

Rockwood Area SD

Gifted Education Plan Assurances (Chapter 16) | 2025 - 2028

Profile

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Gifted Education Plan Assurance

1. Describe your district's Child Find public notice procedures conducted annually to inform the public of the gifted education services AND programs offered (newspaper, student handbooks, school website, etc.).

Rockwood Area School District follows Child Find procedures, in that the District locates and identifies all school-age students within the District who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially-designed instruction. The Rockwood Area School District annually conducts awareness activities to inform the public and parents/guardians of school-age children residing within its boundaries, enrolled both in public and nonpublic schools, about gifted education services and programs, as well as how to request these services and programs. The district distributes information through the use of a public outreach awareness system that can reach all parts of the community, including parents/guardians of school-age children not enrolled in district schools. Written notice about the district's gifted education services and programs may be provided annually by: - Publication in local newspapers and other media, including the annual district newsletter; - Printing in district publications and/or literature, including student handbooks; - Posting on the district website within the special education and student services department. The annual public notification will include the following: - A description of gifted services and programs available from the district, and the needs of children served by these services and programs; - The purpose, frequency, and processes used in screening activities; - A description of how to request that the district initiate screening and evaluation activities for a child; - An explanation of the confidentiality protections for information regarding a specific child. The District utilizes the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 (AIU8) for annual child-find notices, which are published in multiple local newspapers, as well as the annual Rockwood Area SD newsletter. All published information is reviewed annually by district administrators, including the district special education director, to ensure accuracy.

2. Describe your district's screening process for locating students who are thought to be gifted and may need specially designed instruction. Use district specific details including the data sources used in the process as well as the titles for those staff who have an active role in screening. If the district uses a matrix/rubric, include the matrix in this section.

The Rockwood Area School District will locate and identify all students of school age residing within its boundaries who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The district will screen all students and evaluate those who are thought to be gifted based on information gathered through screenings and other sources of information (e.g., parent input, teacher referral for evaluation). Rockwood Area School District utilizes a multilevel screening model for locating students thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. Utilization of a matrix system with multiple criteria for eligibility indicates that the determination of gifted ability is not based solely on IQ score alone, which creates a comprehensive evaluation for students who may require specially designed instruction in the form of gifted support services. All students in the 2nd Grade are screened with a group cognitive screening assessment - the Cognitive Ability Tests (COGATs) - in the spring of their 2nd grade year. Results are reviewed by the district school psychologist, district special education director, and elementary principal to determine students who may need to move forward in the screening process. Students who obtain FSIQ scores with confidence intervals above a standard score of 125 move to Level 1 of the Rockwood Area SD Gifted Eligibility Matrix. Elementary - District administration at the elementary level holds grade-level meetings on a bi-weekly basis to discuss student achievement and progress in the classroom setting. Teachers have the opportunity to make referrals for gifted screening throughout the school year as this data is reviewed by the district school psychologist and district administrator (principal, assistant principal) in these meetings. Data presented may include data from universally administered diagnostic assessments including Amplify (DIBELs) and Link-It!, as well as the Cognitive Ability Tests (COGATs), a group-administered standardized ability measure, a review of student grades and academic performance in the classroom, and teacher observation. Grades from math and reading for K-3, and math, reading, science, and social studies for grades 4-12, are also considered at this level. High School - District administration at the high school level meets annually (at a minimum) to discuss student concerns and review student data with the school guidance counselor and classroom teachers. At these meetings, teachers are provided the opportunity to

make referrals for Gifted evaluations. Data presented may include a review of student grades and academic performance in the classroom and teacher observation. Grades across all subjects may be reviewed as well.

3. Describe your district specific process for determining ELIGIBILITY (through MULTIPLE CRITERIA) and NEED (based on ACADEMIC STRENGTH) for potentially mentally gifted students (EVALUATION). Use district specific details including the data sources used in the process as well as the titles for those staff who have an active role in the evaluation process. If the district uses a matrix/rubric for evaluation that is different from the one described in Question 2, include the different matrix in this section.

