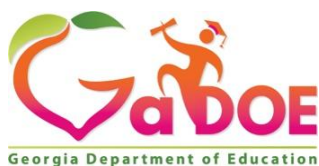


2026-2027

Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services



Forward

Georgia has a long history of serving intellectually and creatively gifted students, beginning in the 1950s under the direction of Ms. Margaret Bynum. Ms. Bynum's leadership led the way for Georgia to become the first state to pass legislation requiring all public-school systems in the state to offer programs for gifted students. In 1994 and 1995, legislative and rule-making initiatives led to the adoption of Georgia's multi-criteria rule for the identification of gifted students. The multiple criteria approach enables districts to assess students in the four categories of mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Using this approach allows local districts to look at students' strengths and interests when they are determining the students' educational needs. These procedures offer local school districts the opportunity to identify a diverse group of talented students for gifted education programs and services. Gifted education programs can both extend and accelerate the pace and depth of the Georgia approved standards. Our Gifted Education and Advanced Academics team seeks to serve and support; communicate and collaborate; plus engage and connect with our stakeholders to better meet the needs of our gifted and advanced students.

This *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services* is a companion document to [State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS](#) adopted by the State Board of Education on May 10, 2012. The guidelines included in this manual provide assistance to local boards of education, local school districts, administrators, and teachers. Moreover, parents and other interested parties can use the manual as a guide to gifted education in Georgia. This guidelines document is frequently updated and should be viewed as a "living" document.

Please review the Georgia Department of Education [website](#) for additional gifted education information. Persons searching this website for information regarding a particular school or school district should keep in mind that many gifted education decisions and procedures are local decisions, meaning the decisions are left to the discretion of local school districts so they may address the unique needs of their students. This is especially evident in districts that have been awarded Strategic Waiver School Status or Charter Status by the State Board of Education. It is best practice to always check with your local school and school district for additional information.

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Section 1: Statutory Basis/Support for Gifted Education

There are three documents that provide the authority and the specific requirements for gifted education in the state of Georgia. They are found in state law, State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule, and SBOE-approved Regulations, which apply to traditional school systems and state charter schools. Key elements related to identification and service requirements for gifted students are in bold type below.

State Law: [OCGA 20-2-152 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES](#)

Relevant excerpts include:

(a) All children and youth who are eligible for a general and career education program under Code Section 20-2-151 and who have special educational needs shall also be eligible for special education services ...Special education shall include children who are classified as intellectually gifted ...The State Board of Education shall adopt classification criteria for each area of special education to be served on a state-wide basis. The state board shall adopt the criteria used to determine eligibility of students for state funded special education programs ...

(a.1) The criteria adopted by the state board to determine the eligibility of students for state funded special education programs for the intellectually gifted, Category VI pursuant to paragraph (6) of subsection (d) of this Code section, shall authorize local boards of education to use:

- (1) The criteria used on July 1, 1993, as amended by state board or state department regulation from time to time; and
- (2) Multiple eligibility criteria which include:
 - (A) Evidence of student work product or performance;
 - (B) Data from teacher, parent, or peer observation; and
 - (C) Evidence of student performance on nationally normed standardized tests of mental ability, achievement, and creativity.

A student's eligibility may be determined under either paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection. The multiple eligibility criteria shall be implemented no later than May 30, 2012. A student who has been determined before May 29, 2012, to be eligible for state funded special education programs for the intellectually gifted shall not be required to satisfy any additional eligibility criteria or information documentation as a result of this subsection.

(b) Local school systems shall, subject to any limitations specified in this Code section, provide special education programs for all eligible students with special needs who are residents of their local school systems, either by establishing and maintaining such educational facilities and employing such professional workers as are needed by these

students or by contracting with other local schools systems, regional education service agencies, or other qualified public or private institutions for such services.

Section II: 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students

Code: IDDD 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

(1) DEFINITIONS

(a) **Differentiated Curriculum** – courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students

(b) **Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)** – the agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education including the implementation of federal and state mandates

(c) **Gifted Student** - a student who meets the eligibility criteria as identified in this rule and as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*

(d) **Local Board of Education (LBOE)** – agency charged with adopting policies to govern educational entities within the local educational agency

(e) **Local Educational Agency (LEA)** – local school system pursuant to LBOE control and management

(f) **Panel of Qualified Evaluators** - experts in relevant fields appointed by the LEA who evaluate student products/performances to determine gifted program eligibility

(g) **Qualified Psychological Examiner** - a psychologist licensed by a state licensing board in the United States and having training and experience in school psychology or child psychology

(h) **State Board of Education (SBOE)** – the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K-12 education agencies in Georgia

(2) REQUIREMENTS

(a) **Notification.** The LEA shall notify parents and guardians of identified gifted students being considered to receive gifted education services in writing of information related to the gifted education program including, but not limited to the following:

1. Referral procedures and eligibility requirements adopted and applied by the LEA.
2. Notification of initial consideration for gifted education services.
3. Evaluation guidelines and documentation of training procedures utilized and maintained by the LEA.

4. The type(s) of gifted services to be provided, academic standards to be met, the teaching methods employed, and the manner in which students will be evaluated annually.
5. Performance standards gifted students are to meet to maintain their eligibility and receive continued services in the program.
6. A description of the probationary period applied to students in jeopardy of losing their eligibility for services. The description shall include the length of the probationary period and the criteria.
7. Termination of services when students on probation have failed to meet criteria for continuation of services.

(b) Referrals. The consideration for gifted education services may be reported or automatic as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

1. **Reported Referral.** A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.
2. **Automatic Referral.** Students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, for further assessment to determine eligibility for gifted program services.
 - i. The LBOE shall establish the criterion score needed on norm-referenced tests for automatic consideration for further eligibility assessment.
 - ii. The LBOE shall ensure that tests or procedures used in the referral process and to determine eligibility for gifted education services meet standards of validity and reliability for the purpose of identifying gifted students and shall be non-discriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex.

(c) Consent. The LEA shall obtain written consent for testing from parents or guardians of students who are being considered for referral for gifted education services. The LEA shall obtain written consent from parents or guardians before providing gifted education services to students determined to be eligible for services.

(d) Eligibility. The LBOE shall adopt eligibility criteria that are consistent with this rule and as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

1. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either (a) score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria described in paragraph (2)(d) 5.(ii). Achievement (for Option A), or (b) qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation (Option B).

