



# GiftedNYS

[www.giftednys.org](http://www.giftednys.org)

## GiftedNYS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

*The following represent questions that have come to GiftedNYS from around the state over time. Below are questions and responses to provide information to parents/guardians and educators for their respective use.*

### **1. Does New York have any state mandates for gifted education?**

No. NYS does not mandate to identify or provide programming for gifted learners. Moreover, NYS does not provide any state funding for gifted education. NYS does require that parents/ guardians are notified IF their child is identified as "possibly gifted." (see [Commissioner's Regulations - Sections 117.1, 117.2, 117.3; & ARTICLE 90 Gifted Education](#)). New York is one of less than 10 states that has no state mandate for gifted education.

### **2. How does New York State define giftedness?**

Nearly every state in the country has its own definition of giftedness. The current New York State definition is as follows:

*Gifted pupils are those who show evidence of high performance capability and exceptional potential in areas such as general intellectual ability, special academic aptitude and outstanding ability in visual and performing arts. Such definition shall include those pupils who require educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their full potential.*

In New York State's [definition](#), both potential and performance are embedded. Additionally, the definition defines three areas of giftedness-general intellectual ability, specific academic ability, and visual/performing arts. Lastly, the definition speaks to the

NEED for these learners to receive differentiated services, not ordinarily provided in the regular classroom.

### **3. How do I ask for differentiation for my child(ren) in a way that wouldn't upset their teacher(s)?**

#### Advocacy and Working with your Child's School

This first step is to become informed about your child's gifted qualities, and supporting data, including any standardized testing data, observations in and out of the classroom, and other demonstrated evidence of giftedness (whether in a particular area or in general). This allows you to determine what needs your child has, and/or what areas need additional support. Decide and prioritize goals for your child and be able to share them when you meet with teachers. Schools may not have the resources to approach all goals at once, so it is important to prioritize.

Learn about various approaches to differentiation, which can vary depending on the school context, structure, grade level, resources and the child's academic and social-emotional needs. Some options are: differentiation in the regular classroom, grouping with other talented students within the regular classroom, placing students in a separate class for high-ability students, participating in pullout programs or curriculum compacting, and moving up a grade for one or more subjects.

Start first with making an appointment with the child's teacher, whether a classroom teacher or possibly a teacher in a subject area of giftedness. Approach the teacher positively, in partnership by sharing your concerns and observations as well as asking about the teacher's observations. Share goals for your child and create a plan with the teacher, which may include additional testing and observation, implementation of differentiation strategies, and continued follow-up meetings to discuss the effectiveness of the plan.

### **4. Who do I contact to find out more about gifted identification, programming and differentiation in my district?**

It depends. Each school and district has a specific administrative hierarchy, and the contact person can range from a dedicated gifted teacher to a director of pupil personnel services. Your child's principal can tell you who to contact, and what services are available in your specific school. In schools that provide gifted programming, the teacher may be

called an enrichment specialist or gifted & talented teacher. In addition, some districts and/or schools have content specific administrators (Ex. Department Chairperson for Math K-12, Science Coordinator, Arts Department Chairperson) who may have information about differentiation, enrichment and/or gifted programming in those specific areas. District administrators may also be in charge of gifted programming. Many districts have a Superintendent/Director of Curriculum & Instruction K-12 who oversees all curricular programming. Gifted education sometimes falls under the responsibility of the district administrator in charge of special education, often called the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

## **5. What are things I can do at my local level to help my child(ren) and others like them?**

Become informed. Gather information about gifted children's characteristics and needs, [gifted education strategies](#), and your district's enrichment and gifted opportunities and policies related to gifted education.

Connect with allies within the school system, (teachers, school mental health staff, gifted education staff) and make an appointment to speak with them. Tell your student's story including data, facts, and observable behaviors. Ask school staff for their perspective. Be prepared to respectfully verbalize your "asks" and try to connect them to best practices or the district's policies, vision, mission, and goals. Highlight being a partner: How can we work together to..., As an educator, what do you suggest to address..., What can I do at home to support...? Follow up, and if necessary, move up the chain of command (typically Teacher, Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Board of Education).

