

GIFTED EDUCATION – MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

The North Allegheny 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. North Allegheny 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 general education instructional day.

Gifted Program students are to be held responsible for mastery of all standard curriculum objectives. However, due to the unique nature of the Gifted Program and the workload that these students are expected to carry, they will, in most cases be excused from daily and related homework assignments given while participating in Gifted program classes. While all classroom assignments are important, requiring Gifted Program students to make up all work is actually a penalty to the gifted student. The following are guidelines to be used when making decisions regarding work missed while attending Gifted Program classes:

Students attending Gifted Program classes will be excused from the daily/homework assigned during the class period(s) missed. Students will be excused from these assignments without penalty to their grades, loss of other scheduled activities, or loss of any classroom privileges.

Mastery of standard curriculum objectives may be determined by oral review, teacher observations, quizzes, modified assignments, and/or a few selected problems. It is the responsibility of the general education classroom teacher and the student to determine mastery of objectives reflected in daily/homework assignments missed while participating in the Gifted Program. If mastery of standard grade appropriate objectives become a problem for any Gifted Program student, the classroom teacher and the teacher of the gifted should work together to find a solution to the problem.

Test, science labs, and other major or long-range assignments should not be made up before or after school. It is the responsibility of the student and classroom teacher to make alternate arrangements to ensure that the assignment is completed in a reasonable time period agreed upon by the teacher and the student. (For example, a test administered while the gifted student is attending the Gifted Program might be made up the following class day in lieu of that day's assignment.)

Time spent in the Gifted Program class is governed by State regulations. Therefore, students are not to miss any of the scheduled time for Gifted Program services. Assignments due on the day the student is to attend the Gifted Program class(es) are to be turned in the next scheduled class time. It is certainly important that Gifted Program students succeed in their academic classes. By not requiring daily assignments in addition to Gifted Program assignments for these students, the general education classroom teacher can take some of the pressure off and encourage their success. The thinking skills

that gifted students are learning and practicing in the Gifted Program can only enhance their performance in general education classes.

When this occurs, GOAL activities are to be in place of and not in addition to general education 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 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) online or via email 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 North Allegheny School District curriculum. Address concerns regarding student absences to the GOAL staff for resolution.

In order to ensure that each student meets or exceeds rigorous performance and achievement standards, North Allegheny schools must assist gifted students in maintaining and extending their learning. The appropriate design, use, and evaluation of regular homework assignments are all integral pieces needed to achieve that goal.

General education classroom teachers should avoid scheduling major tests, field trips, etc. on the day gifted students are participating in the gifted support services.

General education classroom teachers who use attendance/participation, and/or daily assignments as elements in determining student grades shall not penalize the gifted students for their authorized absence from their class.