Gifted Education Program

GOAL

(Growth Opportunities for Advanced Learners)

Contact Information

Dr. Cindy Soltys
Director of Pupil Services
Karen Townsend
Secretary for GOAL
Phone: (724) 539-4212
Fax: (412) 539-4202

Elementary Gifted Teachers

Baggaley Elementary
Diane Weatherton
4080 Route 982
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 539-4531

Latrobe Elementary
Diane Weatherton
1501 Ligonier Street
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 539-9779

Mountain View Elementary
Joseph Comm
3110 Mountain View Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 834-7399

*Visit each teacher’s GOAL webpage through the “Teacher” tab of your building’s webpage.*

Elementary School Psychologists: Mrs. Jen Hartman and Mrs. Susan Hoopes

General Information

The 3-6 grade GOAL program (Growth Opportunities for Advanced Learning) is required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a part of the special education mandate for those whose needs cannot be fully met in the regular classroom. GOAL provides additional enrichment opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for mentally gifted students whose abilities require greater challenge.

The GOAL program provides emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation. All activities are designed to emphasize the four strands of gifted performance:

- critical thinking
- problem solving
- creativity
- communication skills

Rules and regulations governing gifted education are contained in Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students, part of the Pennsylvania School Code. A copy of this law can be obtained on the PA Department of Education website at www.education.state.pa.us.

* The link below will provide Pennsylvania State Regulations for Gifted Education:

http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter16/chap16toc.html
Identification

A gifted multidisciplinary evaluation (GMDE) is the process used for collecting all pertinent information to determine a child's eligibility at the time of the initial referral. An oral or written request by a parent or teacher is necessary in order to begin an evaluation. Such requests are limited to one per school year.

The definition of giftedness comes from the Pennsylvania Special Education Rules and Regulations. Chapter 16.21 states:

(d) Each school district shall establish procedures to determine whether a student is mentally gifted. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria as set forth in this chapter and in Department Guidelines indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. Deficits in memory or processing speed, as indicated by testing, cannot be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted special education. A person with an IQ lower that 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted must include an assessment by a certified school psychologist.

(e) Multiple criteria indicating gifted ability include:

(1) A year or more above grade level achievement for the normal age group in one or more subjects as measured by Nationally normed and validated achievement tests able to accurately reflect gifted performance. Subject results shall yield academic instruction levels in all academic subject areas.

(2) An observed or measured rate of acquisition/retention of new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.

(3) Demonstrated achievement, performance or expertise in one or more academic areas as evidenced by excellence of products, portfolio or research, as well as criterion-referenced team judgment.

(4) Early and measured use of high level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication skills, foreign language aptitude or technology expertise.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Team will determine if a student is mentally gifted (based on Chapter 16) and in need of specially designed instruction. This information will be outlined in a comprehensive Gifted Written Report (GWR) and will be given to the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) Team. The Gifted Written Report (GWR) is a concluding summary of the evaluation and a report is disseminated by the school psychologist within 60 calendar days of receipt of the parental consent for evaluation (excluding summer break).
**Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP)**

A Gifted Individualized Education Plan is developed for eligible students at a team meeting within 30 calendar days after issuance of the Gifted Written Report (GWR) and conducted annually thereafter.

Possible members of each GIEP team are:

1. The student's parent(s).
2. The student (if parents choose to have the student participate).
3. A representative of the school district who serves as the chairperson of the GIEP team, is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district, and is authorized by the district to commit those resources.
4. A teacher of the gifted
5. One or more of the student's current teachers
6. Other individuals at the discretion of either the parents or district

A GIEP consists of:

- Present levels of educational performance
  - Ability and assessment test scores
  - Achievement test scores
  - Grades
  - Progress on goals
  - Instructional levels
  - Aptitudes, interests, specialized skills, products and evidence of effectiveness in other academic areas
- Parent and teacher input
- Annual goals
  - Short-Term learning outcomes with timelines
  - Specially Designed Instruction
- Support Services Needed to Assist the Gifted Student to Benefit from Gifted Education

After the GIEP Team Meeting, the Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is issued for parental consent and must be signed and returned within ten (10) days to the Gifted Support Teacher.
Elementary GOAL Program (3 - 6)

The K-2 gifted program consists of enrichment within the regular classroom and consultation with the teacher of gifted. Third through sixth grade GOAL classes are scheduled at least twice a week for 40 minute sessions. The program consists of two components: thematic units (including an annual research project) and preparation for gifted events and competitions.

