How to Write Written Education Plans (WEPs) for Gifted Students

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Legal Reasons to Create WEPs

Written Education Plans (WEPs) are required by Ohio Revised Code: 3301-51-15. They must be on file for identified gifted students in order for a district to report gifted service in any form. The WEP documents official data entry on the Ohio Report Card. WEPs are intended to guide teachers and students to target specific areas of need for students.

The goal of a WEP is to develop a more intentional and accountable plan to address individual needs of gifted students.

Another requirement for writing WEPs or WAPs and reporting gifted service, is that teachers receive ongoing (HQPD) professional development from a licensed gifted staff member throughout the year on gifted topics.

WAPs (Written Acceleration Plans)

Written Acceleration Plans (WAPs) are similar, but are targeted to students who are accelerated in a subject or grade regardless of whether they are identified as gifted or not. They are the legal documentation required to claim service in acceleration for the Ohio Report Card. Students taking algebra as 8th graders are an example of that.

Students who take an above grade level Ohio content test qualify for this.

Procedure:
Using the Allen County WEP Form

- Complete demographic information at the top of the page: name, date, grade, etc.
- Complete testing data that indicates giftedness according to Ohio's law and specify each area identified. If you need help with this, contact your principal, curriculum staff member and/or your district's gifted staff contact.
- Write the goal(s) for the student based on his/her identified gifted area. For superior cognitive, try to find the content area the student has demonstrated the most strength in, such as reading or math.
- *Rule of thumb, but not in stone:* Superior cognitive students should grow more than a year's worth of growth per year. [They are generally 2 years ahead of their age peers.] Specific Academic students should also grow more than a year's worth of growth in their identified area. [They are generally one year or more ahead of their age peers.] Some statistics have identified a target average of 1.3 years worth of growth per gifted student.
- Write a **SMART** goal for the most identified areas of **academic need.** The best goals target more specific areas of the main content area, i.e., math comprehension versus just math.
- Be sure to include how you will measure the progress and final outcome of the goal.

Rigor is …

- Quality of thinking, not quantity, and can occur in any grade at any subject (Bogess, 2007)
- Deep immersion in a subject and should include real-world settings (Washor & Majkowki, 2006)
- Thoughtful analysis with sufficient attention to accuracy and detail (Beane, 2001)
- Helping students develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging (Strong, Silver, & Perrini, 2001)

WEPs should focus on rigor for gifted students. Real-world audiences, real-world settings, real-world products provide another framework to think about yearly goals for them.

SMART Goals:

- **S – specific: who, what** [content standards, continuum of grade level benchmarks, social/emotional areas, college planning standards, behavioral standards and expectations for positive interactions]
- **M – measurable: what, how** [an action or expectation toward a higher level of performance, often stated in increases – rate, percentage, number, level of benchmark, level of performance, rubric standards, juried level of standard, accelerated content course grade]
- **A – attainable: how** [expands the match between student profile and programming in reasonable steps, attainable goals inspire positive attitude, skill development, opportunities for developing self-esteem and breakdown barriers to learning]
- **R – realistic: when and how** [a goal has a target or end-point for guiding annual learning and growth, is a predictor of where the student will be, or how far the student will learn and grow, realistic long term targets for gifted students in the area of strength is two years or more]
- **T – timely: when to begin and end** [a goal has a time frame for accomplishing the measurable target or growth expected, a goal is dynamic, ongoing progress monitoring provides data for making pace, content and skill decisions for adjusting the learning experience toward the goal]

Write a **SMART** goal, if needed, for critical **affective** (social/emotional) **needs.**

Issues might be:

- appreciation of others
- asynchronous development
- empathy
- intensities
- organization
- over-excitabilities
- peer relationships
- perfectionism
- excessive self-criticism
- prioritizing-rank ordering
- procrastination
- risk taking
- self-acceptance
- self-awareness
- self-control
- twice-exceptional
- underachievement

Ask yourself the six W questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

For instance, "James will read above grade level", can be made more specific by saying, "When given an above grade level passage to read, James will read fluently using proper decoding methods and demonstrate comprehension at an 85% level or above as measured by the Gates McKinney end-of-year test."

Also, make sure your goals are not perfectionistic. Example: The 85%ile goal above is realistic. If one would put 100% for mastery, few would be able to reach that goal and sets the student and teacher up for failure.

Individualized Needs

Be thoughtful about what special education needs this student has for academic and/or social/emotional growth this year. For older students, they may choose an appropriate goal(s) for themselves with teacher and/or parent guidance.

WEPs/WAPs are living, dynamic documents for parent/student/teacher communicating, conferencing, and monitoring.

These plans help all involved be more accountable in moving the student toward growth academically and socially/emotionally.

WEPs/WAPs are documents for cumulative files that are adjusted at least annually.

General Examples

- By May of this school year, Briana will demonstrate 1.3 years worth of growth in reading fluency and comprehension as measured by the Aimsweb Reading Progress measure.
- By the end of this school year, Henry will demonstrate 1.5 year's worth of growth in math applied problem solving skills as measured by STAR Math scores.
- By the end of this school year, Jenny will show improvement in science concept skills of one year's growth through data taken from the IOWA Test of Basic Skills.