The Rockwood Area School District will locate and identify all students of school age residing within its boundaries who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The district will screen all students and evaluate those who are thought to be gifted based on information gathered through screenings and other sources of information (e.g., parent input, teacher referral for evaluation). Rockwood Area School District utilizes a multilevel screening model for locating students thought to be gifted and in need of specially-designed instruction. Utilization of a matrix system with multiple criteria for eligibility indicates that the determination of gifted ability is not based solely on IQ score alone, which creates a comprehensive evaluation for students who may require specially designed instruction in the form of gifted support services. The initial screening and evaluation process begins at Level 1, with the review of data from universally administered diagnostic assessments including Amplify (DIBELs) and Link-It!, as well as the Cognitive Ability Tests (COGATs), a group-administered standardized ability measure, a review of student grades and academic performance in the classroom, and teacher observation. Grades from math and reading for K-3, and math, reading, science, and social studies for grades 4-12, are also considered at this level. This process is completed by the district school psychologist in conjunction with the classroom teacher, along with the building administrator (principal) for the elementary or high school. A total of 10 points or more (out of a possible 14 points) must be achieved to move to the next level for students 4-12; or 3 points or more for students K-3. The next level, Level 2, involves screening using an individually administered standardized assessment by the school psychologist, the Wechsler Abbreviated Intelligence Scales-2 (WASI-2), and a teacher rating scale to evaluate gifted qualities the student presents in the classroom setting (Gifted Rating Scales – GRS). A total of 4 points (out of 6 possible points) must be achieved at Level 2 to move to the next level for students K-12. Students who meet the criteria outlined in the matrix through Levels 1 and 2 advance to Level 3, the final level, which includes a formal Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE). At Level 3, Permission to Evaluate is disseminated to the parent by the school psychologist, indicating the District's determination to move to Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE). Once written permission is obtained from the parent for the evaluation, the district conducts a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE), which must be completed within 60 days. This includes the formal review of multiple criteria, including parent input, teacher input, including a teacher rating scale (Gifted Rating Scales – GRS) along with qualitative teacher input via Google Forms), and an individual intelligence measure (most often the WISC V), along with an individual achievement measure (most often the WIAT-4), administered by a certified school psychologist. Input from the school nurse is also obtained to determine if there may be intervening factors masking the student's gifted ability related to medical health needs. It should be noted that within psychoeducational testing for cognitive ability, deficits in working memory and/or processing speed will not be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted education – variable forms of cognitive ability can be utilized to determine ability, including the General Ability Index (GAI), which rule out the impact of cognitive proficiency on overall ability level/IQ. Gifted ability cannot be based on IQ scores alone. If the IQ score is lower than 130, a child may be admitted to gifted programs when other conditions strongly indicate gifted ability. The other factors to be considered include; Scores falling at or above the 95th+ percentile on nationally-normed and validated achievement tests, completed with the school psychologist; An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills, which may be derived through teacher input and observation; Demonstrated achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by the excellence of products, portfolio, or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment. Achievement at the gifted level is expected to fall at or above the 95th percentile; Evidence of early skill development and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills,

intense academic interest areas, communications skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise. This information is often derived through teacher input and observation, teacher ratings, and work samples; Documented, observed, validated, or assessed evidence that intervening factors such as English Learner status, disabilities defined in 34 CFR 300.8, gender or race bias, or socio/cultural deprivation are masking gifted abilities. Parents and teachers are given the opportunity to provide information related to these factors within the evaluation. Following its evaluation, the GMDT prepares a Gifted Written Report (GWR), including recommendations as to whether a student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. The Rockwood Area School District utilizes a matrix to determine eligibility. If a student obtains a score of 130 or above in any of the following- Full-Scale IQ (FSIQ), General Ability Index (GAI), or Nonverbal Index (NVI), he or she will automatically qualify. If none of the scores meet the 130 cutoff standard score mark, then multiple criteria are considered. Within the Rockwood School District matrix, students must obtain 27 or more points in grades 4-12, or 17 or more points in grades Kindergarten to 3rd, to qualify for gifted support, along with the recommendation of the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT). The GMDT includes the school psychologist, parent, regular education teacher, gifted education teacher, and building administrator (principal). The GWR becomes the basis for the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) team's determination as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. Parents may request one evaluation per year. Gifted Screening & Identification Matrix Student: _____ Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Grade: _____ LEVEL I: A. Classroom Achievement 2 pts. 1 pt. 0 pts. (average grades from the last 3 quarters) (=96%tile) (90-95%tile) (Below 89%) Reading/ELA _____ Mathematics _____ Science(s) - Grades 4+ _____ Social Studies/History - Grades 4+ _____ B. Most Recent State Assessment-Grades 4+ 3 pts. 1 pt. 0 pts. (e.g. PSSA, Keystones, etc) (Advanced) (Proficient) (Basic - Below Basic) Reading _____ Mathematics _____ LEVEL I Point Total: _____ * Students receiving 10 points or more (Grades 4+) -OR- 3 points or more (Grades K-3) - MOVE ON TO LEVEL 2 LEVEL II: A. Gifted Rating Scales (GRS) 2 pts. 1 pt. 0 pts. (4+ domains =60) (2-3 domains =60) (=1 domain =60) _____ B. Intelligence Screening (WASI-II) 4 pts. 3 pts. 2 pt. 0 pts. (=128) (125-127) (122-124) (<122) _____ LEVEL II Point Total: _____ * Students receiving 4 points or more (K-12) - MOVE ON TO LEVEL 3 LEVEL III: (Referred for a formal evaluation) A. Psychological Evaluation IQ/GAI Score 6 pts. 4 pts. 1 pt. 0 pts. (=128) (125-127) (122-124) (Below 122) _____ B. Standardized Achievement Test 3 pts. 2 pts. 1 pt. 0 pts. (=96%tile) (91-95%tile) (85-90%tile) (Below 85%tile) Reading Comprehension _____ Mathematics Problem Solving _____ Qualifications for Gifted Support Services: Level I (____) + II Score (____): _____ *Total Score of 27 or more (Grades 4+) *Total Score of 17 or more (Grades K-3) equates recommendation for gifted supports and services. IQ Score: _____ Achievement Score: _____ *TOTAL SCORE: _____