2. To be eligible for gifted education services (for Option B), a student must meet the qualifying score on at least one nationally norm-referenced test and must have qualified in two other categories by either assessment or observational data collected on his/her performance or production of a superior product(s) as described below. Information shall be collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
3. Test scores used to establish eligibility shall have been administered within the past two calendar years.
4. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category.
5. Data shall be used for eligibility in the four areas according to the following:
 - i. **Mental Ability.** For Option A, students in grades K-2 shall score at the 99th percentile on a composite or full-scale score, and students in grades 3-12 shall score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score on a norm-referenced test of mental ability. For Option B, students in grades K-12 shall score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score or appropriate score, as defined in the approved list of assessments, on a norm-referenced test of mental ability.
 - I. Mental ability tests shall be the most current editions, or editions approved by GaDOE, of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability, which have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
 - II. Mental ability tests that were designed to be administered individually shall be administered by a qualified psychological examiner.
 - ii. **Achievement.** Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a norm-referenced achievement test or have produced a superior student-generated product or performance, where the superior performance is one that can be translated into a numerical score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale as evaluated by a panel of qualified evaluators.
 - I. Norm-referenced achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and shall yield a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in mathematics concepts and applications. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.

- II. Performances and products shall be assessed by a panel of qualified evaluators and must have been produced within the two calendar years prior to evaluation.
- iii. **Creativity.** Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking, receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and or performances.
 - I. Norm-referenced tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
 - II. Rating scales used to qualify creativity shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation.
 - III. As evidence of creativity, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products or performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators.
- iv. **Motivation.** Students shall receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100 point scale on a structured observation or evaluation of student-generated products and/or performances, or for grades 6-12 have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 89 on a 4.0 scale where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, or a numeric grade point average (NGA) of 90 percent on a 100 point scale where 100 = A and 89 = B. Grades used to determine the GPA or NGA must be a two-year average of regular school program core subject grades in mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, science, and full year world languages.
 - I. Rating scales used to qualify student motivation shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.
 - II. As evidence of motivation, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to

evaluation. The products, performances, or structured observations submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators.

III. GPAs of students are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the subjects of mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, and full year world language, if such language study is included in the student's records.

6. Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or LEA shall be considered as part of the referral and evaluation process. External evaluation data shall not be substituted for or used as the sole source of data the school generates during the initial eligibility process. External evaluations shall have been reviewed for bias with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

(e) **Continued Participation.** The LBOE shall have a continuation policy for students identified as eligible for gifted services to continue to receive such services. The LEA shall review the progress of each student receiving gifted education services each year. Any student who receives gifted education services shall continue to receive services, provided the student demonstrates satisfactory performance in gifted education classes, as described in the LBOE continuation policy and stated in the continuation policy.

1. The LBOE continuation policy shall include a probationary period in which a student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status. The length of this probationary period shall be determined by the LBOE.
2. The LBOE continuation policy shall provide for a final review prior to discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in gifted education classes during the probationary period and criteria for resuming gifted education services for such students.

(f) **Reciprocity.** Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria in this rule for gifted education services in one LEA shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA within the state. For further details, please see page 44 of the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

(g) **Curriculum and Services to Be Provided.**

1. The LBOE shall develop curricula for gifted students that incorporate SBOE approved curriculum. LBOE curricula for gifted students shall focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation, in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, world languages, fine arts, and career, technical and agricultural

education. LEAs shall make available to the public and the GaDOE a description of the differentiated curricula used for instruction of gifted students. The LEA shall review and revise, if revisions are needed, its curricula for gifted students at least annually.

2. Students identified as gifted and whose participation has received parental consent shall receive at least five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted education services, using one of the approved models described in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

(h) Data Collection

1. The LBOE shall collect and maintain statistical data on the number of students referred for evaluation of eligibility for gifted education services, the number of students determined eligible for services, and the number of students actually served during the school year. These data shall be archived and maintained by subgroups, which shall include at least the grade level, gender, and ethnic group of the students.
2. The LEA shall evaluate its gifted program at least every three years using criteria established by GaDOE.

(i) Public Review. The LBOE shall make available for review by the public and by GaDOE a copy of its administrative procedures for the operation of its gifted education program and the LEA's gifted education curricula.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151; 20-2-152; 20-2-161.

