



**Executive Summary
of the
Gifted Education Compliance Monitoring Review
of the
Downingtown Area School District**

**PART I
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

A. Review Process

Prior to the Bureau's monitoring the week of March 16, 2015, the Downingtown Area School District was formally notified of the dates the on-site review would be conducted. The District was informed of its responsibility to compile various reports, written policies, and procedures to document compliance with requirements.

While on-site, the monitoring team employed a variety of techniques to gain an in-depth understanding of the District's gifted program operations. These techniques included:

- Interviews of District administrative and teaching staff.
- Review of policies, notices, plans, gifted education forms, and data reports used and compiled by the District (Gifted Facilitated Self-Assessment.)
- Comprehensive case studies (including interviews of gifted education staff, parents and students, and student file reviews).

B. General Findings

In reaching compliance determinations, Bureau of Special Education (BSE) monitoring teams apply criteria contained in state gifted education regulations. Specifically, these are:

- 22 Pa. Code Chapter 16 (State Board of Education Gifted Education Regulations)

This report focuses on compliance with requirements and also contains some descriptive information (such as interview results) which is intended to provide feedback to assist in program planning.

C. Overall Findings of the Three Major Sections of the Compliance Monitoring Instrument

1. GIFTED FACILITATED SELF-ASSESSMENT (GFSA)

The team reviewed the GFSA submitted by the School District and conducted on-site verification activities of the information submitted in the GFSA. The on-site verification activities included review of policies, notices, procedures, and school file reviews.

GFSA	In Compliance	Out of Compliance
Strategic Plan and Policy		X
Personnel		X
Special Education/Dual Exceptionalities		X
Screening and Evaluation Process		X
Gifted Education Placement		X
Gifted Procedural Safeguards		X
Student Record Review		X

2. FILE REVIEW (Student case studies)

The gifted education records of randomly selected students receiving gifted education services were studied to determine whether the District complied with essential requirements in five areas.

The status of compliance of the District is as follows:

Sections of the FILE REVIEW	In Compliance	Out of Compliance	N/A
Essential Student Documents Are Present and Were Prepared Within Timelines	177	38	5
Evaluation/Reevaluation: Process and Content	57	15	8
Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP): Process and Content	165	97	38
TOTALS	399	150	51

3. TEACHER, PARENT AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with parents and teachers of students and students selected by BSE for the sample group. The goal was to determine if the District involves parents, students and professionals in required processes (e.g., Evaluation, GIEP development...), whether programs and services are being provided, and whether the District provides training to enhance knowledge. Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the gifted education services is also generally assessed.

	# Yes Responses	# No Responses	N/A
Teacher Interviews	97	16	0
Parent Interviews	100	10	0
Student Interview	40	10	0
TOTALS	237	36	0

4. COMMENDATIONS

- The school district is commended for providing extensive in-service training for parents of gifted students.
- The school district is commended for the increased attendance of administrators and teachers of gifted students at trainings on gifted education.
- The school district is commended for beginning to follow through on focused efforts to improve gifted education services.
- The school district is commended for the extensive preparation and openness to be monitored for compliance with the desire to improve educational services for gifted students.
- The school district is commended for the excellent learning opportunities at the STEM Academy with the focus on the learning process instead of the product.
- The school district is commended for offering the STEM Academy as an option for gifted/advanced learners.

PART II CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCESS

PART I of this report presented an overall summary of findings in each major area reviewed by the team. In the Appendix to the report, we have provided you with detailed findings for each of the criteria of the 3 major sections of the gifted compliance monitoring instrument, i.e. GFSA, File Review, and Parent, Student and Teacher Interviews. The detailed report of findings in the Appendix includes:

- Criteria Number
- Statements of all requirements
- Whether each requirement was met or was not met
- Statements of corrective action required for those criteria not met

Upon receipt of this report, the District should review the corrective actions required. The Report is formatted so that findings from all components of the gifted monitoring are consolidated by topical area. The Report lists the finding, and whether corrective action is required. For certain types of findings, corrective action will be prescribed, and will not vary from school district to school district. For example, if the finding is that a school district lacks a specific required policy, it is reasonable to have the BSE prescribe a standardized remedy and timeline for correcting this deficiency. However, the majority of corrective action activities will be individually designed by school districts based on their own unique circumstances and goals.

The BSE Adviser will schedule an on-site visit with school districts within 60 days following issuance of the gifted monitoring report. The Adviser and school district staff will develop a LEA Compliance and Improvement Plan for corrective action. A school district will recommend a corrective action or Improvement Plan strategy and timeline. A school district proposes corrective action activities and the BSE Adviser and school district mutually agree upon the Plan for Corrective Action. The BSE Adviser will confirm and submit a PDE - approved school district improvement plan.

With respect to the File Review, because students were selected at random, findings are generalized to the entire population of gifted students. During the corrective action review, the BSE Adviser will select students at random and not focus on those students in the original sample. Consequently, school districts should approach corrective action on a systemic basis. If there has been a finding of non-compliance regarding the appropriateness or implementation of an individual student's program a school district must take immediate, individual corrective action.

Upon conclusion of the corrective action process, a school district will be notified of its successful completion of the gifted monitoring process.

While the Bureau of Special Education chairperson was responsible for on-site activities, report preparation, and resolution of any discrepancies in the report, responsibility for the corrective action process is assigned to the Director's Office. Therefore, school districts should direct inquiries and concerns related to corrective action to Dr. Shirley K. Curl at (717) 786-6361.