

ASSEMBLY, No. 1201

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

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District 20 (Union)

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Co-Sponsored by:

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SYNOPSIS

Establishes Division of Gifted and Talented Education in DOE; directs State Board of Education to authorize gifted education endorsement to instructional certificate; and establishes certain other requirements related to gifted and talented education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/8/2021)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the education of gifted and talented students,
2 amending P.L.2017, c.6, and supplementing Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. (New section) As used in sections 1 through 8 of P.L. ,
9 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

10 “Gifted and talented students” means students who possess or
11 demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas
12 when compared to their chronological peers in the school district
13 and who require modifications of their educational program if they
14 are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

15 “Instructional adaptation” means an adjustment or modification
16 to instruction enabling students who are gifted and talented to
17 participate in, benefit from, or demonstrate knowledge and
18 application of, the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

19
20 2. (New section) a. There is established a Division of Gifted
21 and Talented Education in the Department of Education. The
22 division shall be staffed by at least one full-time individual who has
23 a demonstrated knowledge base in the education of gifted and
24 talented students and who is qualified by training and experience to
25 perform the duties of the division. Staff in the division, to the
26 extent possible, shall possess, or be eligible for, the gifted education
27 endorsement to the instructional certificate established pursuant to
28 section 7 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
29 this bill).

30 b. The Division of Gifted and Talented Education shall ensure,
31 in conjunction with each office of the executive county
32 superintendent of schools and each County Specialist of Gifted and
33 Talented Education required pursuant to section 3 of P.L. ,
34 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), that each
35 school district provides for its students who are gifted and talented a
36 thorough and efficient education with appropriate modifications so
37 that they can achieve in accordance with their capabilities. The
38 division shall ensure that each school district:

39 (1) Identifies gifted and talented students and provides them
40 with appropriate instructional adaptations and services, in
41 accordance with the following:

42 (a) School districts shall make provisions for an ongoing
43 identification process for gifted and talented students in grades
44 kindergarten through 12 that includes multiple measures;

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 (b) School districts shall provide appropriate educational
2 services in grades kindergarten through 12 for gifted and talented
3 students;

4 (c) School districts shall develop appropriate curricular and
5 instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students
6 indicating content, process, products, and learning environment;
7 and

8 (d) School districts shall take into consideration the Pre-K to
9 Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards of the National
10 Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted
11 and talented students;

12 (2) Designs and delivers curriculum in such a way that all
13 students are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills specified
14 by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and designs and
15 delivers appropriate instructional adaptations, integrated
16 accommodations, and modifications for gifted and talented students;
17 and

18 (3) Actively assists and supports professional development for
19 teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders, including
20 their efforts to meet mandatory professional development
21 requirements specified in State Board of Education regulations in
22 the area of gifted and talented education.
23

24 3. (New section) The office of the executive county
25 superintendent of schools shall include a County Specialist of
26 Gifted and Talented Education. The County Specialist of Gifted
27 and Talented Education shall have a demonstrated knowledge base
28 in the education of gifted and talented students, and to the extent
29 possible, shall possess, or be eligible for, the gifted education
30 endorsement to the instructional certificate established pursuant to
31 section 7 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
32 this bill). The County Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education
33 shall ensure, through collaboration with each school district and
34 each school district's Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education
35 required pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
36 the Legislature as this bill), that each school district's gifted and
37 talented program meets or exceeds the parameters set forth in
38 subsection b. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
39 Legislature as this bill).
40

41 4. (New section) Each school district shall appoint a school
42 district Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education. A school
43 district Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education shall possess
44 the gifted education endorsement to the instructional certificate
45 established pursuant to section 7 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
46 before the Legislature as this bill). A school district Specialist of
47 Gifted and Talented Education shall, in conjunction with each
48 school principal, coordinate the school district's gifted and talented

1 program. The responsibilities of a school district Specialist of
2 Gifted and Talented Education shall include, but not be limited to,
3 the following:

4 a. meeting on a regular basis with teachers of gifted and
5 talented education within the school district to discuss ways in
6 which the district's gifted and talented program can be improved in
7 the areas of student identification and the development and delivery
8 of curriculum and instructional adaptations for gifted and talented
9 students;

10 b. meeting on a regular basis with general education teachers
11 who have students identified as gifted and talented in their
12 classrooms to discuss ways in which the development and delivery
13 of curriculum and instructional adaptations for gifted and talented
14 students can be improved for students in general education
15 classrooms; and

16 c. coordinating professional development opportunities for
17 teachers of gifted and talented education and general education
18 teachers who have students identified as gifted and talented in their
19 classrooms.

20
21 5. (New section) a. The Commissioner of Education, in
22 consultation with recognized experts in gifted and talented
23 education from a cross section of academia, gifted and talented
24 student advocacy organizations, nonprofit organizations,
25 professional associations, and government agencies, shall establish
26 inservice workshops and training programs to train selected public
27 school employees to act as County Specialists of Gifted and
28 Talented Education and school district Specialists of Gifted and
29 Talented Education in accordance with the provisions of sections 3
30 and 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
31 bill). The commissioner shall seek to make the workshops and
32 training programs available and administered both in person and
33 online through the department's website, inservice programming, or
34 other existing online resources. The commissioner shall evaluate
35 the effectiveness of the consulting group on an annual basis. The
36 inservice training programs may utilize the offices of the executive
37 county superintendents of schools, or such other institutions,
38 agencies, or persons as the commissioner deems appropriate. Each
39 board of education shall provide time for the inservice training
40 during the usual school schedule in order to ensure that appropriate
41 personnel are prepared to act in the district as school district
42 Specialists of Gifted and Talented Education.