**Thematic units** are interdisciplinary in nature, but usually have an emphasis in one of the four major elementary curriculum areas of science, social studies, mathematics or language arts. Specific units of study are selected by the GOAL teacher in each building and may change from year to year. **Examples** of thematic units are:

- Grade 3 – Fairytales, Fables & Folktales, Rocks & Minerals/Volcanoes, Animals, Weather
- Grade 4 – Historical Fiction/Local History, United States, Marble Mazes, Presidents
- Grade 5 – Autobiographies/Family History, Architecture/Domes, Crime Scene Investigations
- Grade 6 – Biographies/Great Leaders, Stock Market, Hot Air Balloons, Ancient Civilizations

An off-site curriculum extension is scheduled once a year to compliment a thematic unit. Examples of past field trips include: Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History, Fallingwater, Johnstown Flood Museum, Laurel Caverns, The Pittsburgh Zoo, and The Heinz History Center.

* Individualized options can be included and are driven by the students' GIEP goals and are based on individual interests, strengths and needs. The activities may be organized under categories such as centers, independent research/projects and academic games.

**Gifted events and competitions** are held throughout the year in conjunction with the Westmoreland Elementary Gifted Educators (WEGE) group. This group consists of elementary teachers of gifted from districts in Westmoreland County. Events and competition are hosted at various venues by participating districts, including Greater Latrobe. Events and competitions as well as Greater Latrobe involvement are subject to change from year to year. An example of events and competitions are as follows:

- Fun with Physics Fair (Grade 3)
- “24” – math tournament (Grades 5-6)
- Calcu-Solve - math problem solving competition (Grades 3-4)
- Westmoreland County Academic Quiz Bowl (Grades 3-6)
- Invention Convention (Grades 3-6)
- Science Bowl (Grade 4)
- Celebration of Literature - reading competition (Grades 4-6)
- Geography Seminar (Grades 4-6)

*Additional events and competitions may be included/excluded each year as they become available/cancelled and at the discretion of the teacher of gifted.
Elementary School Teacher Guidelines

The gifted support program, as defined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students, is a legally mandated component of an identified gifted child’s instructional program. Greater Latrobe School District’s gifted support program (GOAL) is structured to include classes and/or individualized options for our gifted students. These activities are developed and planned to provide identified students with experiences that will enhance their areas of strength, allow students to make community and academic connections, explore career options, and participate in co-curricular programs that enrich their classroom experiences beyond the district’s curriculum. When participating in these activities, students will miss some or all of the regular education instructional day. When this occurs, GOAL activities are to be in place of and not in addition to regular class work. Make-up work may be necessary under certain circumstances, but “requiring make-up work to be completed that inappropriately penalizes the student and detracts from a successful gifted education is an unintended consequence and should be avoided.” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, Gifted Guidelines, 2004).

However, recognizing the sequential and incremental nature of instruction, the following procedures should be followed when working with your GOAL students:

Work that may need to be completed by the student includes such things as:

- introduction of new concepts
- tests and quizzes
- individual parts of group projects
- reading assignments required for follow-up discussion
- work in areas in which a student is experiencing difficulty or needs extra practice

Work that would not need to be completed by the student includes such things as:

- guided practice sheets/activities on skills already mastered
- cut, paste, and coloring activities
- journal writing
- class work that is reinforced by homework
- group activities/discussions which would be impossible to replicate independently

Ways in which work can be completed include:

- upon completion of other assigned class work
- as a carry over into the next day’s class
- through the occasional use of recess, activity periods, or other free times as agreed to by the student, teacher, and parents
- on-line or via e-mail
- as homework when no other option is possible
Suggestions for teachers:

- It is against regulations to limit absences from class for participation in GOAL activities to a set number or to discourage participation in GOAL activities.

