

Gifted and Talented Education Program Handbook



**Burlington County Institute
of Technology**

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1. Introduction

Background of the Law (January 13, 2020)

The Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act was enacted on January 13, 2020, with the aim of enhancing educational opportunities for exceptionally gifted and talented students. This act recognizes the importance of identifying and nurturing the potential of these students to ensure they receive appropriate educational services and support.

The law emphasizes that gifted and talented students possess unique talents, skills, and potential that require specialized attention. It mandates the development of programs and services to help these students reach their full potential, thereby contributing to the enrichment of our society and economy.

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide educators, administrators, and stakeholders with a comprehensive guide to understanding and implementing the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act. It includes definitions, details of the gifted and talented continuum of services, and an overview of how Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT) complies with this law under Policy #2464.

Definitions

Gifted and Talented Student: A student who demonstrates outstanding capabilities or potential in one or more areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership ability, or in a specific academic field.

Continuum of Services: A range of educational options, activities, and support services designed to meet the diverse needs of gifted and talented students at various stages of their development.

2. Gifted and Talented Education Continuum of Services

The Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act mandates the provision of a continuum of services to address the unique needs of gifted and talented students. BCIT is committed to providing a comprehensive range of services that encourage, challenge, and nurture the abilities of these exceptional students. It's important to note that the services offered to gifted and talented students are designed to complement, not replace, the basic instructional program provided to all students within the district.

The Continuum of Services

The educational program offered to gifted and talented students may include, but is not limited to, the following services and strategies:

1. **Pull-Out Programs:** Gifted and talented students may have the opportunity to participate in specialized pull-out programs that offer advanced and enriched curriculum components. These programs provide an environment where students can delve deeper into their areas of interest and expertise.
2. **Classroom Differentiated Instruction:** Within the regular classroom setting, teachers employ differentiation techniques to tailor instruction to the individual needs and abilities of gifted and talented students. This approach allows students to progress at their own pace and explore advanced topics.
3. **Acceleration:** Acceleration options may be provided, allowing gifted and talented students to advance to higher grade levels or access advanced coursework in specific subjects. This enables them to engage in more challenging academic experiences.
4. **Flexible Pacing:** Gifted and talented students may have the flexibility to pace their learning according to their individual abilities and interests. This means they can move through material at an accelerated rate or spend more time exploring complex concepts.
5. **Compacted Curricula:** Curricula may be compacted to eliminate redundant content for gifted and talented students. This ensures that they can focus on mastering new and challenging material.
6. **Distance Learning:** In some cases, gifted and talented students may have access to distance learning opportunities, allowing them to explore subjects not offered within the physical school setting or collaborate with experts and peers beyond the classroom.
7. **Advanced Classes:** BCIT offers advanced-level courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses, for gifted and talented students seeking college-level coursework and credit.
8. **Individual Programs:** Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are developed to address the unique needs of each gifted and talented student. These plans outline specific goals, accommodations, and interventions to support their growth and development.
9. **Extracurricular Programs:** BCIT encourages gifted and talented students to participate in extracurricular activities that align with their interests, talents, and goals. These activities can provide additional opportunities for skill development and enrichment.

Balancing the Continuum

It's essential to strike a balance between challenging gifted and talented students and ensuring that they receive a well-rounded education. BCIT is committed to providing a continuum of services that fosters the intellectual, creative, and personal growth of gifted and talented students while maintaining a strong foundation in core subjects and the overall educational experience.

3. Burlington County Institute of Technology Policy #2464

Overview

Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT) recognizes its obligation to adhere to the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act and provide appropriate educational services for gifted and talented students. Under Policy #2464, BCIT is committed to:

- Identifying gifted and talented students using a fair and comprehensive process.
- Developing and implementing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to meet the unique needs of gifted students.
- Offering a differentiated curriculum and enrichment activities.
- Providing ongoing professional development for educators.
- Engaging with parents, families, and the community to support gifted and talented education.

Identification Process

Incoming Freshmen

Incoming freshmen at BCIT will be invited to join the Gifted and Talented Program based on a holistic evaluation of multiple factors, which include:

- **Entrance Exam (LinkiT Test Scores):** Students' scores on the LinkiT test will be considered as a part of the identification process.
- **Math Entrance:** Students with a score of 65% or higher in the Math entrance examination.
- **ELA Entrance:** Students with a score of 80% or higher in the English Language Arts (ELA) entrance examination.
- **Prior Grades:** Evaluation of students' prior academic performance, taking into account their grades in relevant subjects.
- **Standardized Test Scores:** Analysis of standardized test scores to identify students with exceptional abilities in specific areas.

Upperclassmen

Upperclassmen will be recommended for the Gifted and Talented Program based on a combination of the following factors:

- **Performance in Advanced-Level Courses in High School:** Students who excel in advanced-level courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) or honors courses, will be considered for the program.
- **Teacher Recommendation:** Recommendations from teachers who have observed a student's exceptional abilities, talents, or potential will be a valuable factor in the identification process.
- **Prior Grades:** Evaluation of students' prior academic performance, taking into account their grades in relevant subjects.
- **Standardized Test Scores:** Analysis of standardized test scores to identify students with exceptional abilities in specific areas.

