

Policy IDE: Gifted Education Program

Status: ADOPTED

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GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Under Mississippi law each school district within the state must provide gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6. Through these programs the Webster County School District will ensure that gifted children who demonstrate unusually high potential are identified and offered an appropriate education based on their exceptional abilities.

DEFINITIONS

Intellectually Gifted Children – Those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process.

Gifted Education Programs (GEP) – Special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2-12 ... in the public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.

Although the State of Mississippi recognizes permissive programming for academically gifted students in grades 9-12; artistically gifted children in grades 2-12; and creatively gifted children in grades 2-12, only intellectually gifted programs in grades 2-6 are mandated by law.

IDENTIFICATION OF INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students who may be at a disadvantage for identification.

The student identification processes are separated into six stages. The six stages are:

1. Referral,
2. Local Survey Committee (LSC) review of referral data,
3. Parental permission for testing,
4. Assessment,
5. Assessment report,
6. LSC eligibility determination stage.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REFERRAL

Intellectual ability and academic ability are two distinct and separate areas of performance. Accordingly, while grades and/or achievement test scores might be an indicator of giftedness, neither grades nor achievement test scores shall eliminate a student from the identification process for the intellectually gifted program.

There are two types of gifted referral processes:

Type 1 – Mass Screening – With parental permission is conducted in first grade annually. The district will use a normed group measure of intelligence in the mass screening referral process.

Type 2 – Individual – Individual referrals for students in second through sixth grade are accepted throughout the school year. A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else

having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted.

A referral must be initiated by written request to the teacher of the gifted. Once a referral process has been initiated with a dated and signed referral form, only the Local Survey Committee (LSC) or parents can stop the identification process. The 90-day assessment timeline begins on the date that a signed and dated student referral is submitted by anyone believing that the student may be intellectually gifted.

In addition, the child must satisfy at least THREE of the following to be considered for the Gifted Educational Program:

- A score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published characteristics of giftedness checklist;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published measure of creativity;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published measure of leadership;
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test;
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability;
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months;
- Other measures that are documented in the research on the identification of intellectually gifted students.

Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy the minimal acceptable criteria on the individual test of intelligence shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 90th percentile on the nonverbal scale, or who in the opinion of the reviewing committee would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

Students with special considerations for gifted assessment, who scored at least at the 84th percentile or have a scale score that falls within the range of the 90th percentile confidence interval of the state minimum scale/percentile score, may be administered ONE of the following additional measures to determine eligibility:

1. A test of cognitive abilities with a minimal score at the 90th percentile
2. A group intelligence measure with a minimal score at the 90th percentile
3. A district-developed matrix approved by the MDE

Identification criteria, as approved by the MDE on the local district's Gifted Education Program Proposal, must be satisfied for a student to be ruled eligible by the LSC for the intellectually gifted education program.

LSC REVIEW OF REFERRAL DATA

Once the referral data have been complied, the LSC shall review all data and make one of the following recommendations:

1. The student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage;
2. The student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however, the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time; OR
3. The student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING

If a student meets the criteria for referral, the Local Survey Committee (LSC) will recommend individual assessment to determine eligibility for an "Intellectually Gifted" ruling. Written parental permission for testing must be obtained before any individual testing is initiated and parents will be notified in writing of their rights under the Family Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA).

ASSESSMENT

District personnel shall review all relevant data and shall make such data available to a licensed examiner. If a student meets criteria for referral, LSC will recommend individual assessment to determine eligibility for an "Intellectually Gifted" ruling. The individual test of intelligence shall be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested.

The student must meet identification criteria as approved by the MDE at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) to satisfy eligibility criteria. If a student meets criteria, the LSC will grant an "Intellectually Gifted" eligibility ruling.

Students who have been assessed by licensed examiners outside of the school district shall have their results considered for referral criteria and reviewed for gifted eligibility.

- Districts shall collect private testing data to meet the requirements of the objective measure of the referral criteria. Additional data shall be collected, and students moved to Stage 4: Assessment.
- Districts shall collect private testing data to meet all requirements from Stage 1 – Stage 5 of the identification process. Once collected, the LSC shall meet and determine an eligibility ruling.

ASSESSMENT REPORT

District personnel shall write an Assessment Report containing all the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) required components:

1. Student's name
2. Name of at least three individual measures from Stage 1
3. Results of each measure
4. Name of person who completed each measure and the date administered/completed
5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s)
6. Interpretation of the results of individually administered test(s)
7. Name of the person administering the individual test of intelligence and the date the test was administered
8. Qualifications of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and identified strengths and weaknesses
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position
11. Date of the Assessment Report

LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program.

