

Local School Boards: Roles and Responsibilities in Gifted Programs

Local school boards are required by the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* (8VAC20-40-60A) to approve a comprehensive plan for the education of the gifted students that includes the components identified in the Regulations. In addition to approving the local plan, school boards must submit a comprehensive local plan to the Department of Education for technical review on a schedule determined by the department.

The following is a condensed listing of the required plan components:

- A statement of philosophy for the gifted education program and the local operational definition of giftedness for the school division;
- A statement of the division's program goals and objectives for the following:
 - identification
 - delivery of services
 - curriculum and instruction
 - professional development
 - equitable representation of students
 - parent and community involvement;
- Procedures for early and ongoing screening, referral, identification, and placement of gifted students, beginning with kindergarten through twelfth grade;
- Procedures for written notification to parents and legal guardians for testing;
- A policy for written notification to parents and legal guardians for identification and placement decisions;
- Assurances that student records are maintained in compliance with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations;
- Assurances that:
 - the selected and administered testing and assessment materials have been evaluated by the developers for cultural, racial, and linguistic biases;
 - identification procedures are constructed so that those procedures may identify high potential or aptitude in any student whose accurate identification may be affected by economic disadvantages, by limited English proficiency, or by disability;
 - standardized tests and other measures have been validated for the purpose of identifying gifted students;
 - instruments are administered and interpreted by trained personnel in conformity with the developer's instructions;

- Assurances that accommodations or modifications determined by the school division's special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) team shall be incorporated into the student's gifted education services;
- Assurances that a written copy of the approved local plan is available to parents/legal guardians of referred students and others upon request;
- Evidence that service options from kindergarten through twelfth grade are continuous and sequential, with parents receiving assessment of each gifted student's academic growth;
- A description of the program's differentiated curriculum and instruction demonstrating accelerated and advanced content;
- Policies and procedures that allow access to programs of study and advanced courses;
- Evidence of professional development opportunities specific to gifted education for instructional personnel;
- Procedures for annual review of program effectiveness, including:
 - screening, referral, identification, and program procedures
 - equitable representation of students
 - review of student outcomes and academic growth

While the *Regulations* allow local school divisions to decide whether to establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members reflective of the ethnic and geographic composition of the school division, it is the responsibility of the school board to appoint members to any existing advisory committee.

In accordance with the Regulations, the local advisory committee has two responsibilities:

1. to review annually the local plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions, and
2. to determine the extent to which the plan for the previous year was implemented.

The *Regulations* (8VAC20-40-60A.14) provide specific areas for the local advisory committee to address in their review of effectiveness for the division. These areas include, but are not limited to the review of:

- screening, referral, identification, and program procedures toward the achievement of equitable representation of students;
- student outcomes;
- academic growth of gifted students.

Such review shall be based on multiple criteria and shall include multiple sources of information. The findings of the annual program effectiveness and the recommendations of the advisory committee shall be submitted annually in writing to the division superintendent and the school board. It is the responsibility of the school board to directly receive the local advisory committee's review of effectiveness and recommendations.

Additional information can be found on the [VDOE Gifted Education webpage](#).