- Weigh carefully whether the completion of a specific missed assignment is essential to the child’s mastery of a concept. It is appropriate to exempt students from certain assignments.

- Whenever possible, plan activities which do not need to be made up when it is known in advance that a large segment of the class will be gone.

- Carry over work to the next day’s class as GOAL students can often finish work quickly.

- If a student is present in the building at some point on the day of a GOAL curriculum extension, it is reasonable to expect the prior day’s homework to be turned in on that day at a time when the student is able to do so. If the student misses the entire day, accept homework due on the day of absence on the following day with no penalty.

- Avoid the creation of substitute individual assignments to replace group activities, discussions, or experiments, if the skills and/or concepts involved can be evaluated verbally or through other regularly scheduled assignments/assessments.

- Use a teacher-directed system (i.e., assignment board, folder, website) to indicate to students missed assignments and which ones must be made up, rather than asking GOAL students to contact other students regarding make-up work.

- Provide a proportional period of time for students to make up missed work. If students miss one class period, they should be given at least one day’s time to make up the work prior to its being due. For longer absences, allow one day’s time for each day of school missed.

- A GOAL student’s absence from class is the same as any other excused absence (for illness, family emergencies, etc.). Do not give make-up tests which are more difficult than the original test or establish policies which “punish” students for participation in GIEP-mandated activities, such as requiring students to come in prior to the start of the school day to complete work or moving up the deadline for completion of work or presentations.

- Encourage GOAL students to share their related experiences with your class to enrich your curriculum and to allow them a differentiated avenue of participation for the missed class. View GOAL student participation in GOAL activities as opportunities for the entire class to take advantage of resources and extensions to the Greater Latrobe curriculum.

- Address concerns regarding student absences to the GOAL staff for resolution.
Glossary of Gifted Terms

1. **Enrichment** - In-depth learning experiences that provide more contact with topics than that covered in regular education.
2. **Acceleration** - Access to higher level learning activities than provided in regular education. Examples: grade skipping, course compacting, credit by examination.
3. **Course Compacting** - Eliminating content of a course that a child has already mastered so a faster pace can be undertaken.
4. **Honors Course** - A secondary level course designed to be advanced in content process and product. Often these courses have prerequisite requirements.
5. **Advanced Placement Course** - A secondary course in which there is the possibility of earning college credit or advanced college placement upon successful completion of a national test given after course completion.
6. **Differentiation** - Adaptation of a curriculum to meet a student's needs.
7. **Homogeneous Grouping** - Grouping based on an identified specific variable that all students have in common.
8. **Heterogeneous Grouping** - Grouping based on grade level which includes students with diverse needs and learning styles.
9. **Flexible Grouping** - Temporary grouping arrangement designed to allow students at a similar performance level to work together on a specific skill or objective.
Directory of Organizations and Resources

**Director of Pupil Services**  
Dr. Cindy Soltys  
410 Main Street  
Latrobe, PA 15650  
(724) 539-4212

**Westmoreland Intermediate Unit**  
(724) 836-2460

**Investigation of Talented Elementary Students**  
Dr. Ann Lupkowski Shoplik, Director  
Carnegie Mellon University  
240 Hamburg Hall  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890  
(412) 268-1629  
*Provides annual talent search for 3rd through 9th graders and offers academically challenging summer programs for identified students.*

**American Mensa, Ltd.**  
201 Main Street, Suite 1101  
Ft. Worth, TX 76102  
(817) 332-2600

**Center for the Gifted**  
3324 Midvale Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19129  
(215) 849-5077  
*Provides identification and assessment, vocational testing and guidance, counseling and psychotherapy, workshops, and community services.*

**Council for Exceptional Children**  
1920 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 22091-1589  
(800) 845-6CEC  
*Provides lists of resource books and literature available for order.*

**Mensa Gifted Children Pen Pals International**  
Dr. Debby Van de Vender  
166 E. 61st Street  
Box 11G  
New York, NY 10021
National Association for Gifted Children
Suite 550; 11707 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 785-4268
Magazines available: Parenting for High Potential and Gifted Child Quarterly plus a newsletter. They also do national advocacy work.

