

Statement from S. Norris 10/14/14

Provide IEPs and additional classroom support and funds for ALL exceptional learners including the gifted and talented and twice exceptional.

I was told currently Delaware only provides IEPs for disabled learners who under perform.

I requested an IEP for my son in September based on difficulty he was having in school last year in terms of being disruptive that lead to a diagnosis of several disabilities. He started at this school in K and they have always recognized he is smart then he started having occasional uncharacteristic outbursts and by end of 2nd grade last year they suspended him many times in row which lead me to seek professional help for him and his being diagnosed. Despite that he remained a class leader in terms of test performance.

When I requested the IEP I was told it would be denied because my son does exceptionally well in school. In fact he lead his grade in standardized testing last year and has been identified as gifted and talented. His score on the school year pre-testing were outstanding. Despite those test scores his medical condition has already lead to a suspension from from this year and I have received numerous calls from the school indicating that the teachers are having difficulty with him in their classrooms. All focus is on his behavior while I continue to try to impress upon them that focusing on his behavior without trying to keep him engaged and challenged is doomed to fail.

I provided the excerpt below as a justification for my IEP request.

Excerpts from <http://prezi.com/s662l5ffxlas/iep-flow-chart/>

Who Are Exceptional Learners

Exceptional learners differ from the norm **either above** or below *to such an extent that they require an individualized program of special education and related services to fully benefit from education.* The term exceptional learner includes children who experience difficulties in learning as well as those whose performance is so superior that modifications in curriculum and instruction are necessary to help them fulfill their potential. The term covers autism, deaf, blind, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, health impairments, speech and language, traumatic brain injury, developmental delay, **gifted and talented**, and **twice exceptional**.

Strategies to Differentiate Instruction

Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Therefore it is individualized for each student.

Special Education can consist of one of the following:

*individualized curriculum that is different from that of same-age nondisabled peers

*the same general curriculum as that for nondisabled peers, with adaptations and modifications made for the student.

* a combination of these elements.

The Purpose of special education is that special educators work collaboratively with general educators and share the responsibility for ensuring that students with identified disabilities will meet success. All students can learn when instruction is geared to their strengths and they are given sufficient opportunities to learn. This enables students to successfully develop to their fullest potential by providing a free appropriate public education in compliance with IDEA.

Exceptional learners need modifications and accommodations provided in the individual student's least restrictive environment. Modifications are a changes in what is being taught or expected from the student. Providing modified assignments or lower level reading material are examples of modifications. Accommodations are changes that help a student work around the disability. It involves how a student learns. An example of an accommodation is having a student who struggle with writing give his answers orally. The student is still expected to know the same material and answer the same questions as other students, but he doesn't have to write his answers to show that he knows the information.

Common Characteristics of Learners with Gifts and Talents

- *Ability to learn basic skills quickly and easily and retain information with less repetition***
- *High verbal ability***
- *Very observant***
- *Long attention span***
- *Risk Taker***
- *Self directed***
- *Strong critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills***
- *May mature at different rates than age peers***
- *Sense of independence***

Common Characteristics of Learners with Disabilities

- *Difficulties with one or more than one of the following reading, reading comprehension, writing and memory***
- *Difficulty with processing***
- *Difficulty with multi- step directions***
- *Low self-confidence***
- *Letter reversals***
- *Fine motor issues***
- *Difficulties with number concepts***
- * Frequently have difficulty paying attention but may focus for long periods in areas of interest***
- *Sometimes can appear immature since they use *anger*, crying or *withdrawal to express feelings and to deal with challenges****

Please reference Handout #2 for more information

- *Keep them actively engaged in the learning process***
- *Teach study skills and organizational skills***
- *Use scribes***
- * voice recognition software***
- *readers for longer more challenging tasks***
- *Use checklists***
- *Step by step written direction***
- *Mnemonic devices***
- *Set achievable goals and evaluate these constantly***
- *Frequent check-ins to assure understanding***
- *Tasks that focus on interest***
- *Real life tasks***
- * role play***
- *Tiered assignments***
- *Learning centers***
- *Use word banks***
- *Use portfolio***
- *Use groups, study buddy,***

Strategies for Learners with Gifts and Talents

- *Vary lesson topics***
- *Flexible grouping***

- *Use technology to further investigate and extend the learning process***
- *High level thinking questions***
- *Accelerate learning process***
- *Independent study***
- *Tiered activities***
- *Activities that focus on students gifts and interests***
- *Interactive journals***
- *Portfolio of work examples***
- *Logical analytical thinking***
- Groups students with peers***
- *teach information to others***
- *Alternative product options***
- *Hands on experience***
- *Use high-interest personal reading material or above grade level reading material***
- *Extension and enrichment activities***
- *Use a variety of forms of media in presentation***

Update: I saved this as draft and before I got a chance to send it, I guess I kicked up enough fuss and my son required enough work that they called to tell me that they would do some testing and there is now a possibility based on the results of the testing that my IEP request could be granted. I really hope this works out.

S. Norris