenge provided may vary from one school or class to another so significant to look at how needs are currently met.
- Should academic achievement be excluded from the definition or be used as evidence of need?
- What measures should be used?
- Screening
 - Purpose of screening –
 - Do we need an assertive way of looking at students to identify signs of giftedness (ex: Alachua’s)
 - Identify intellectual ability
 - Screening needed to narrow the field
 - Heighten staff awareness of who may need the program and heighten awareness of characteristics
 - Need to look at all students
 - Should there be formal and informal screening
 - Similar to child find
Searching
Widely
For } Gifted SWEEP
Exceptional
Educational
Potential
 - We need to get past the biases
 - Needs to be written in the rule to have a mandatory screening – mandate screening
 - Should it be done by state or district?
 - Every year? How often?
 - Districts could determine what to use – Mandate training so teachers know what to look for
 - Primary, Intermediate, Middle } Minimums, once at each level, mandated at elementary (at least a couple of times)
 - Consensus

- Agreed – How do we address a high test score when there is no demonstrated need for program?
- Eligibility
 - Private testing will be considered
 - Important to have other factors
 - Important to have teachers trained for identification
 - How can we document the needs of the children?
 - 6 or 9 weeks grading period
 - Professional judgment (not in any other ESE category)
 - “Very rare cases “ – problematic
 - define “very rare cases”
 - in cases of low SES disabilities, LEP
 - such as the TAP on partial scores
 - use these descriptors rather than saying “very rare cases”
 - Teacher recommendation should be a strong indicator [Bias may not be a factor]
 - Foundation needs to be “need for program”
 - We document failure: document accomplishments
 - How do we get into the program those kids who otherwise would not?
 - Characteristics should be part of the screening mechanism
 - What should be required for screening?
 - What about the child who is tested privately?
 - Private testing MAY be considered.
 - How do we document need from home school or transfer?
 - Academics (portfolio, clarify what will be in it – important to be consistent – achievement tests, parent interviews ...need a list), writing prompt, leadership, motivation, creativity [student product portfolio]
 - A centralized area team for assessment of the portfolio can help in stabilizing overview
 - A rubric for portfolio assessment helps
 - Needs to be standardized
 - Potential measures
 - Academic achievement
 - Standardized testing (including FCAT)
 - GPA may be a measure of motivation, not a measure of achievement
 - Rate of learning
 - CBM
 - K-2 individual achievement
 - 3-12 individual achievement
 - High achievement by second language learners
 - Intellectual functioning
 - Woodcock – Johnson
 - Weschler
 - Stanford-Binet
 - DAS

- Nonverbal – Unit, Naglieri, Leiter
- Problem solving?
 - TOPS – language based
- What is the evidence of need?
 - Statement from teacher
 - Teacher documents attempts to meet needs
 - Sometimes can be assessed by parent
 - Multiple sources
 - Self perception/ interview/ questionnaire
 - Observations
 - Assess strengths / weaknesses
 - High academic achievement
 - Screening indicators
 - Academic underachievement

The workgroup will reconvene for two meetings in October. Dates to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.