4. Describe the gifted programs* that are offered to provide opportunities for acceleration, enrichment, or both. *The word “programs” refers to the CONTINUUM OF SERVICES, not one particular option. Describe what acceleration means and how it is applied in each of the grade spans (EL, MS,HS). Describe what enrichment means and how it is applied in EL,MS,HS. (i.e. there are 20 forms of acceleration- which ones are offered in the district and at which grade spans are they offered).

The Rockwood Area School District acknowledges that students who have been identified as mentally gifted are required to receive free, appropriate instructional programs to meet their educational needs. The programming for identified students includes acceleration through curriculum compacting and advancing levels and/or enrichment in the regular classroom and/or through the approved gifted curriculum. Full grade level or subject acceleration is considered after reviewing data including student performance in the classroom, conversations regarding social/emotional functioning compared to same-grade peers by the IEP Team, and/or end of the year assessments. All programming decisions are made on an individual basis by the GIEP Teams, focusing on strengths and needs of students identified in the GMDE. Gifted programming is available in all grade levels from K-12. Additional information regarding programming in

each level is as follows: Grades K-6 Gifted Program: In the K-6 elementary school, students are pulled out of the regular education program 2x/month for a full school day as a small group with the Gifted Support Teacher. The students participate in hands-on extension activities which enrich the academic content provided at Rockwood Area SD within the general curriculum. Pull-out offerings range from interdisciplinary units on subjects, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), historical periods or figures, architecture, space, environmental science, or other areas including major conceptual themes to single-subject study units. Problem solving activities, such as puzzles, thinking games, and similar deductive reasoning activities are offered, as well as experience with problems in authentic situations (e.g., brainstorming ideas for vacant city buildings). Teachers respond to enrichment needs by providing activities that integrate and correlate aspects of math, science, reading, history, creative writing, literature analysis, communication through oral and written expression, skills of researching, and application of learning to new situations. This approach provides the children with opportunities to connect what they are learning in the two learning environments to make deeper connections. In addition, students typically focus on one annual goal/project each year. The eight areas of focus include: reading, comprehension, presenting, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and technology. The goals are worked upon in the regular and gifted classroom settings. The Gifted Support teacher will consult with the regular education teachers to develop enrichment opportunities within the classroom setting for students throughout the school year on an ongoing basis. Grades 7-12 Gifted Program: High school students identified as gifted are provided with the opportunity to explore subjects of interest and challenge themselves intellectually by enrolling in enriched and/or accelerated classes. The HS Gifted Teacher is available to support students as they pursue these challenging courses throughout the school day. The Gifted Support teacher will consult with the regular education teachers to develop enrichment opportunities within the classroom setting for students throughout the school year on an ongoing basis. The Gifted teacher also continues to monitor student performance toward GIEP Goals. In all advanced classes, gifted high schoolers are expected to work toward personal goals they set as described within their individual GIEPs. Gifted students are also encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities (competitions, clubs, and organizations) according to their individual strengths and learning needs. Secondary students may choose among various college preparatory courses in each department, and, if they qualify, may take advanced level courses. College in High School courses are offered to those students who qualify and who wish to acquire college credits and/or exemption from introductory college courses for course work taken in high school. Courses in world languages offer options for cultural and linguistic growth. Art electives further develop a student's creativity and imagination. The Music Department offers instrumental and vocal performing opportunities. Students interested in computers or other technical areas may take advantage of special programs offered through the Somerset County Technology Center. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, the student newspaper, yearbook, Student Council, forensics/debate, theatrical experiences, honor societies, as well as many sports teams, which allow students to develop leadership and character skills. Support services also include counseling concerning scheduling, testing (PSAT, SAT, etc.), study skills, career guidance and assistance with college applications, financial aid, and many scholarship opportunities. Students in Rockwood's gifted programs have competed in the following competitions: Scrabble, Math 24, County Quiz team.