Adopted: May 10, 2012

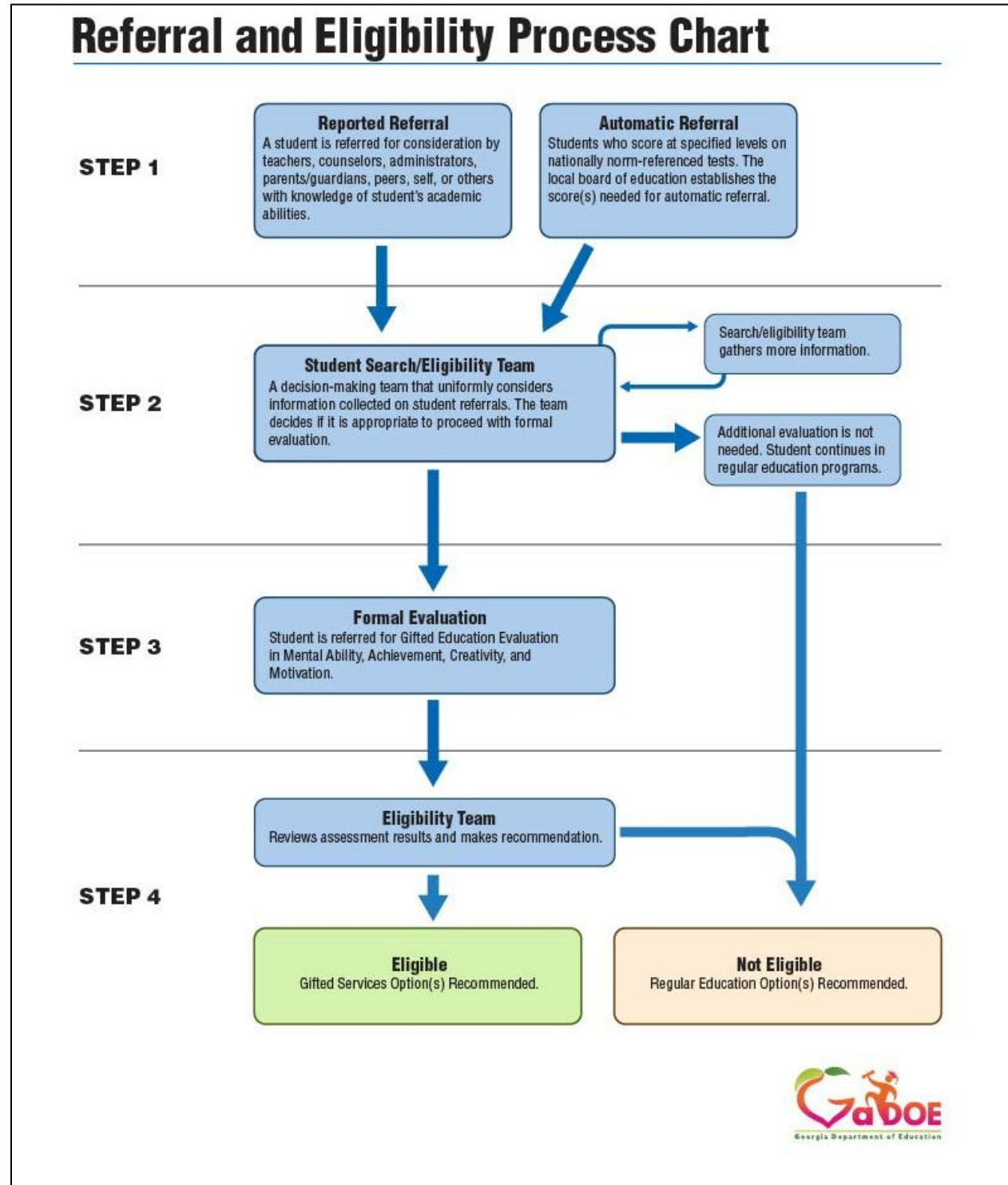
Effective: May 30, 2012

Section III: Gifted Education Eligibility Chart

• In options A and B, information must be gathered in each of the four categories. • At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a GaDOE-approved, nationally norm-referenced test. • Any data used to establish eligibility in one category cannot be used to establish eligibility in another category. • If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale cannot be used to evaluate motivation. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale cannot be used to evaluate creativity. • Any piece of information used to establish eligibility must be current within two calendar years. • Local school systems must establish policies regarding the use of data gathered and analyzed by private entities.		
Category	Option A	Option B
	Student must have a qualifying score in the mental ability AND achievement categories.	Student must qualify in <u>three of the four</u> categories.
Mental Ability	• Grades K-2: 99th percentile composite score on a nationally age normed mental ability test • Grades 3-12: ≥96th percentile composite score on a nationally age-normed mental ability test	• Grades K-12: ≥ 96th percentile composite OR appropriate component score on a nationally age-normed mental ability test
Achievement	• Grades K-12: ≥ 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test	• Grades K-12: ≥ 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test • Grades K-12: Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators
Creativity	• Evaluation data required	• Grades K-12: ≥ 90th percentile on composite score on a nationally normed creativity test

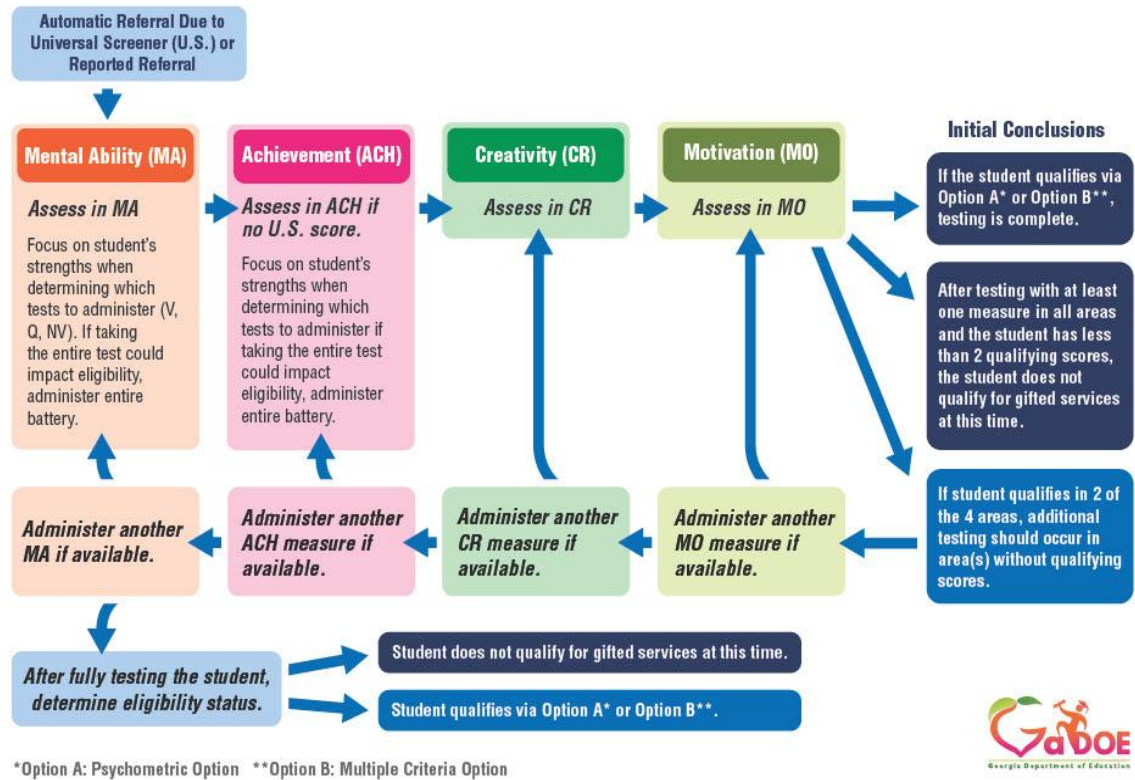
		• Grades K-12: Rating scales used to qualify student creativity must equate to the 90th percentile • Grades K-12: Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators
Motivation	• Evaluation data required	• Grades 6-12: Two-year average of a 3.5 GPA/NGA on a 4.0 scale in the regular core subject of mathematics, ELA, social studies, science, and full year world languages (This should be the top 10% of the core courses listed. See pages 41 for additional information.) • Grades K-12: Rating scales used to qualify student motivation must equate to the 90th percentile • Grades K-12: Superior product/performance/structured observation with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators

Section IV: Referral and Eligibility Process



CREATING A THOROUGH

Gifted Education Eligibility Process



The determination of which category of assessment should be administered first, and the order of all the assessments are local district decisions.

