

Memo to: Membership of the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
From: Donna Benson, President
David L. Mason, First Vice President
Subject: Update on the PAGE and PDE Initiatives
Date: August 31, 2005

A meeting between the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education and Pennsylvania Department of Education was held on August 30, 2005 to discuss the initiatives that were presented by Secretary of Education, Dr. Francis Barnes, at the PAGE Conference in April 2005. Those attending were: Dr. Francis Barnes, outgoing Secretary of Education; Dr. Jerry Zahorchak, newly appointed, acting Secretary of Education; Linda Rhen, Director of Bureau of Special Education; Barbara Thrush, Gifted Education Program Advisor; and PAGE Board members, Donna Benson, David Mason and Donna Weldon. Significant progress was made on the following:

- 1. Compliance Monitoring:** Dr. Zahorchak and Dr. Barnes directed the Bureau of Special Education to convene a work group of affected stakeholders to incorporate gifted education compliance monitoring into the special education compliance monitoring system. They set a deadline of October 30, 2005. Barbara Thrush will be putting together a timeline, to assemble the procedures for monitoring the gifted. A committee representing PAGE, School Leadership Associations, Parents, Regular Education and PDE Special Education and Curriculum Divisions, will do the initial work. It was suggested that Jim LoGiudice chair this committee. The group is to use the Gifted Self Evaluation & Complaint Procedures and additional information to develop the proposed gifted compliance monitoring procedures. The Secretaries committed to include monitoring of the gifted programs as part of the Special Education Compliance Monitoring Cycle beginning in 2005. Six school districts will be monitored during the first year.
- 2. Budgeted Money:** Monies (\$105,000) have been budgeted for the development of compliance procedures, compliance monitoring, staff development and training.
- 3. Gifted Liaison Network:** This Network would continue to function with representatives from each of the Intermediate Units and an Advisory Board to direct roles and responsibilities.
- 4. PDE Positions for Gifted:** Director of the Pennsylvania Schools of Excellence has been identified with responsibilities related to Mentally Gifted, and the position for Gifted Education within the Special Education Division has been maintained.
- 5. Teacher Certification for Gifted:** It was discussed that PAGE and PDE work together to establish a Career Ladder for Educators of the Gifted to include: a core course requirement on gifted education for all education majors attending state universities, continued staff development through the three-year induction program and Gifted Program Specialist Certificate for Gifted/Special Education Coordinators. Dialogue between PAGE and PDE will continue.
- 6. Javits Grant:** The PDE will continue to support initiatives to obtain federal grants related to gifted education.
- 7. PAGE / PDE:** The PDE will continue to partner with PAGE to present sessions at the annual State Conference and provide sessions to meet the needs of gifted learners for teacher/parents and administrators.

Following our meeting, Jim LoGiudice agreed to chair the committee to review compliance and accountability issues in gifted programs in order to finalize the PDE monitoring program.

A subcommittee to prepare the documents for the larger working group to review will meet this week.