43 b. Upon completion of the initial inservice training program,
44 the commissioner shall ensure that programs and workshops that
45 reflect the most current information on gifted and talented
46 education are prepared and made available to County Specialists of
47 Gifted and Talented Education and school district Specialists of
48 Gifted and Talented Education at regular intervals.

1 c. Nothing in this section shall preclude a school district from
2 making the inservice workshops and training programs for County
3 Specialists of Gifted and Talented Education and school district
4 Specialists of Gifted and Talented Education available to other
5 teachers of gifted and talented education or general education
6 teachers who have students identified as gifted and talented in their
7 classrooms.

8
9 6. (New section) In addition to any other requirements adopted
10 by the State Board of Education for educator preparation programs,
11 the State board shall require that the preparation program for an
12 instructional certificate include a minimum of the equivalent of
13 three semester credit hours of classroom instruction, clinical
14 experience, including student internships, or a combination thereof,
15 in the education of gifted and talented students. Coursework in this
16 area shall include, but not be limited to: foundations of gifted and
17 talented education; needs and characteristics of gifted and talented
18 students; identification of gifted and talented students; curriculum
19 development, modification, and differentiation of instruction for
20 gifted and talented students; social and emotional development and
21 needs of gifted and talented students; program options for gifted
22 and talented students; and the education of twice-exceptional
23 students who have been identified as eligible for special education
24 and related services and have also been identified as gifted and
25 talented.

26
27 7. (New section) a. The State Board of Education shall
28 authorize a gifted education endorsement to the instructional
29 certificate. The endorsement shall authorize the holder to teach
30 gifted and talented education in all public schools.

31 b. State Board of Education regulations prescribing the
32 requirements for eligibility for a gifted education endorsement to
33 the instructional certificate shall, at a minimum, require that a
34 candidate for the endorsement:

35 (1) completes a Department of Education-approved course of
36 study, with 15 semester credit hours, from an accredited college or
37 university, which meets the competencies for gifted and talented
38 education set forth in subsection c. of this section; and

39 (2) passes the Educational Testing Service Praxis test in Gifted
40 Education.

41 c. A candidate for the gifted education endorsement to the
42 instructional certificate, upon completion of the education
43 requirements of paragraph (1) of subsection b. of this section, shall
44 have obtained the following competencies and knowledge:

45 (1) understanding variations in learning and development in
46 cognitive and affective areas between and among individuals who
47 are gifted and talented, and applying this understanding to provide

- 1 meaningful and challenging learning experiences for students with
2 exceptionalities;
- 3 (2) the ability to create safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive
4 learning environments so that students who are gifted and talented
5 become effective learners and develop social and emotional well-
6 being;
- 7 (3) using knowledge of general and specialized curricula to
8 advance learning for students who are gifted and talented, and
9 creating and improving programs and services at the classroom and
10 school level, including considering and planning for the needs of
11 minority and low-income students in all programming and service
12 decisions;
- 13 (4) using multiple methods of assessment and data sources in
14 making educational decisions about the identification of students
15 who are gifted and talented, including using valid and reliable
16 assessment practices to minimize bias and ensure an equitable
17 identification process;
- 18 (5) the ability to select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-
19 based instructional strategies to advance the learning of students
20 who are gifted and talented;
- 21 (6) using foundational knowledge of the field of gifted and
22 talented education, professional ethical principles, and
23 programming standards to inform gifted education practice; and
- 24 (7) collaborating with families, other educators, related service
25 providers, gifted and talented individuals, and personnel from
26 community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the
27 needs of students who are gifted and talented across a range of
28 learning experiences.
- 29 d. A teacher who has four years of documented experience as a
30 teacher of the gifted in any New Jersey school district shall be
31 issued a gifted education endorsement to the instructional certificate
32 upon application to the State Board of Examiners, and shall be
33 exempt from the coursework and Praxis test requirements for the
34 endorsement set forth in subsection b. of this section.
- 35 As used in this subsection, “teacher of the gifted” means any
36 teacher or coordinator of gifted education with full-time, shared, or
37 part-time responsibility for the education of students identified as
38 gifted and talented. “Teacher of the gifted” shall not mean a
39 general education teacher who has students identified as gifted and
40 talented in the teacher’s general education classroom.
- 41 e. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, no person shall be
42 appointed by a board of education as a teacher or coordinator of
43 gifted and talented education unless that person possesses a gifted
44 education endorsement to the instructional certificate.
- 45
- 46 8. (New section) The State Board of Education shall, as part of
47 the professional development requirement established by the State
48 board for public school teaching staff members, require each public

1 school teaching staff member to complete at least two hours of
2 instruction in the education of gifted and talented students in each
3 professional development period. The instruction shall include, but
4 not be limited to: foundations of gifted and talented education;
5 needs and characteristics of gifted and talented students;
6 identification of gifted and talented students; curriculum
7 development, modification, and differentiation of instruction for
8 gifted and talented students; social and emotional development and
9 needs of gifted and talented students; program options for gifted
10 and talented students; and the education of twice-exceptional
11 students who have been identified as eligible for special education
12 and related services and have also been identified as gifted and
13 talented.