Section V: Gifted Education Service Delivery Models

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will make a description of the differentiated curricula and delivery models used for the instruction of gifted students available to the public and GaDOE upon request. In forming classes, schools need to adhere to federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

A differentiated curriculum is defined as courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students. In the delivery models described below, the instruction must be based on the Georgia curriculum standards. These regulations also describe the requirements that must be met in order to count the instructional segments provided by any of these models at the gifted weight in full time equivalency (FTE) reporting. In the event that regular school operation is interrupted, all models can be utilized virtually. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) requires that gifted education teachers have a gifted education endorsement attached to their Georgia Teaching Certificate or be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program. For a teacher to be considered 'in field' while participating in a gifted endorsement, the teacher should apply for and obtain an N3T or I3T certificate. Unless noted otherwise, the total class size is specified by the SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08.

The Collaborative Teaching model was discontinued at the end of the FY26 school year (2025-2026).

Direct Services

Resource Class (K-12)

1. All students must have been identified as gifted by SBOE criteria.
2. The curriculum must have an academic content foundation based on the Georgia curriculum standards, but it should focus on interdisciplinary enrichment activities and not any one content area.
3. The content and pacing should be differentiated to the degree that the activities are clearly not appropriate for more typical students at that grade level.
4. Gifted students may receive no more than ten gifted FTE segments per week of resource class service.
5. If the district/school has an all-day elementary resource room model, then each segment of the day must be coded separately. For example, districts will need to change the section number. It would look like the below:

71.2000000 – 001

71.2000000 – 002

71.2000000--003 (and continue the pattern)

There will be four data elements that are looked at for duplication, COURSE NUMBER, CLASS SECTION, MARKING PERIOD AND CLASS START DATE. There will be an error if districts do not change the section: "E9071 - Duplicate course record. Multiple course records have been submitted for this student that have the same COURSE NUMBER, CLASS SECTION, MARKING PERIOD, and CLASS START DATE."

6. To earn FTE gifted funding, the teacher must
 - have completed content-area GaPSC-approved certification **and**
 - have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program.

Advanced Content (K-12)

1. Students are homogeneously grouped based on achievement and interests in any content area: ELA, math, science, social studies, world languages, fine arts, computer science, and .0 Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education-CTAE courses.
2. The district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted, but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area.
3. The local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify gifted and regular education students who will be successful in advanced content classes.
4. The local board of education must maintain a description of the course curriculum which very clearly shows how the advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills, and assessments differ from courses more typical for students at that grade level.
5. Identified gifted students in the advanced content course may be counted at the gifted FTE weight. Students who are not identified as gifted must be counted at the regular education FTE weight.
6. Gifted students may receive no more than two gifted FTE segments per day of advanced content services in the **same** content area.
7. Gifted Honors (6-12), Cambridge Middle School, IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), and Pre-AP courses to earn FTE gifted funding must have:
 - The teacher must have the appropriate content-area GaPSC-approved certificate in the specific honors course
 - The teacher has a current GaPSC-issued gifted endorsement **or** is actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program.
 - The Cambridge, IB, or Pre-AP teacher must complete the appropriate professional development courses required by Cambridge, College Board, or IB.
8. Gifted FTE segment(s) may not be earned in the advanced content service model if a gifted student is already receiving a cluster gifted FTE segment in the same content area. For example, a student could not earn a gifted FTE segment

in advanced content mathematics and earn a gifted FTE segment in the cluster model in mathematics.

9. To earn FTE gifted funding, the teacher must
 - Have completed content-area GaPSC-approved certification **and**
 - Have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program.

Advanced Content Classes: Grades 9-12-Advanced Placement (AP) course, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and Cambridge courses

Students are homogeneously grouped based on achievement and interests in any content area: ELA, math, science, social studies, world languages, fine arts, computer science, and .0 Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education-CTAE courses.

The district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area.

1. The local board of education must maintain a description of the course curriculum, which is based on the College Board, the International Baccalaureate (IB) or the Cambridge frameworks. These frameworks very clearly show how the AP, IB, and Cambridge advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing skills, and assessments differ from the courses more typical for students at that grade level.
2. The total class size specified by the SBOE is 21 at the high school level.
3. In order to count the gifted students in grades 9-12 in AP, IB, and/or Cambridge courses at the gifted FTE weight, the teacher must have the following qualifications:
 - i. Advanced Placement (AP) Courses:
 - a. Content teacher with appropriate content-area GaPSC-approved certification **AND** one of the following:
 - The teacher has a current GaPSC-issued gifted endorsement/certification **or** is actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program **OR**
 - The teacher has completed the appropriate Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) training endorsed by the College Board for that specific AP course **and** has completed a 10- hour gifted professional development course in nature and needs of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted learners.
 - ii. International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Courses or Cambridge high school courses:
 - a. Content teacher with appropriate content-area GaPSC-approved certification **AND** one of the following:
 - The teacher has a current GaPSC-issued gifted endorsement certification **or** is actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program **OR**

- The teacher has completed the appropriate training endorsed by IB for that specific IB course or by Cambridge for that specific Cambridge course **and** has completed a 10-hour gifted professional development course in nature and needs of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted learners.

Cluster Grouping (K-12)

Identified gifted students are placed as a group (recommended 6-8 students) into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom rather than being dispersed among all the rooms/courses at that grade level.

1. To earn FTE gifted funding, the teacher must
 - Have completed content-area GAPSC-approved certification **AND**
 - Have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program.
2. A maximum of two gifted FTE segments per day may be counted at the gifted weight. (Each gifted student may only have two cluster segments on their schedules.) The teacher must document the curriculum differentiation for the gifted student(s) by completing individual or group contracts, which include the following requirements:
 - A description of the course curriculum which is based on Georgia standards that very clearly shows how the advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills, and assessments differ from courses more typical for student(s) at that grade level. Since the cluster grouping gifted service delivery model requires five or ten segments per week or the equivalent, daily intentional differentiated content instruction where gifted FTE is claimed should be evident to effectively meet the needs of the gifted learner.
 - Dates and amount of time (in segments) the student(s) will be engaged in the higher-level activities and how the students will be evaluated (formative and summative).
3. The superintendent must sign assurances that this model has been used appropriately, and that the proper documentation has been collected and evaluated for its effectiveness.