Connect with allies who support the school system. Reach out to existing parent groups and education-related community organizations to inquire about and connect with other families needing gifted education support. Attend school functions, volunteer, and join parent-teacher organizations to build positive family and educator partnerships. You may find other parents with similar or overlapping concerns, and build a team of parents who can advocate with you. There is power in numbers.

## **6. What are some common ways that schools meet the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted students?**

In New York State identifying and serving gifted students rests at the local level, therefore schools and school districts vary widely in their approaches to serving these students.

There are different grouping patterns such as pull-out, cluster grouping, ability grouping in a content area (e.g. advanced math class), general education classroom, or specialized schools, such as New York City to name a few. Each district gets to decide how they want to “group” gifted children. You can find more about grouping practices and how effective each type is through this [link](#).

In addition to the way gifted students are grouped, there are a variety of research-based strategies that teachers can implement to better meet their needs in the classroom. Some strategies include content acceleration, problem-based learning, concept development, student choice, acceleration, and high quality enrichment. Moreover, programs outside of school can support gifted students, including content specific classes, camps, programs, contests as well as social-emotional support groups and counseling. However, outside of school programming augments what is done in school and should not supplant the importance of a student receiving differentiated services during the school day.

## **7. What kind of training does a NYS teacher need to work with gifted students?**

Any teacher can work with gifted students. Many pedagogical approaches are available to all teachers to differentiate and meet the needs of gifted students in their classrooms. Training is important for all teachers in the needs, characteristics and approaches for gifted students.

If a school is looking to hire a gifted specialist, if a teacher works exclusively with gifted students, coordinates a gifted program, or chooses to obtain the gifted certification, there is a pathway for a gifted teacher extension. In these circumstances, a teacher in NYS must be certified in a particular area or range of grade levels, and additionally hold a Gifted Teacher Extension. Degree requirements differ for each area, and must meet the core requirements of NYSED. In addition applicants must complete additional testing and fingerprint documentation. Once certified in any area, a teacher then applies for a Gifted Teacher Extension, involving additional coursework and testing.

## **8. What is twice exceptional (2E)?**

The twice exceptional (or 2e for short) are individuals who have one or more disabilities in addition to their giftedness. Their disability may mask their true intellectual ability or interfere with academic achievement. GiftedNYS has adopted the definition of twice exceptional developed by The National Twice-Exceptional Community of Practice (2e COP). The 2e COP defined twice exceptional as:

“Twice exceptional (2e) individuals evidence exceptional ability and disability, which results in a unique set of circumstances. Their exceptional ability may dominate, hiding their disability; their disability may dominate, hiding their exceptional ability; each may mask the other so that neither is recognized or addressed.”

## **9. What are common myths about giftedness?**

There are often many misconceptions about the characteristics of gifted children, or what it means to be gifted. It is often perceived that students who are gifted are always top achieving students, who do well in all areas, are well adjusted, and do not have any of their own challenges or disabilities. These are not necessarily true. The following resources explain many of the common myths of giftedness:

[Gifted NYS: Did You Know?](#)

[NAGC: Myths About Gifted Students](#)

[Davidson Institute: Disproving Myths About Gifted Students](#)

[SENG: Competing Myths about the Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Students](#)

## **10. What can I do to get involved?**

You can join GiftedNYS ([www.giftednys.org](http://www.giftednys.org)). Gifted New York State, Inc. (GiftedNYS), is a not-for-profit organization of parents, educators, and professionals who have come together to support the needs of New York’s gifted and twice-exceptional (2E) student population and their families. We hold virtual events throughout the year such as speakers on timely topics, meet-ups for parents and educator sharing, and provide a quarterly newsletter. Additionally, you can join in our advocacy efforts to get New York to have a mandate for gifted and 2E learners as well as volunteer in a variety of ways. Your choice, your way.