Compliance and Reporting

BCIT will regularly assess its compliance with the law and Policy #2464, including the identification process for gifted and talented students. Compliance reports will be submitted to the appropriate state authorities as required.

Program Evaluation and Improvement

BCIT recognizes the importance of continually evaluating and improving its identification process to ensure that gifted and talented students are identified and provided with the appropriate educational opportunities. Feedback from students, parents, and educators will be used to refine and enhance these processes.

4. Professional Development Opportunities

At Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT), we recognize the importance of equipping our educators and school leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students. Professional development opportunities are offered to support teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders in their understanding of gifted and talented students, their needs, and their educational development.

Goals of Professional Development

Our professional development initiatives are designed to achieve the following goals:

1. **Enhanced Understanding:** Develop a deeper understanding of the characteristics and unique needs of gifted and talented students.
2. **Effective Identification:** Equip educators with the tools and strategies needed to identify gifted and talented students accurately.
3. **Differentiated Instruction:** Provide training on the principles of differentiated instruction to cater to the diverse learning styles and abilities of gifted students.
4. **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):** Educate staff on the development and implementation of IEPs that meet the specific needs of gifted students.
5. **Program Enhancement:** Continually improve and refine the gifted and talented education programs offered at BCIT through feedback and best practices.

Professional Development Opportunities

BCIT offers a range of professional development opportunities, including but not limited to:

1. **Workshops and Seminars:** Regular workshops and seminars focused on best practices in gifted education, identification strategies, and instructional techniques for gifted and talented students.
2. **Conferences:** Opportunities for educators and school leaders to attend regional, national, and international conferences dedicated to gifted and talented education.
3. **In-Service Training:** In-service training sessions tailored to the specific needs of BCIT educators and staff.
4. **Collaboration and Peer Learning:** Encouragement of collaboration among educators and staff to share insights and strategies for supporting gifted students.

5. Resource Sharing: Access to a repository of resources, research, and materials related to gifted education.

Ongoing Commitment

BCIT is committed to the ongoing professional development of our staff to ensure that they remain well-informed, skilled, and motivated in their roles as educators of gifted and talented students. We recognize that the field of education is dynamic, and staying current with best practices is essential to providing the best possible educational experiences for our students.

Reporting and Feedback

Staff members are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness of professional development opportunities and suggest areas for improvement. This feedback is valuable in shaping the future direction of our professional development programs.

5. Complaint Policy

An individual who believes that the district has not complied with the provisions of NJSA 18A:35-34 et seq. may file a complaint with the Board of Education. This policy for filing a complaint shall be linked to the homepage of the Board's Internet website. The Board shall issue a decision in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter. The individual may then file a petition of appeal of the Board's written decision to the Commissioner of Education through the office of Controversies and Disputes in accordance with NJSA 18A:6-9 and the procedures set forth in State Board of Education regulations.

At Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT), we are committed to providing the best possible education and support to our students, including those in the Gifted and Talented Program. We understand that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time, and we are dedicated to addressing them promptly and fairly.

Reporting a Complaint

If you have a concern or complaint related to the Gifted and Talented Program, please follow these steps:

1. **Informal Resolution:** Whenever possible, we encourage individuals to resolve concerns or complaints informally. This may involve discussing the issue with the teacher, staff member, or administrator directly involved.
2. **Use of Google Form:** If your concern or complaint is not resolved through informal means or if you prefer to report it formally, BCIT provides a dedicated Google Form for this purpose. You can access this [form](#) on our school website on the "[Curriculum](#)" page, "*Gifted and Talented Education Program*" section, under the "*Complaint Reporting*" subsection of the page. The form is designed to gather essential details about your concern, allowing us to address it effectively.

Filing a Complaint via Google Form

Follow these steps to file a complaint using the BCIT Google Form:

1. **Access the Form:** Visit our school website and navigate to the "Complaint Reporting" section. Click on the link to access the Google Form.

2. **Provide Information:** Complete all required fields on the form, providing accurate and detailed information about your concern or complaint.
3. **Submission:** Once you have filled out the form, click the "Submit" button. Your complaint will be sent electronically to the designated BCIT contact responsible for handling complaints related to the Gifted and Talented Program.
4. **Acknowledgment:** You will receive an acknowledgment of your complaint via email, confirming that it has been received and will be reviewed.

Investigation and Resolution

BCIT is committed to conducting a thorough investigation of all complaints. The process may involve interviews, documentation review, and consultations with relevant parties. Our goal is to reach a fair and appropriate resolution within a reasonable timeframe.

Confidentiality

BCIT takes the confidentiality of complaints seriously. While we may need to share certain information with individuals involved in the investigation or resolution process, we will do so while respecting the privacy of all parties involved.

Non-Retaliation

BCIT strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who file complaints in good faith. We encourage open communication and value your feedback to improve our programs and services continually.

Follow-Up

After the investigation and resolution of your complaint, BCIT will communicate the outcome to you and take any necessary actions to address the issue effectively. We appreciate your commitment to helping us maintain a safe and productive educational environment.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns related to our complaint policy or process, please contact Danielle Hartman, Director of Curriculum and Instruction by emailing dhartman@burlcoschools.org.