Innovative Models

GaDOE encourages the development of innovative programs for gifted students which are clearly in accordance with the needs of the gifted learners and the philosophy of the district. To earn gifted FTE funding for this model, the gifted education teacher for the innovative model must have an appropriate GaPSC-approved certification and a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively participating/enrolled in a gifted endorsement program.

School districts implementing a gifted program delivery model other than one of the models described previously need to keep on file a plan that clearly describes the rationale for the special model, the goals and objectives for the program, the advanced nature of the curriculum which will be provided to gifted learners, how the model's effectiveness will be evaluated, how gifted FTE funding will be generated and documented, and the anticipated fiscal impact of the model (i.e., how many FTEs will be generated).

1. To ensure appropriate development of the innovative programs for gifted students, school districts may contact the Gifted Education and Advanced Academics unit for guidance.
2. Since the FY25 school year, the Innovative model plans must be submitted by April 15th of the previous school year, in essence in the spring (April 15th) before the new school year starts.
3. The Gifted Education and Advanced Academics team may approve the submissions for one or two years of implementation. The request for the two-year implementation must be included in the initial submission.
4. On September 1st of each school year, the superintendent must sign assurances that this model is being used appropriately, and that the proper documentation is being collected and evaluated for its effectiveness.

Indirect Services

The Collaborative Teaching model was discontinued at the end of the FY26 school year (2025-2026).

Internship/Mentorship (9-12)

Gifted students collaborate with a mentor to explore a profession or career of interest. The district may include students who are not identified as gifted, but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area. The local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify gifted and regular education students who will be successful in internship/mentorship classes.

1. The gifted education program internship teacher (gifted endorsed) assigned to supervise the internship/mentorship program maintains close contact with both the participating student(s) and the selected mentor(s) to ensure acceptable progress toward the student's individual learning goals which are based on the approved Georgia standards-based curriculum. One or two instructional segments per day may be counted at the gifted FTE weight for gifted students participating in the internship/mentorship program.
2. To earn gifted FTE funding for this model, the gifted education program internship teacher must have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program and be assigned to supervise the internship/mentorship program.
3. Each internship/mentorship student must have a contract which documents the work to be completed, the learning goals for the student, the dates and amount of time the student will be participating in the internship/mentorship, how the student's learning will be assessed, and the responsibilities of the gifted program internship teacher and the mentor.
4. This internship/mentorship is not intended or designed for the student to receive monetary compensation but as an internship/mentorship designed for exploration into a profession of interest.
5. To ensure adequate time for the gifted education program internship teacher to monitor and assist students participating in internships/mentorships, the teacher must be given one full period each day or its weekly equivalent during which the teacher has only gifted education internship/mentorship responsibilities (as determined by the local system) for every fifteen students for whom the teacher is supervising the internship/mentorship experience.

Directed Study (9-12)

Gifted students work under the direction of a gifted education endorsed teacher to explore a challenge/subject of interest. Students participate in self-initiated, teacher-directed, and approved courses of study in an area of interest as described in a written contract which is based on curriculum standards, research, and planned presentations. Independent study encourages student autonomy in planning, research, and problem-solving.

The district may include students who are not identified as gifted, but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area. The local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify gifted and regular education students who will be successful in Directed Study classes.

The gifted education teacher assigned to supervise the Directed Study program maintains close contact with the participating student(s) to ensure acceptable progress

toward the student's individual learning goals which are based on the approved Georgia standards-based curriculum.

1. One or two instructional segments per day may be counted at the gifted FTE weight for gifted students participating in the directed study program.
2. To earn gifted FTE funding for this model, the gifted education program Directed Study teacher must have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program and be assigned to supervise the directed study.
3. Each student in the directed study must have a contract which documents the work to be completed, the learning goals for the student, the dates and amount of time the student will be working on the directed study, how the student's learning will be assessed, and the responsibilities of the gifted education program directed study teacher and any other supporting teachers/staff working with the directed study.
4. To ensure adequate time for the gifted education program Directed Study teacher to monitor and assist students participating in the directed study, the teacher must be given one full period each day or its weekly equivalent during which the teacher has only gifted education directed responsibilities (as determined by the local system) for every 15 students for whom the teacher is supervising in the directed study.

Community Service Learning (9-12)

Gifted students work under the direction of an endorsed gifted education teacher to complete a project(s) with community service learning. The district may include students who are not identified as gifted, but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area. The local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify gifted and regular education students who will be successful in Community Service Learning classes.

The gifted education teacher assigned to supervise the Community Service Learning program maintains close contact with the participating student(s) to ensure acceptable progress toward the student's individual learning goals which are based on the approved Georgia standards-based curriculum.

1. One or two instructional segments per day may be counted at the gifted FTE weight for gifted students participating in the gifted Community Service Learning program.
2. To earn gifted FTE funding for this model, the gifted education program Community Service Learning teacher must have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement **or** be actively participating/enrolled in a gifted endorsement program and be assigned to supervise the community service learning.

3. Each student in the Community Service Learning program must have a contract which documents the work to be completed, the learning goals for the student, the dates and amount of time the student will be working on the community service learning project, how the student's learning will be assessed, and the responsibilities of the gifted education program Community Service Learning teacher and any other supporting teachers/staff working with the community service learning project.
4. To ensure adequate time for the gifted education program Community Service Learning teacher to monitor and assist students participating in community service learning, the teacher must be given one full period each day or its weekly equivalent during which the teacher has only gifted education Community Service Learning responsibilities (as determined by the local system) for every 15 students for whom the teacher is supervising in the community service learning.

Section VI: Gifted Education Curriculum

Curricula for gifted education learners must incorporate the SBOE-approved standards. Local BOE curricula for gifted students focuses on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation.

Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Tomlinson, 2011). The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum (Hall, 2011).