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented
The University of Connecticut
362 Fairfield Road, U-7
Storrs, CT 06269-2007
(203) 486-4826
http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/

Pennsylvania Department of Education
http://www.ped.state.pa.us/

Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE)
3026 Potshop Road
Norristown, PA 19403
(610) 584-5221
PAGE Help line: (717) 774-0476
http://www.giftedpage.org/
Membership brochures and newsletters are available.

Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)

Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN)
Route 8
Gibsonia, PA 15044
(724) 443-7821

Support Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
Kent State University
P.O. Box 5190
Kent, OH 44242
(330) 672-4450
SENG focuses on parents to help them understand their gifted children and assist them in developing to their full potential.
Educational Links for Students, Parents, and Teachers
(for additional sites, please refer to GOAL Staff web pages)

The following links and websites are a valuable resource for both students and teachers. They were compiled in conjunction with **C-MITES** (Carnegie Mellon Institute for Talented Elementary and Secondary Students), which services academically talented students in grades K-9.

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**Common Search Engines**

- Lycos: [http://www.lycos.com/](http://www.lycos.com/)

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**Search Engines for Kids**

- Kids’ Click: [http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick/](http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick/)

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**Specialty Search Engines**

- Collection of Special Search Engines: [http://www.leidenuniv.nl/ub/biv/specials.htm](http://www.leidenuniv.nl/ub/biv/specials.htm)
- Google Local (local businesses and services): [http://www.google.com/lochp](http://www.google.com/lochp)
Math Websites

24 Game: http://www.24game.com/
Brainteasers: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/brain_teasers.htm
Cool Math: http://www.coolmath.com/
Curious Math: http://www.curiousmath.com/
The Geometry Center: http://www.geom.uiuc.edu/
Highline Advanced Math for Grades 5-7: http://home.blarg.net/"math/
Math Challenges: http://www.mathschallenge.net/
Math Counts (middle school math contest): http://www.mathcounts.org/
Math Forum: http://www.mathforum.org/
Math Games: http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/School_Bell/Math/Games_and_Puzzles/
Math Links for Kids: https://www.cmu.edu/cmites/kids.html#math
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary and Middle Schools: http://www.moems.org/
Multiplication Fact Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/multiplication.htm
POP Mathematics: http://archives.math.utk.edu/popmath.html
Student Resources: http://www.nku.edu/~mathed/p12sr.html
Tangrams: http://mathforum.org/trscavo/tangrams/construct.html
Teacher Resources: http://www.nku.edu/~mathed/tr.html
Varnelle Moore"s Primary Math Activities: http://mathforum.org/varnelle/index.html
Science and Technology Websites

Answers to Biology Questions: http://askascientist.org/
Cool Science for Curious Kids: http://www.hhmi.org/coolscience/
Computer Programming Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/programming.htm
Discovery School: http://school.discovery.com/
Experiments and Activities: http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/Science_and_Nature/Experiments_and_Activities/
Insect Lore: http://www.insectlore.com/
NASA Education Homepage: http://education.nasa.gov/home/index.html
Natural Science Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/natural_science.htm
Physics Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/physics.htm
Science Links for Kids: https://www.cmu.edu/cmtes/kids.html#science
Science Olympiad: http://www.soinc.org/
Sharks: http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/sharks/
Space Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/space.htm
Super Science Fair Projects: http://www.super-science-fair-projects.com/
Virtual Reality Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/virtual_reality.htm
Volcano World: http://www.volcanoworld.org/
Whales: http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/whales/
Windows to the Universe: http://www.windows.ucar.edu/
The Yuckiest Site on the Internet: http://yucky.kids.discovery.com/
Language Arts Websites

