

STATE OF NEW YORK

10027

IN ASSEMBLY

March 4, 2020

Introduced by M. of A. McDONOUGH -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing statewide standards for gifted education programs and requiring school districts to be accountable for providing such gifted education programs

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "gifted
2 education reinforcement act".

3 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 4454 to read
4 as follows:

5 § 4454. Gifted education. 1. For the purposes of this section, the
6 following terms shall have the following meanings:

7 a. "Gifted" shall mean neurological development which allows one to
8 exhibit cognitive ability and/or ingenuity significantly more sophisti-
9 cated than average in one or more areas.

10 b. "Individualized education program" shall mean an educational plan
11 designed to meet a student's learning needs via the use of various adap-
12 tations.

13 c. "504 plan" shall have the same meaning as defined in the federal
14 rehabilitation act of 1973.

15 d. "Competency-based education" shall mean an educational system based
16 on students' demonstration of mastery of a given topic.

17 2. A board of education shall:

18 a. ensure that sufficient educational services are provided to gifted
19 students from kindergarten through grade twelve and that proper instruc-
20 tional adjustments are made in accordance with established standards;

21 b. create the necessary policies for a continuous identification proc-
22 ess from kindergarten through grade twelve, which shall consist of
23 multiple measures in order to definitively identify strengths in various
24 academic areas. To ensure equal access to the gifted education program,
25 the identification process shall include adaptations for certain groups
26 of students, including those who are English language learners and those
27 with individualized education programs or 504 plans;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 c. provide ample resources and time to develop, reevaluate, and
2 improve instructional tools for gifted education;

3 d. develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional
4 adjustments used for gifted students indicating content, process,
5 products, and learning environment, and including additional educational
6 activities such as academic competitions, guest speakers, and lessons
7 with a specialist. Such adjustments shall be included in staff and
8 student schedules, as well as lesson and unit plans, and shall be
9 accounted for in budgets for educational materials;

10 e. appoint a coordinator who shall oversee the operations and content
11 of the district's gifted education program;

12 f. create and uphold a list of students identified as gifted in every
13 school within the district; and

14 g. actively and consistently provide and support professional develop-
15 ment for teachers, school leaders, and administrative staff regarding
16 gifted education.

17 3. a. The commissioner shall appoint a qualified coordinator of gifted
18 education programs who shall be responsible for reviewing the programs
19 implemented in each school district, assessing whether programs comply
20 with the provisions of this section, and approving subsequent proposals
21 in the area of gifted education.

22 b. Each school district shall file a report with the coordinator of
23 gifted education programs within the duration of the first full school
24 year following the effective date of this section and once every three
25 years thereafter. Such report shall include, but not be limited to:

26 (i) a thorough explanation of the continuum of policies, curriculum,
27 and services implemented in the district pertaining to gifted education;

28 (ii) a complete description of the identification process used by the
29 district to determine placement into the gifted education program;

30 (iii) the total number of students receiving gifted education services
31 and the percentage of the total district student population receiving
32 such services;

33 (iv) the professional development opportunities and services provided
34 on the topic of gifted education;

35 (v) the number of staff employed by the school district whose job
36 responsibilities include the identification and instruction of gifted
37 students; and

38 (vi) a delineation of any plausible future plans for expanding,
39 improving, or otherwise altering the gifted education program imple-
40 mented by the district.

41 4. a. The commissioner shall develop a protocol pursuant to which an
42 individual may file a formal complaint asserting that a school district
43 is noncompliant with this section. Such protocol shall require that
44 upon the filing of a formal complaint the department shall lead an
45 investigation into the accused school district's policies. Such protocol
46 shall also include procedures to be followed in the remediation of gift-
47 ed education programs in noncompliant school districts.

48 b. A complaint submitted to the department may not assert noncompli-
49 ance that has occurred in excess of one year prior to the date of the
50 complaint's filing. The complaint shall include:

51 (i) a statement that the school district in question is in a state of
52 noncompliance with this section;

53 (ii) facts and circumstances that evince and lend credence to the
54 claim that the district is in a state of noncompliance; and

55 (iii) the full name, address, and contact information of the complain-
56 ant.

1 c. The department shall complete an investigation within ninety days
2 of receipt of a complaint and issue a written decision, including a
3 proposal for remediation if necessary, to the school district and the
4 complainant.