ELEMENTARY ACADEMIC EXAMPLES

Reading/Language Arts-Elementary

1. Student will use analysis to develop an appreciation of literary characterizations. Student will show evidence of being able to compare and contrast a minimum of three characters in two literary classics in a teacher-approved product of choice by June 2016.
2. Student will use writing as a tool for learning by maintaining learning logs, laboratory reports, note taking, journals, or writing portfolios. Student will maintain a learning log to be assessed by checklist weekly for each grading period. Student will demonstrate appropriate skills in effective note taking as evidenced by a rubric by end of grade 4.
3. Student will increase his oral reading fluency by 30% as evidenced by the completion of ten, grade appropriate reading assessments in class.
4. Student will improve his vocabulary skills by achieving a minimum test score of 90% on monthly classroom assessments.
5. Student will successfully compare literature pieces 4 out of 5 times as evidenced by the use of graphic organizers and/or essays in class.

Reading/Language Arts from Common Core Standards

By the end of the year, the student will read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Mathematics-Elementary

- Student will develop strategies to solve complex, grade appropriate mathematical problems with 85% mastery.
- Student will demonstrate higher order thinking skills 8 out of 10 times as evidenced by classroom work samples that document the use of synthesis and evaluation skills using a rubric to evaluate the work.
- Student will increase his mathematical computation abilities by 90% as measured by teacher-made tests completed in the classroom by end of year.

Accelerated Math - Elementary

Given the third grade mathematics curriculum the student will demonstrate mastery of all fourth grade skills and concepts and continue into the fifth grade mathematics curriculum.

[Mastery level of 90% or higher on two consecutive trials. Teacher made tests, curriculum-based assessments, standardized assessment, performance-based assessment, project]

Student will complete grade 5 math curriculum with 85% mastery by the end of grade 4.

- By the end of the first nine weeks the student will evidence mastery of 85% of the grade four math objectives
- By the end of first semester the student will have completed 80% of the first half of the grade 5 math curriculum with 80% mastery.
- The student will complete at least one activity per week from Challenge Math with 90% accuracy.

Organization Skills-Elementary

Student will learn various approaches to organization through counseling sessions with the teacher and a high school student volunteer on a weekly basis. Progress will be measured by parent/teacher communication via email and success will be documented with a reduction in homework papers being lost and increased deadlines being met.

Vocabulary Development – Middle School

Samuel is reading a year and a half above grade level. This 2015-2016 school year he will focus on extending his vocabulary development and improving his comprehension through studying root words and foreign language patterns using the Scripps Howard Spelling Bee website and participating in small group book discussion sessions led by the teacher using the Jr. Great Books inquiry model. Pre, mid-year and post-tests (September, January, May) will be administered for each area to monitor and document growth. The vocabulary goal is to improve by a minimum of 50%. The comprehension goal will be measured using a rubric and Samuel's pre and post evaluations will show improvement by a minimum of 5 specific characteristics.

Technology Goal – Middle School

- Given the Excel program, the student will calculate statistical functions (mean, median, mode). [mastery level 90% or higher, teacher made tests, curriculum-based assessments, standardized assessment, by the end of the second grading period]
- Given an Excel program, the student will format a spreadsheet and effectively communicate data results for a variety of problems. [mastery level 90% or higher on established rubric, teacher made and student generated problems, by the end of the current school year]
- Given real world applications, students will format a database, analyze the results and share the information. [mastery level 90% or higher on established rubric, teacher made and student generated applications, by the end of the current school year]

Reading Goal – High School

By May, Student A, will demonstrate advanced level skills in reading, evidenced by advanced scores in Reading CSAP and other district level assessments and obtain at least a “B” grade in Honors English.

AP Government

Student A's social studies skills will be strengthened, increased, and developed at an advanced rate and deeper level as determined by curriculum based assessments through the AP Government class. The student will benefit from higher level coursework, integrating the use of complex writing skills, in-depth problem solving, and inquiry based discussions offered within the advanced placement classroom. Student progress will be measured by formal and informal assessments, observations, participation, discussions, and advanced placement curriculum materials and measurements.

[To improve this goal, one might have baseline data to cite as well as specific scores for the target goal at end-of-year.]

Managing the Process

- WEPs and WAPs should be written with the student involved as much as possible. If they are too young to write the goals, they can be made aware of what the goals are and held responsible for keeping track of their progress toward the goals(s).
- Student ownership of this process is another way to motivate them for deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and can even serve as career guidance later in schooling.
- Districts and teachers need to decide on how to pass the WEPs along to next year's teachers, especially the pertinent data regarding gifted identification.
- Another decision is how to keep and maintain the files. Will they be electronic, paper, or both? Can a system be established that will automatically enter in all the demographic data for each student?
- Parent signatures are important and copies of the documents with those signatures should be in the student's file.
- Keep in mind this is a growth process for the student as well as the teacher. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate on writing these when possible.
- The Ohio Teacher Evaluation System highly supports differentiation overall and writing WEPs/WAPs are evidence of one part of that process.