14
15 9. Section 1 of P.L.2017, c.6 (C.18A:26-2.23) is amended to
16 read as follows:

17 1. In addition to any other requirements adopted by the State
18 Board of Education for teacher preparation programs, the State
19 board shall require that the preparation program for an instructional
20 certificate include a minimum of the equivalent of 6 semester credit
21 hours of classroom instruction, clinical experience, including
22 student internships, or a combination thereof, in special education.
23 Up to 3 semester credit hours of this requirement may include
24 classroom instruction, clinical experience, including student
25 internships, or a combination thereof, in the education of twice-
26 exceptional students who have been identified as eligible for special
27 education and related services and have also been identified as
28 gifted and talented.

29 (cf: P.L.2017, c.6, s.1)

30
31 10. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations
32 pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410
33 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this
34 act.

35
36 11. This act shall take effect immediately.

37 38 39 STATEMENT

40
41 This bill establishes several requirements related to the education
42 of gifted and talented students in the public schools. The bill
43 establishes a Division of Gifted and Talented Education in the
44 Department of Education, which would have the responsibility to
45 ensure that each school district provides for its students who are
46 gifted and talented a thorough and efficient education with
47 appropriate modifications so that they can achieve in accordance
48 with their capabilities. The division must ensure that every school

1 district: (1) identifies gifted and talented students and provides them
2 with appropriate instructional adaptations and services; (2) designs
3 and delivers curriculum in a way that all students are able to
4 demonstrate the knowledge and skills specified by the New Jersey
5 Student Learning Standards, and designs and delivers appropriate
6 instructional adaptations, accommodations, and modifications for
7 gifted and talented students; and (3) actively assists and supports
8 professional development for teachers, educational services staff,
9 and school leaders in the area of gifted and talented education.

10 The bill requires each office of the executive county
11 superintendent of schools to include a County Specialist of Gifted
12 and Talented Education, and requires each school district to appoint
13 a school district Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education. A
14 County Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education would be
15 responsible to ensure that each school district's gifted and talented
16 program meets or exceeds the parameters set forth in the bill. A
17 school district Specialist of Gifted and Talented Education would be
18 responsible for coordinating the district's gifted and talented
19 program, including: (1) meeting regularly with teachers of gifted
20 and talented education and with general education teachers who
21 have students identified as gifted and talented in their classrooms to
22 discuss ways in which gifted and talented education can be
23 improved; and (2) coordinating professional development
24 opportunities concerning gifted and talented education. Under the
25 bill, the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with
26 recognized experts in gifted and talented education and other
27 specified entities, will establish inservice workshops and training
28 programs to train selected public school employees to act as County
29 Specialists of Gifted and Talented Education and as school district
30 Specialists of Gifted and Talented Education.

31 The bill requires the State Board of Education to authorize a
32 gifted education endorsement to the instructional certificate, which
33 would authorize the holder to teach gifted and talented education in
34 all public schools. The bill specifies that the eligibility
35 requirements for a gifted education endorsement must, at a
36 minimum, require that a candidate for the endorsement: (1)
37 completes a Department of Education-approved course of study,
38 with 15 semester credit hours, from an accredited college or
39 university, which meets certain specified competencies for gifted
40 and talented education; and (2) passes the Educational Testing
41 Service Praxis test in Gifted Education. However, a teacher who
42 has four years of documented experience as a teacher of the gifted
43 in any New Jersey school district may be issued a gifted education
44 endorsement to the instructional certificate upon application to the
45 State Board of Examiners, without meeting the coursework and test
46 requirements. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school
47 year, a person may not be appointed by a board of education as a
48 teacher or coordinator of gifted and talented education unless that

- 1 person possesses a gifted education endorsement to the instructional
2 certificate.
- 3 In addition, the bill does the following:
- 4 • Requires that the preparation program for an instructional
5 certificate includes a minimum of the equivalent of three
6 semester credit hours of classroom instruction, clinical
7 experience, including student internships, or a combination
8 thereof, in the education of gifted and talented students;
 - 9 • Amends current law to provide that, of the existing
10 requirement that teacher preparation programs for an
11 instructional certificate include at least six semester credit
12 hours in special education, up to three semester credit hours
13 of that requirement may include classroom instruction,
14 clinical experience, including student internships, or a
15 combination thereof, in the education of twice-exceptional
16 students who have been identified as eligible for special
17 education and related services and have also been identified
18 as gifted and talented; and
 - 19 • Directs the State Board of Education to require, as part of
20 the professional development requirement for public school
21 teaching staff members, that each teaching staff member
22 completes at least two hours of instruction in the education
23 of gifted and talented students in each professional
24 development period.