A differentiated curriculum for gifted learners includes the following expectations:

Content: Complex and challenging subject matter that:

- Requires intellectual struggle
- Utilizes primary documents
- Integrates research skills and methods
- Incorporates relevant and real-life experiences
- Integrates interdisciplinary connections

Process: Instructional strategies are designed to:

- Emphasize higher-order thinking, problem-solving and communication skills
- Foster self-initiated and self-directed learning
- Promote creative application of ideas
- Model and encourage academic discussion

Product: Gifted student products should demonstrate a developmentally appropriate capacity for:

- Self-directed learning
- Meaningful collaboration
- Effective problem-solving of challenging and complex issues
- Effective communication

Environmental: Physical setting and work conditions to:

- Change the actual place where students work
- Allow flexible time
- Provide opportunities for independent study and in-depth research
- Provide opportunities for mentorship

Assessment: Gifted learners need various methods and opportunities to document mastery of curriculum, such as:

- Pre/post-tests
- Self-assessment through rubrics
- Creation of goal-based checklists
- Conferencing, commentary, and qualitative feedback (Cobb, 2012)

Further, gifted education curriculum should intentionally incorporate deep learning and instructional strategies that foster high levels of student engagement. Deep learning moves students beyond surface-level to purposeful, meaningful learning that can be applied across disciplines and in real-world contexts. This approach emphasized critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem solving. Together, these skills prepare students for enrolment, enlistment, and employment, enabling them to thrive in whichever pathway they choose.

Section VII: Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and Other Data Collection

FTE reporting refers to the state funding mechanism based on student enrollment and the educational services that local school systems provide for the students. The base amount of money received for each FTE student is determined by the Georgia General Assembly. Refer to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161 for information concerning the Quality Based Education (QBE) formula. Gifted Education is one of nineteen categories of instruction funded through the state's Full-Time Equivalent Funding Formulas. A Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTE) is defined as six (6) segments of instruction. To view state FTE funding rates and levels, go [here](#) and select a specific report.

Students who are served in an approved gifted education model are reported with the Gifted Education weight (PROGRAM CODE = "I") for each segment served on the FTE count day.

Gifted certification requirements to earn FTE funding at the gifted weight:

- Official gifted endorsement from the GaPSC
- Actively participating in a gifted endorsement program
- Completed appropriate content-area GaPSC-approved certification with the appropriate coursework. For example, Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) training endorsed by the College Board for that specific AP course, or appropriate training endorsed by IB for that specific IB course, or appropriate training endorsed by Cambridge for that specific Cambridge course and has completed a 10-hour gifted professional course in nature and needs of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted learners (page 18 in the 2026-2027 Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services).

The school system may claim students for gifted weight who receive gifted services on the day of the count only. Gifted students who are not provided with gifted program instruction on the day of the count must be reported according to the weight that indicates the actual services they receive on the FTE count day. For state-funded FTE earnings, the count dates are the first Tuesday in October and the first Thursday in March. The FTE count days provide a “picture” or “point in time snapshot” of the scheduled instructional services provided to students on that specific date.

Students who are referred during a school year but who are not eligible for gifted services need to be coded for the Student Records Collection that is transmitted in June. The students should have a gifted referral code (example: automatic, etc.) and the gifted eligibility code: “4. referred this school year, but not eligible.”

For federal cross functional monitoring, LEAs should have all documentation for the APSI, IB, and/or Cambridge high school training, plus the 10-hour gifted course in nature and needs of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted learners.

Per the Georgia Archives, the gifted and talented program selection and placement requirements for documentation are the core documentation about the admission criteria and program requirements. Retention is permanent (LG-06-009 https://www.georgiaarchives.org/records/local_government/schedules/51/P20).

Please ensure that all CPI, student class, student records, and FTE data are accurate and supported by gifted documentation.

CLASS SIZE

Source: Code: IEC 160-5-1-.08 – CLASS SIZE
O.C.G.A. & 20-2-244 (H)

Gifted Education class sizes are established by the State Board of Education. The current funding ratio for gifted education is twelve. The maximum individual gifted education class sizes are listed below:

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM	MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE
Elementary (K-5)	17
Middle School (6-8)	21
High School (9-12)	21

Note: Class size may be adjusted based on waivers included as part of approved Charter System or Strategic Waiver System contracts. Be mindful that the expressed legislative intent of the additional gifted funding weight is to provide additional resources and lower student-to-teacher ratios directly for gifted students.

Section VIII: Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Support (GaMTSS) Guidance for and Gifted and High-Ability Learners Guidance

Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Supports (GaMTSS) is a data-driven, multi-level prevention system designed to meet the needs of the whole child by implementing a continuum of tiered supports for academics, behavior, and wellbeing. It emphasizes effective teaming and data-based decision-making to foster a positive school climate that contributes to increased student success and overall district and school improvement.

GaMTSS is the integration of existing systems of tiered support within the state, including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This integrated approach recognizes that academics, behavior, wellbeing, and attendance do not exist in isolation; they are interrelated and mutually influencing.

GaMTSS is designed in context and delivered to meet the needs of all students, including gifted and high-ability learners. The authors of *Effective Universal Instruction* “argue that students who are at or above the 90th percentile in achievement have as much need for intensive differentiation as students who are at or below the 10th percentile” (p.189).

Teams use data from universal screenings and other data sources to identify who is at-risk and the degree to which support is needed for each student to progress and reach their potential. Instructional support within GaMTSS extends beyond interventions for students who are not meeting grade-level expectations. GaMTSS also provides gifted and high-ability structured and tiered support for enrichment and acceleration. Additionally, students needing enrichment, who have yet to be determined eligible for gifted services or who have not met eligibility requirements, can be challenged and participate in enriched learning opportunities.

Supports of increasing intensity are organized and operationalized within three tiers. The tiers represent support to students who display a need, not a step in a sequential process.

All students should have access to and benefit from Tier 1. The design of Tier 1 includes high-quality, schoolwide academic, behavior and wellbeing instruction, differentiated instruction, and evidence-based practices. While there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to address the needs of all gifted and high-ability learners, the advanced learning needs for most students can be addressed in the general education setting by considering:

- how students are grouped for instruction (i.e., cooperative learning groups, flexible instructional grouping, grouping strategies that allow for a like-ability learning cohort),
- how students are taught (e.g., accelerated pace, less practice and review, whole-to-part concept teaching, problem-solving learning), and
- how the curriculum is differentiated (e.g., the content, process, product, environment, and assessment, tiered instruction and assignments for depth, complexity and higher-order thinking).