5. Look at the district's most recent PIMS October 1 snapshot in field 80. How many students are identified in each area GY (gifted with or without a 504 and receiving services on a GIEP); GS (dually exceptional/twice exceptional and receiving services through an IDEA IEP); GX (gifted and does not require specially designed instruction). Provide the numbers for each category in PIMS. Are all the district's gifted students accounted for in PIMS. If not, how are they different and how will you address the discrepancy?

A snapshot was requested from PIMS on 7/9/2024 for 10/1/2023, and reviewed for the purposes of this question. GY - 16 students GS - 1 student GX - 0 students All of Rockwood Area School District students identified as Gifted are accounted for in PIMS (17 total students). There is no discrepancy noted in PIMS. The District will continue current procedures for ensuring accuracy of data in PIMS for the upcoming school years.

6. Review the district data for gifted identification proportionality. Is the district identification proportionately reaching the underrepresented populations?

If the answer is yes, how did you address the issue. If the answer is no, how will you address the issue.

During the 2022-2023 school year, total enrollment at Rockwood Area School District was 634 students. Of those 634 students, 96.2% of students were white, 2.1% were multiracial, and 1.2% were Hispanic. 17 total students were identified as Gifted during the 2022-2023 school year - all of these students were white, which falls within 5% of total population breakdown for students within the district. During the 2022-2023 school year, 39% of the total population were marked as 'Economically Disadvantaged' in PIMS. Of the 17 gifted students, 23% were marked as 'Economically Disadvantaged.' Rockwood Area School District will continue to implement data-driven procedures for Gifted screening and identification to reach all student populations within the district. This includes using varied assessments, such as non-verbal tests (when appropriate), along with consideration of the general ability index (to decrease the impact of cognitive proficiency on eligibility). Gathering input from a variety of sources, including teachers, parents, and students themselves, is critical for non-biased evaluation. Educators should be trained on cultural competence and implicit bias, and universal screening should continue to be implemented to identify underrepresented gifted students. Using diverse criteria, not just test scores, considering creativity, leadership, and problem-solving, is crucial when looking at the 'whole child' through the Gifted evaluation process. Finally, involving parents and communities in the process by educating them about giftedness and the identification process is also an important step, and area for improvement of the District moving forward. Implementing these strategies requires a commitment to equity and adaptability, which the Rockwood Area SD continues to work toward for all students.

7. 22 Pa. Code § 16.5 (related to personnel) requires that a school district and intermediate unit shall provide, under section 1205.1 of the School Code (24 P.S. § 12-1205.1), in-service training for gifted and regular teachers, principals, administrators, and support staff persons responsible for gifted education. Describe how the district is addressing this mandate, including information related to how and when general education teachers are trained and held accountable for delivering gifted services.

The Rockwood Area School District is committed to ensuring in-service training and opportunities for professional growth for Gifted Support Teachers throughout the school year. At the start of each school year during district in-service, the Gifted Support Teachers at the elementary and high school levels are given the opportunity to review Gifted procedures and policies with all staff, including regular education teachers K-12, special education teachers K-12, and district administration. Building administrators (principals) also review policies regarding GIEPs during their presentations with their respective staff on in-service days at the start of each school year. This includes a review of where to access GIEPs for all students on each teacher's roster – these can be found in the Confidential Student Drive on Google Drive, which is shared with all staff at the start of each school year. As GIEPs are updated annually, they are added to Google Drive, and teachers are alerted to review the GIEP for updates. Gifted Support Teachers are provided time for training and professional development throughout the school year. These teachers attend training annually to broaden their understanding of best practices related to gifted education. This past year, the District School Psychologist and District Gifted Support Teachers attended the online 'Gifted Education in Pennsylvania Statewide Webinar' in October, and Gifted Support Teachers attended in-person training throughout the school year hosted by the IU8 State Gifted Team. Furthermore, the District School Psychologist, Gifted Support Teachers, and Building Administrators (Principals) stay up-to-date with best practices and policy changes through subscriptions with IU8 State Gifted Team emails (Sarah Brambley) and membership with the IU8 Gifted Network (<https://www.iu08.org/page/gifted-education>).

Training for general education teachers	\$0 (In-house trainings by district professionals, including the District School Psychologist and Gifted Support Teachers, along with IU8 trainings, are free of cost for the school district)
Staff costs	Salary and Benefits for Gifted Support Teacher in each building (RAES, RAJSHS)

Training for gifted support staff	The district spent approximately \$378 in October 2023 and \$378 in March 2024 for Gifted Network Meetings for Gifted Support Teachers. Training costs for the upcoming school year are estimated to be the same - approximately \$760.
Materials used for project-based learning	Incorporated into the general fund under instructional expenses.
Transportation	\$0
Field Trips	\$8,000

Signatures and Quality Assurance

Chief School Administrator	Date