Alphabet Coloring Pages: http://www.learningplanet.com/parents/alphabet/
Book Websites: http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/School_Bell/Language_Arts/Books/
Books and Authors: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/books_authors.htm
Database of Award-winning Children’s Literature: http://www.dawcl.com/
European Myths and Legends: http://www.europeoftales.net/
Favorite Poem Project: http://www.favoritepoem.org/
Guide to Grammar and Writing: http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Guys Read: http://www.guysread.com/
Kids Reads: http://www.kidsreads.com/
Language Arts Links for Kids: https://www.cmu.edu/cmites/kids.html#languagearts
Language Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/language.htm
Letters about Literature Writing Contest: http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters.html
Mythology: http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mythology/mythology.html
The Read In: http://www.readin.org/
Spell-a-Roo (spelling game): http://www.funbrain.com/spellroo/
Student Treasures Publishing Company: http://www.studentreasures.com/
Summer Reading Lists: http://www.education-world.com/summer_reading/
The Writing Corner: http://www.writingcorner.com/
Writing Topics: http://thewritesource.com/topics.htm
Social Studies Websites

3-D Flags: http://www.3dflags.com/
Ancient Egypt: http://ms.ahsd.org/egypt.htm
Cool Antarctica: http://www.coolantarctica.com/
Economics Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/economics.htm
Geography Links: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/geography.htm
The History Beat: http://history.searchbeat.com/
The History Channel Classroom: http://www.historychannel.com/classroom/classroom.html
Museums in the United States: http://www.museumca.org/usa/types.html
National History Day: http://www.nationalhistoryday.org/
The Smithsonian Institution: http://www.si.edu/
Social Studies Links for Kids: https://www.cmu.edu/cmites/kids.html#socialstudies
States Web Games: http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm
The Stock Market Game: http://www.smgww.org/
Stone Pages (stone structures in Europe): http://www.stonepages.com/
Time for Kids: http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/
A Walk through Time (ages 7-9): http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/walk/
The White House for Kids: http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/
Multiple-Subject Websites and Reference Materials

Answers to Biology Questions: http://askascientist.org/
The Awesome Library: http://www.awesomelibrary.org/
CyberKids (activities): http://www.cyberkids.com/
Encyclopedia: http://www.encyclopedia.com/
Fact Monster (online reference materials): http://www.factmonster.com/
Fun Brain (games): http://www.funbrain.com/kidscenter.html
Hotlists (links to many sites): http://peoria.k12.il.us/merlins_castle/HotlistIndex.html
Show Me (online U.K. museums): http://www.show.me.uk/
Thesaurus: http://thesaurus.reference.com/
Word and Logic Puzzles: http://crpuzzles.com/
Zoom School (elementary school activities): http://www.enchantedlearning.com/school/index.shtml
**Teacher Websites**

Classroom Management Links: [http://drwilliampmartin.tripod.com/reallybest.htm](http://drwilliampmartin.tripod.com/reallybest.htm)
Education Place: [http://www.eduplace.com/](http://www.eduplace.com/)
Educational Links Page: [http://lth3.k12.il.us/rhampton/edlinks.html](http://lth3.k12.il.us/rhampton/edlinks.html)
Forms and Testing Sheets: [http://www.mrsperkins.com/testing.htm](http://www.mrsperkins.com/testing.htm)
K-8 Resources: [http://www.sabine.k12.la.us/vrschool/elemtry.htm](http://www.sabine.k12.la.us/vrschool/elemtry.htm)
Lesson Plans: [http://lessonplanz.com/](http://lessonplanz.com/)
Quiz Creator: [http://school.discovery.com/quizcenter/quizcenter.html](http://school.discovery.com/quizcenter/quizcenter.html)
Rubric Builder: [http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php](http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php)
Students Can Learn on Their Own (independent study): [http://users.erols.com/interlac/](http://users.erols.com/interlac/)
Think Tank (research organizers): [http://thinktank.4teachers.org/index.php3](http://thinktank.4teachers.org/index.php3)
Tools and Resources: [http://4teachers.org/](http://4teachers.org/)
The WebQuest Page: [http://webquest.sdsu.edu/webquest.html](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/webquest.html)