5 5. Each school district shall make information pertaining to its
6 gifted education program available on the school district's website.
7 Such information shall include the school district's policies, services
8 provided via the program, procedures and measures used to identify gift-
9 ed students, and timelines relating to the identification process.

10 6. a. In order to set a uniform standard of entry into gifted
11 programs, the department shall, with the approval of the commissioner
12 and the coordinator of gifted education programs, select a standardized
13 test of intelligence and a standardized test of creativity which shall
14 both be components of the identification process. The criteria to be met
15 by examinations shall consist of the following:

16 (i) the examinations shall be norm-referenced and recognized by a
17 national authority on gifted education;

18 (ii) the examinations shall be able to be individually administered;
19 and

20 (iii) the examinations shall be able to be administered from kinder-
21 garten to grade twelve.

22 b. Every school district shall use the examinations selected by the
23 department pursuant to paragraph a of this subdivision when determining
24 eligibility of students for entry into gifted education programs.

25 c. The examinations selected pursuant to paragraph a of this subdivi-
26 sion shall be administered by a qualified psychological examiner.

27 d. Once students are identified as gifted they shall not be obliged to
28 take the examinations selected pursuant to paragraph a of this subdivi-
29 sion again.

30 7. a. A student is eligible for gifted education programs in one or
31 more subjects if the student meets the following criteria:

32 (i) the student demonstrates superior neurological development, as
33 evidenced by an intelligence quotient at least two standard deviations
34 above the mean on a standardized test of intelligence or an individual
35 component of the test; and

36 (ii) the student demonstrates superior creativity, as evidenced by a
37 score in at least the ninetieth percentile on a standardized test of
38 creativity; and

39 (iii) at least one of the following:

40 (1) the student demonstrates above-average ingenuity inside and/or
41 outside the classroom, as observed by the student's teachers;

42 (2) the student demonstrates the need for a special program due to the
43 default educational program in one or more academic areas being insuffi-
44 ciently challenging for the student, as observed by the student's teach-
45 ers; or

46 (3) the student demonstrates an intense voracity for knowledge or
47 motivation for learning that cannot be satisfied by the default educa-
48 tional program in one or more academic areas, as observed by the
49 student's teachers.

50 b. Teachers shall rate students on a scale of one to one hundred in
51 the domains of creativity (criterion 3) and motivation (criterion 5) and
52 recommend all children with scores greater than or equal to ninety to
53 the school district's panel of three or more qualified evaluators if the
54 student already or has previously satisfied the criteria listed in para-
55 graph a of this subdivision. Teachers shall also provide the panel with

1 additional information regarding the rationale behind the ratings given
2 to recommended students.

3 c. Following the receipt of teacher recommendations, the panel of
4 three or more qualified evaluators shall examine each case and make
5 decisions regarding students' placement.

6 8. a. The department shall develop statewide standards, based on the
7 framework of currently existing standards employed in the state, via the
8 addition of markedly more complex, challenging, and thorough material in
9 order to ensure the stimulation of students enrolled in gifted education
10 programs and the most complete comprehension possible.

11 b. School districts shall develop their own curricula based on stand-
12 ards approved by the department.

13 9. a. School districts shall utilize a combination of individualized
14 education programs and acceleration in gifted education programs, with
15 either one of the two or both being used in accordance to which course
16 is in the best interest of a particular gifted student.

17 b. A gifted student's individualized education program shall be devel-
18 oped by the coordinator of gifted education programs of the school
19 district, with input from the current teachers of the student and input
20 from the school psychologist and guidance counselor, if applicable.
21 Individualized education programs shall involve the use of alternative
22 teaching methods, such as competency-based education, and/or differen-
23 tiated content.

24 c. A gifted student's acceleration plan, if such a plan is deemed
25 suitable for the student, shall be developed by the coordinator of
26 gifted education programs of the school district, with mandatory input
27 from the current teachers of the student and input from the school
28 psychologist and guidance counselor, if applicable. Acceleration shall
29 involve a student's placement into a higher-level class in one, multi-
30 ple, or all subjects dependent on the student's level of proficiency in
31 each subject.

32 10. A student's status of being identified as gifted shall be written
33 in that student's record.

34 11. Gifted education shall be included as a subsection of special
35 education in the department's budget.

36 § 3. This act shall take effect on the first of July next succeeding
37 the date on which it shall have become a law.