

Gifted & Talented and Advanced Potential in Physical Education

Physical Education plays a critical role in educating the whole child as part of a well-rounded education. Like other academic courses of study, Physical Education is based upon rigorous state and national standards. Physical Education is unique to the school curriculum as it is the only program that provides students with opportunities to learn motor skills, develop fitness, and gain an understanding of the importance of physical activity.

Identifying giftedness and potential for success in advanced academics in Physical Education takes into consideration a student's ability to collaborate, cooperate, strategize, execute movement, transfer skills and knowledge, self-reflect, adapt, communicate, and make responsible decisions, among other related skills, behaviors, and dispositions.

AREAS OF IDENTIFICATION

There is no state-recognized standardized assessment for physical education. Multiple measures for identification include teacher-generated assessments and observations, teacher/mentor recommendations, grades, and individualized student performance based on state standards and rubrics. Gifted students and students with advanced potential may demonstrate growth or ability in some or all standards-based activities at a rate beyond the expected outcomes of their age or grade band, typically at least two grade levels above the standard. Identification practices should include student interviews, passion projects, and portfolios.

Additionally, recognition from the district, state, or national agencies should be considered in the identification of advanced potential in Physical Education. A few examples include recognition from the following:

- Maryland Athletic Association
- Maryland High School Sports Award
- Local School and District Awards

The following non-exhaustive list of behaviors and characteristics may help identify giftedness in students.

IDENTIFYING BEHAVIORAL TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Students may consistently demonstrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities beyond expected outcomes for their age or grade bands or demonstrate atypical/rapid growth. They may exhibit high levels of confidence, and comfort in taking calculated risks. They may be highly motivated and committed to practice, improvement, and performance. They are reflective, creative, and adaptive to new strategies. They exhibit elevated levels of coordination and control in their bodies.

Sample Scenario for Primary Grades

A student in first grade may demonstrate coordination beyond that of their peers. For example, a first-grade student is expected to dribble continuously in personal space using the preferred hand (S1.G1.14)

while a potentially gifted student may be able to travel with the object, changing speed or direction with agility and ease of dexterity.

Additionally, a student in first or second grade is expected to engage in learning activities independently and in controlled paired activities. A potentially gifted student may respectfully offer and accept performance-based feedback and accept partners of all abilities and skill levels into the activity.

Examples for Secondary Students

Student may be able to:

- Create original games or fitness plans to support optimal health and performance
- Observes and solves problems
- Builds cooperative teams, provides feedback and goals for the group
- Applies health and fitness concepts outside of the school
- Creates personalized fitness plans strength, flexibility independent goal setting and career innovation, college, and a career

Additionally, students may utilize concepts of team building, cooperation, and strategy as transferable skills in other disciplines and authentic life situations.

ACTION

Interactions between individuals and environmental factors will continue over time. These interactions will impact student ability, and as such, the teacher's ability to recognize/value giftedness and abilities of students must adapt over time. As students progress through different developmental stages receive instruction in different social settings with varying topics and levels of interest, teachers should consider that gifted and talented students: (1) Demonstrate above average ability in the skill assessed, (2) Demonstrate commitment to quality through reflection and analysis, and (3) Utilize creativity to problem solve/succeed in varying challenges.

Using the Maryland Physical Education Framework, students scoring two or more grade levels above their current grade level in a designated skill/concept demonstrate advanced ability. In addition, students demonstrating trajectory and rapid improvement in skill acquisition should be considered for giftedness.

Sources:

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