

NSW Secondary Principals' Council



POSITION PAPER

Author: SPC HPGE Committee

Ratified: 11 November 2021

High Potential and Gifted Education

Rationale

Background

The NSW SPC is committed to ensuring that all students in NSW public secondary schools are supported in achieving their potential, regardless of background, through high quality teaching and learning, talent development and differentiation.

The SPC supports the implications and recommendations of the 2020 DOE High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) policy based on new research, cited in CESE's 2019 Gifted Education Literature Review: Revisiting Gifted Education, and research, which recognised:

- that giftedness occurs across intellectual, creative, social-emotional and physical domains.
- the importance of talent development, and the honing of gifts over time through mastery and practice
- the significance of unequal access to opportunities and practice, and the growth of an "excellence" gap for low SES, Aboriginal, rural and remote students and those with disabilities.
- that HPG students need explicit teaching, scaffolding and specific teaching strategies including curriculum acceleration that extend their learning potential.

The SPC supports the research underpinning planning for HPGE that:

- Gifted students need more challenging learning with greater depth and complexity.
- Gifted students are found in all social groups.
- Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in gifted programs and/or underachieve through fewer opportunities to develop their talent.
- Lack of adequate challenge can contribute to social and emotional challenges which can be remedied through appropriate programs.
- Gifted students benefit from explicit teaching and well-structured learning.
- Specific strategies are also needed to help gifted students achieve their best, for example through evidence-based effective strategies such as curriculum acceleration, extension and enrichment learning experiences.

To be reviewed: November 2023



Business Partners

Principles

The SPC supports an equity focus in HPGE education.

Noted educational researchers have in recent years considered that many of Australia's top 40% of schools and students may be complacent and have the potential to achieve at higher levels. If the needs of our students with the greatest potential in all schools are neglected, impacts will include long term potential loss in productivity, innovation, and economic growth, across the state.

The SPC also supports a focus on reducing the "equity/achievement gap" that has developed for high potential students in diverse equity groups including students with disabilities (2E), low SES, EALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands students.

Position

The SPC wishes HPGE to remain a specific area of specialist focus and expertise in the NSW Department of Education, as exists for Disability and Inclusion.

The SPC supports the continuation and significance of a broadly representative HPGE Advisory Committee for effective implementation, in:

- ensuring a team of experts in HPG works closely with schools over an extended period of time, rather than a diluted model of curriculum support.
- building collective expertise in HPG in schools beyond the selective group, over time
- fostering HPG action research within and across a broader range of schools
- raising awareness of all professional learning opportunities
- translating and helping to modify the implementation approaches.
- fostering understanding of equity issues that affect HPG students.
- sourcing and sharing current research and best practice for the growing 2E group of students.
- providing valuable feedback to the team on regional aspects and issues
- ensuring that opportunities for students are known and disseminated equitably across the state, particularly for those groups identified as under- represented (Aboriginal, low SES, rural and remote, disability).

The SPC supports having both rural and urban partially selective/selective representation on the High Potential and Gifted Committee.

Recommendations

1. Provide additional resources to effectively support further development of HPGE for all high potential and gifted students regardless of setting or background.
2. Develop further, with this funding, a discrete dedicated team, tasked with the development and importantly the implementation of HPGE specific PL and differentiated resources, to ensure the policy is to become a core element of teaching and learning in NSW schools and embedded in networks of practice.

3. Extend the time frame for implementation to enable localised approaches in professional learning to develop and support schools in implementation.
4. Maintain high levels of consultation through the HPGE Advisory Team to ensure authentic representation of the broad range of schools and locational contexts to foster equity. Use equity as a key focus to drive excellence.
5. Retain the Gifted and Talented staffing code amended to high potential and gifted.