

**Upper Merion Area School District  
Student Services  
K-12 Gifted Education**

**MISSION**

The mission of the Upper Merion Area School District's Gifted Education Program is to ensure that all gifted students are identified and provided with individualized and challenging educational opportunities and experiences. We offer a range of services so that individual programs can be designed around each student's identified needs. These programs are based on each student's strengths and needs, and are designed to develop their unique talents and abilities. After determining eligibility and need for specially designed instruction (in compliance with Chapter 16 guidelines), an appropriate individualized educational program is prepared by a multidisciplinary team comprised of school personnel, parents, and (where appropriate) the student. We encourage gifted education students to join all students in making positive contributions to society.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

The Upper Merion Area School District's Gifted program was designed with input from teachers, administrators, parents, and students. We provide services to a diverse population of gifted learners. Goals of the program include: - Identifying candidates for the program and assessing their eligibility using a variety of tools and procedures. - Emphasizing a positive working relationship between parents and school personnel. - Creating an individualized, flexible, and appropriate program based on the measured strengths and needs of each eligible student. - Providing guidance and appropriate support services for eligible students, including those who are low achieving or at risk. - Providing staff development opportunities for all school personnel, including support for the preparation of differentiated educational plans, materials, and curriculum by regular classroom teachers. - Promoting the use of strategies developed for challenging students' analytical and critical thinking skills in regular classrooms. - Realizing student potential to excel in accordance with cognitive and academic strengths and beyond. Students will have opportunity for advancement beyond the typical high school interests to further inspire their strengths and interests in higher education.

**EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

**UMASD engages in a three-tiered evaluation process to determine if a student qualifies for and is in need of gifted programming. This process is outlined below. Your child's data and performance will determine his or her movement through this process. Not all students will move onto a Level III evaluation). You will be notified if your child does not move onto the next level of evaluation.**

**Level I Evaluation:**

1. The classroom teacher and school counselor review student performance in the general education curriculum, report card information, Upper Merion Area School District performance tasks and standardized assessment information.

2. If this data is consistently in the advanced range, the school counselor administers the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Second Edition (K-BIT2).
3. If the student's measured IQ on the K-BIT2 is 125 or above, the school counselor administers the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Third Edition (KTEA-III)
4. If the student's achievement scores on the KTEA-III are in the 96th %tile or higher (and the measured IQ is 125 or above) the student proceeds to Level II evaluation.
5. If these criteria are not met, you will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NORA) explaining the recommended educational placement for your child (e.g. regular education) along with Gifted Procedural Safeguards, which outline your rights as a parent.

### **Level II Evaluation:**

1. You will be given a parent input form to describe the student's perceived strengths and needs. The student's regular classroom teacher will complete a Gifted/Talented Evaluation Scale - Teacher Form and may submit a work sample or portfolio.
2. If the input forms indicate strong evidence of possible giftedness and need for specially designed instruction the case proceeds to Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE), Level III screening.
3. If these criteria are not met, you will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NORA) explaining the recommended educational placement for your child (e.g. regular education) along with Gifted Procedural Safeguards, which outline your rights as a parent.

### **Level III Evaluation:**

Multidisciplinary evaluation for gifted follows state guidelines for final assessment and determination of gifted eligibility. If your child scores Full Scale or Composite IQ greater than or equal to 130 *and* exhibits a need for specially designed instruction, he/she is deemed Mentally Gifted (MG) and receives a Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP). If wide discrepancies between verbal and spatial scores exist, the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) considers Multiple Criteria more closely.

## **GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

We believe that gifted, like all students, learn best when provided with challenging instruction which can be delivered in a range of settings. Thus, Upper Merion Area School District is committed to a program that is flexible and dynamic, multi-leveled, and designed to expand the abilities of each learner. Research has also shown that gifted students benefit from being grouped together for meaningful instruction during the day. Each student identified as Gifted, will have a GIEP tailored to his/her specific strengths and needs for specialized instruction. Programming is expressed in the GIEP and can include combinations of the following:

Enrichment - Beginning in elementary school and delivered through differentiation of core content at all grade levels, as well as pull out instruction by a dedicated GIEP teacher, students

will be provided with opportunities for deeper investigation of standards using materials commensurate with their cognitive and academic strengths;

**Acceleration** - Instruction is matched to the competence level of the student. This can be achieved through curriculum compacting and telescoping at all levels. Additional acceleration in Mathematics begins in grade 5 and continues in high school in honors, AP, Online, and Dual enrollment course offerings in all content areas.

**Individualization**, When instruction is matched specifically to the student's achievement, ability, and interest, students become self motivated and have opportunity to achieve beyond expectation. Individualized programming can be initiated at any level in accordance with IEP team determinations.

The GIEP is reviewed and updated annually at a meeting involving the student's gifted support teacher, a regular classroom teacher, parents, a school administrator, and other specialists as needed. All teachers have received training in meeting the needs of the diverse learners in their classrooms. Our curriculum is rigorous and instruction is driven by multiple sources of student data to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged.

## **RESOURCES**

Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education

PAGE Incorporated 3026 Potshop Road Norristown, PA 19403

Gifted Children Monthly [www.gifted-children.com](http://www.gifted-children.com)

Gifted Education Resource Institute (Purdue University) [www.geri.soe.purdue.edu](http://www.geri.soe.purdue.edu)

Future Problem Solving Program [www.fpsp.org](http://www.fpsp.org)

Hoagies Gifted Education [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)

SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

National Association of Gifted Children [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

Pennsylvanians for the Education of Gifted Students (PEGS) [www.pegsgifted.org](http://www.pegsgifted.org)