District personnel shall notify in writing the parents of each student tested for the intellectually gifted program about the assessment results. District personnel shall offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. District personnel shall also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

After a student has been ruled eligible for one of the gifted programs, written parental permission for placement shall be obtained before the student is placed in the program.

IN-STATE GIFTED STUDENT TRANSFERS

Students who have a valid Mississippi gifted eligibility ruling do not have to be re-evaluated. A Mississippi eligibility determination in any of the four areas shall be accepted by all school districts within the state provided the district has a program in the area for which the student has eligibility. Before serving a transfer student in the local gifted education program, districts shall collect a copy of the student's Gifted Eligibility Form, assessment reports, and parental permission to serve.

OUT-OF-STATE ELIGIBILITIES

Intellectually gifted students from out of state will be accepted into the MS GEP if they have met the 91st percentile on an IQ test. These students will no longer be required to be reassessed for the GEP in the state of Mississippi. This includes students from military families based on the Military Interstate Children's Compact.

GIFTED STUDENT FILES

All data collected as part of the identification process are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents must be notified of their rights under FERPA. It is the obligation of the local district to ensure that parents understand these rights.

All information/data collected as part of the identification process shall be placed in an individual eligibility file for each student. These files and the information contained therein shall not be placed in the student's cumulative record folder. The files shall be maintained in a separate locked storage facility/file cabinet in a central location within the district, and access to the information shall be restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or who have a documented need to know.

Once the referral process begins, parents must be informed of the information/data that is collected. Parents shall have access to these records. Each district shall have a policy that establishes the process that parents shall adhere to when requesting access to these files. Parents shall be made aware of their rights to an explanation of the results of the Assessment Team Report.

Gifted student files shall be required to contain the following information:

1. Gifted Eligibility Form (GEF) INCLUDE:
 - a. Parent Signature
 - b. Eligibility/ineligibility mark
 - c. Signed by LSC (minimum 2 signatures)
 - d. Eligibility date
2. Permission for Gifted Service Form INCLUDE:
 - a. Parent Signature
3. Assessment Report
4. Referral Documentation
5. Original Protocols INCLUDE:
 - a. Objective measure(s)
 - b. Subjective measure(s)
 - c. Individual assessment(s)

Intellectually gifted student files shall be held for five (5) years after high school graduation. Prior to shredding, notice will be posted that these records are available to parents or students eighteen (18) years of age or older with proper identification. These records may include information on referral, assessment, placement, and participation in the gifted education program including authorizations and evidence of eligibility.

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUED PLACEMENT

A committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the gifted program. The committee must include, at a minimum, the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative. Since participation in the gifted education program is an entitlement under the law, students shall remain in the gifted program if they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the general education program are the responsibility of the general education teacher and shall not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program.

In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's continued placement. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress, the student may be placed on probation for the next 9-weeks term. Parents shall be included in the process and notified in writing of all actions taken by the committee. Documentation of all decisions and actions will be collected and maintained in LSC minutes.

If the student's performance in the gifted program does not improve within a designated period of time, the student may be removed from the program. If the parents are not in agreement with the school-based committee decision to remove the student from the gifted program, they may present their concerns, orally or in writing, to the principal of the school. The principal and parents will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

APPEALS PROCESS/HEARING

Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the parents have the right to a hearing to appeal the decision and determine how the lack of agreement will be resolved.

Within five (5) school days of the meeting with the principal, the parents may put their concerns in writing and present them to the Webster County School District Gifted Contact Person. A meeting of the Gifted Student Assistance Team composed of the parents, Gifted Contact Person, administrator, counselor, and teacher of the gifted will be held within five (5) days or a timeframe agreed upon by the parent. The team will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting. Documentation of all decisions and actions will be collected and maintained in LSC minutes.

REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES

Students removed from the gifted program will be considered for reinstatement in the gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of classroom teachers. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the LSC and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the student. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

GIFTED STUDENTS IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTINGS

The district is responsible for ensuring that intellectually gifted services continue for students who are placed in an alternative school setting. The amount of time and the way services are provided shall be determined by the district.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

Intellectually gifted students shall not be required to make up classwork missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. Homework assigned to the general education classroom students for the evening of the gifted education day must be completed.