Tier 2 refers to targeted, supplemental intervention and support in addition to high-quality core instruction.

For gifted and high-ability learners, Tier 2 instruction is systematic, explicit, and aligned with ongoing Tier 1 instruction; it matches what is going on in the general classroom but takes learning to a more complex level. Tier 2 instructional interventions are typically delivered in small groups of students with similar strengths, interests, or needs. Instruction is based on the needs of individual students as determined by assessments and observation.

An increasingly intense level of instruction and support occurs at Tier 3 to address individual student needs. Gifted and high-ability learners, who require this level of enrichment and instructional support, are generally highly or exceptionally gifted learners. This small percentage of students may require significant levels of acceleration or highly individualized instructional programming. Students whose academic and intellectual needs are not met at Tier 1 or Tier 2 require a curriculum that differs significantly in pace, level, complexity, and abstraction from age-level peers. Tier 3 instruction may take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction, or it may replace it entirely.

Gifted and high-ability learners, like all students, may require different types and intensities of support depending on their current needs. These needs can vary based on their readiness for differentiated curriculum as well as the level of support required for behavioral growth and wellbeing. Students may receive supports across multiple tiers simultaneously, and the intensity of those supports may shift over time as their needs change. Decisions about the type and intensity of support should be guided by data from universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and the learner's response to the instruction or intervention provided.

Some gifted students are considered to be twice-exceptional, meaning they are gifted and talented while also having a disability such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dyslexia, etc. They may need acceleration in one subject area while also needing academic support in another subject area where they are not meeting grade-level expectations.

Instructional Options for Gifted and High-Ability Learners

The needs of gifted and high-ability learners vary widely; therefore, an array of instructional supports should be available across all grade levels and content areas. Specific learning objectives are developed on a case-by-case basis. A continuum of supports at Tiers 1, 2 and 3 may include but is not limited to the options listed below. Instructional strategies may be implemented across multiple tiers depending on the required level of intensity and the individual needs of the student:

Acceleration (subject and whole grade)

An individual student moves to a higher grade for instruction in one or more subject areas, or a student skips a grade level to move to a higher grade than is typical for the student's age group.

Cross-Age Grouping/Multi-Age Grouping

Students of different ages/grades are grouped together for instruction for all or part of the day.

Curriculum Compacting

Curriculum a student has already mastered is eliminated. The student is then allowed to pursue alternative curriculum options.

Gifted Resource Classes/Enrichment Clusters

Students are grouped according to achievement levels for instructional purposes. The instructional focus is on an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Graduated Rubrics

The standard and level of student proficiency and accomplishments designed for students and teachers to measure learning outcomes are increased. Graduated rubrics offer clear expectations for quality and increasing levels of excellence to encourage optimum performance among high-ability learners.

Independent/Directed Study

A student participates in a self-initiated, teacher-directed, and approved course of study in an area of interest as described in a written contract which is based on curriculum standards, research, and planned presentations. Independent study encourages student autonomy in planning, research, and problem-solving.

Internship/Mentorships

A student collaborates with a mentor to explore a potential career choice. The internship/mentorship teacher maintains close contact with both the participating student and the selected mentor to ensure acceptable progress towards the student's individual career goals.

Interest Centers

Centers placed within the classroom that link curriculum topics to areas of student talent and interest in depth and breadth.

Subject Grouping Within Class/Gifted Cluster Classes

Students are grouped/clustered according to achievement, within a regular education classroom, for instruction in one or more subjects.

Subject Grouping across Teams/Classes

Students are grouped according to achievement and go to a different classroom or team, within the same grade level, for instruction in one or more subjects.

Subject Advancement across Grades

Students are grouped according to achievement, in a higher-grade level, for instruction in one or more subjects.

Tiered Assignments

Assignments are designed to meet the varying ability levels of students.

Tiered Products

Products are designed to meet the varying ability levels of the students

Differentiation and Tiered Supports for Gifted and High-Ability Learners

In a differentiated classroom, teachers differentiate **content, process, product, and assessments** according to a student's **readiness, interest, and learning profile**.

- **Content** – the State Board of Education-adopted standards that the student is expected to master and related support materials
- **Process** – instructional strategies designed to ensure that students acquire a deep understanding of the curriculum standards

- **Products** – vehicles through which students demonstrate and extend what they have learned
- **Assessment** – formative and summative – on and/or off-grade-level monitoring to document a student’s mastery of curriculum standards and learning levels
- **Readiness** – a student’s entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill
- **Learning Profile** – how an individual student learns

Table 2: Examples of Tiered Supports for the Gifted and High-Ability Learners

The examples below illustrate possible instructional supports at each tier. The examples are not exhaustive and may be implemented in different combinations depending on student need.

Tier 1	Tier 2
Flexible-Learning Groups	Gifted Education Cluster Classes
Homework Options	Tiered Activities and Products
Use of Reading Buddies	Use of Literature Clubs
Various Journal Prompts	Multiple Testing Options
Student/Teacher Goal Setting	Multiple Texts
Varied Pacing with Anchor Options	Alternative Assessments
Options for Competition	Subject Advancement within class
Flexible Seating	Curriculum Compacting
Varied Scaffolding	Advanced Centers/Stations
Varied Computer Programs	Spelling by Readiness
Design-a-Day	Varying Organizers
Varied Supplemental Materials	Community Mentorships
Stations/Centers	Simulations
Think-Pair-Share	Group Investigations
Open-ended Activities	Multiple Assessment Methods
Explorations by Interest	Student choice in learning activities
Tier 3	
Advanced Content English/language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies courses (honors)	Above grade level accelerated English/language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies courses
Resource Classes	Advanced Placement Classes
Independent/Directed Study	International Baccalaureate Classes
Socratic Seminars	Cambridge Classes
Internship/Mentorships	Whole Grade Acceleration

Section IX: State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Programs for Gifted Students with Annotation

2.1 DEFINITIONS

(a) **Differentiated Curriculum** - courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students.

Gifted students need the opportunity to work through the curriculum at a faster pace and need less time on basics and revision. The curriculum is differentiated in complexity and acceleration, offering a variety of options for students who differ in abilities, knowledge, and skills. In a differentiated curriculum, teachers offer different approaches to what students learn (content), how students learn (process), how students demonstrate what they have learned (product) and how they are evaluated (assessment) (Tomlinson, 2000).

