Summary

High potential and gifted education in NSW public schools

High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) promotes engagement and challenge for every student in every school across creative, intellectual, physical, and social-emotional domains of potential while explicitly identifying and addressing the specific needs of high potential and gifted students.

The High Potential and Gifted Education Policy applies to all NSW public schools, teachers, and students. It describes a framework to develop the talent of high potential and gifted students. The policy provides advice to implement effective learning and teaching practices.

The guiding principles of HPGE

- All students, regardless of background or personal circumstances, require access to learning programs that meet their learning needs and support to aspire to, and achieve, personal excellence.
- Our commitment to high expectations for all students includes high potential and gifted students.
- Achieving excellence for high potential and gifted students is underpinned by effective school environments including quality teaching, learning and leadership.
- Potential exists along a continuum, where differing degrees of potential require differing approaches and levels of adjustment and intervention.

Equity and excellence

Fundamental to the policy are issues of equity and excellence. High potential and gifted students have advanced learning capacity compared to same-age students and, as a result, require talent development opportunities and differentiated teaching and learning practices to ensure their specific learning needs are met.

High potential students are diverse and found among students of all backgrounds. Gaps in achievement, known as excellence gaps, may exist between different groups of high potential and gifted students unless specific support is provided. Such gaps further entrench inequality and disadvantage.

It is a misconception that high potential and gifted students will achieve highly on their own. Estimates of high potential and gifted students who underachieve range from between 10% and 40% (Seeley 1993; Wills and Munro 2001; Rimm, 2003; Steenbergen-Hu, Olszewski-Kubilius 2016). Underachievement is more likely among students who experience disadvantage or have disability. High potential and gifted students can have disability which may impact achievement.

Gagné's adapted model

The policy draws on Françoys Gagné's definitions of giftedness and talent established in the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent DMGT 2.0 (2009). Professor Françoys Gagné suggests that potential exists along a continuum, where given optimal conditions, high potential can lead to high performance and achievement. Gagné outlines that students may exhibit potential in one or more domains including creative, intellectual, physical, and social-emotional.

4 domains of potential

The 4 domains of potential do not sit in isolation and students may demonstrate high potential in one or more domains. The domains of potential may interact and influence one another.

The **creative domain** of potential refers to natural abilities in imagination, invention and originality. Schools can support talent development through the encouragement of creativity, innovation, risk taking and problem solving.

The **intellectual domain** of potential refers to natural abilities in processing, understanding, reasoning, and the transfer of learning. To support students advanced cognitive ability, talent development in this domain may include differentiation, extension, enrichment, advanced learning pathways such as targeted acceleration and purposeful grouping.

The **physical domain** of potential refers to natural abilities in muscular movement and motor control. Targeted talent development includes providing opportunities, mentoring, coaching, extension and enrichment.

The **social-emotional domain** of potential refers to natural abilities in self-management and relating to and interacting with others. Developing talent through leadership opportunities, promoting self-awareness, interpersonal skills and mentoring opportunities can assist students.

What do we mean by high potential and gifted students?

High potential and gifted students are found across diverse family, socio-economic, language, cultural backgrounds and different geographic locations.

High potential students are those whose potential exceeds that of students of the same age They may benefit from an enriched or extended curriculum and learning opportunities beyond the typical level of their age peers.

Gifted students are those whose potential significantly exceeds that of students of the same age. They typically develop talent and achieve mastery notably faster than their age peers.

Highly gifted students are those whose potential vastly exceeds that of their age peers. Highly gifted students may require specific and significant curriculum adjustments to meet their learning and wellbeing needs.

Talent development

Talent development is a process or program by which a student's potential is developed into higher achievement in a specific domain or field of endeavour. Students move through various stages of competency along a continuum from novice to competency to mastery.

Factors that facilitate talent development can include:

- opportunities for sustained deliberate practice
- quality teaching, curriculum and provisions including access to flexible curriculum options
- programs that develop resilience, motivation, effort, and perseverance
- provision of a range of opportunities to engage students and identify their learning interests
- a supportive learning environment.

Effective practices for high potential and gifted students

Effective evidence-informed talent development practices include:

- advanced learning pathways and acceleration
- curriculum differentiation
- enrichment and extra-curricular programs
- explicit teaching
- formative assessment
- purposeful and flexible grouping.

Want to know more?

- High Potential and Gifted Education Policy and HPGE webpage
- HPGE professional learning courses
- Domains of potential discussion papers and Revisiting Gifted Education literature review
- Illustrations of practice
- Differentiation Adjustment Tool

References

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For more information about high potential and gifted education

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