(b) **Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)** – the agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education including the implementation of federal and state mandates.

(c) **Gifted Student** - a student who meets the eligibility criteria as identified in this rule and as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

The GaDOE describes a gifted student as one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. The abilities manifest in a collection of traits, aptitudes, and behaviors that, when taken together, are indicative of gifted potential.

(d) **Local Board of Education (LBOE)** – agency charged with adopting policies to govern educational entities within the local educational agency.

(e) **Local Educational Agency (LEA)** – local school system pursuant to LBOE control and management.

(f) **Panel of Qualified Evaluators** - experts in relevant fields appointed by the LEA who evaluate student products/performances to determine gifted program eligibility.

Local school systems are responsible for training qualified evaluators in the application of adopted observation/evaluation instruments in a culturally sensitive manner. A list of qualified evaluators, the evaluation guidelines, and documentation of training procedures must be maintained by the LEA. Examples of a qualified evaluator include grade and subject level teachers and scientists from a local business or college.

(g) **Qualified Psychological Examiner** - a psychologist licensed by a state licensing board in the United States and having training and experience in school psychology or child psychology.

LEAs are required to have licensed psychologists administer assessments that are designed to be given individually. Examples of assessments designed for individual administration include the WISC V and Stanford Binet 10th Edition. In Georgia, school psychologists and psychometrists are licensed by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and can give individually designed assessments.

Some assessments that are designed to be given individually or in small groups may have specific requirements for the administrators of the assessment based on the assessment's administrator/examiner's manual in addition to the regular testing protocols for group assessments. Follow the administrator's manual for qualifications of examiners.

(h) **State Board of Education (SBOE)** – the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K-12 education agencies in Georgia.

2.2 REQUIREMENTS

(a) **Notification** The LEA shall notify parents and guardians of identified gifted students being considered to receive gifted education services in writing of information related to the gifted education program including, but not limited to the following:

LEA personnel should consider a variety of ways to make sure all members of the community have access to information about their gifted education program. Suggestions for communication include: (a) system and local school websites, (b) parent/student handbooks, and (c) school brochures. The information about the local gifted program should be available in a variety of languages.

Example: "In order to qualify for gifted education services, a student shall meet criteria established by the State Board of Education in the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Any responsible person with knowledge of a student's advanced and/or accelerated educational needs may refer a student for evaluation to determine eligibility for gifted education. For additional information, please contact the Gifted Education teacher at your child's school or (Name), the Gifted Program Coordinator, at (contact information)."

Referral procedures and eligibility requirements adopted and applied by the LEA.

Local districts must establish a decision-making process that allows professional staff members to consider all information collected during the student search stage of the nomination process and determine whether it is appropriate to proceed with a formal referral and further assessment. This decision-making process must be applied consistently to all students who meet the district's automatic consideration criteria, as well as to those who are nominated through a reported referral. Factors to be considered in this screening process should include the strength of the evidence of the student's advanced learning needs, the recency and performance levels of any previous gifted program referral, circumstances that would indicate those assessment results are no longer valid, or other criteria adopted by the local district. While universal screening for gifted is not mandated, it is best practice to have universal gifted screening.

When a Student Search/Eligibility Team evaluates nominated students, the Eligibility Team chairperson or the designated individual must document the following:

- the date of the meeting/decision,*
- the committee members present,*
- the names of the students who were considered,*
- the source of the nomination (automatic, teacher, parent, etc.), and*
- the committee's/individual's decisions and rationale for those decisions regarding whether each student who was considered should be referred for formal evaluation.*

Student data shall be kept by grade level, subgroups, and demographics. This data shall be reviewed at least annually as part of the local district's formative evaluation of gifted program services. The nomination process should be scrutinized for any factors that may be contributing to the underrepresentation of some groups of students in the district's program for gifted students. The nomination, decision-making, and formal referral data must be summarized and reported upon request to the Department of Education as part of the district's evaluation report.

- Notification of initial consideration for gifted education services.
- Evaluation guidelines and documentation of training procedures utilized and maintained by the LEA.
- The type(s) of gifted services to be provided, academic standards to be met, the teaching methods employed, and the manner in which students will be evaluated annually.

A complete list and description of Georgia Department of Education-approved delivery models is located on pages 16-23 of this manual.

- Performance standards that gifted students should meet to maintain their eligibility and receive continued services in the program.
- A description of the probationary period applied to students in jeopardy of losing their eligibility services.
- The description shall include the length of the probationary period and the criteria.
- Termination of services when students on probation have failed to meet criteria for continuation services.

(b) **Referrals** The consideration for gifted education services may be reported or automatic as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Services*. (Referral begins at the time that the determination has been made to evaluate the student for gifted eligibility.)

- **Reported Referral.** A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.
- **Automatic Referral.** Students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, for further assessment to determine eligibility for gifted program services.
 - The Local BOE shall establish the criterion score needed on norm-referenced tests for automatic consideration for further eligibility assessment.
 - The Local BOE shall ensure that tests or procedures used in the referral process and to determine eligibility for gifted education services meet standards of validity and reliability for the purpose of identifying gifted students and shall be non-discriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

(c) **Consent** The LEA shall obtain written consent for testing from parents or guardians of students who are being considered for referral for gifted education services. The LEA shall obtain written consent from parents or guardians before providing gifted education services to students determined to be eligible for services.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must be notified when their child is being considered for possible gifted program placement at whatever point district personnel need to evaluate a student's performance in any way that is not done routinely for other children in that grade. Parental consent is required to conduct any group or individual testing or to engage in formal evaluation of student product or performance. Similarly, professionals may discuss and record their observations of a student's classroom performance, and other indicators of cognitive or creative strengths, and master lists of all students' standardized test scores may be screened for the purpose of identifying automatic referrals without parental permission.

(d) **Eligibility** The LBOE shall adopt eligibility criteria that are consistent with this rule and as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

- To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either (a) score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria described in paragraph (2)(d) 5.(ii) Achievement, or (b) qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
- To be eligible for gifted education services for Option B, a student must meet the qualifying score on at least one nationally norm-referenced test and must have qualified in two other categories by either assessment, observational data collected on his/her performance, or production of a superior product(s) as described below. Information shall be collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
- Test scores used to establish eligibility shall have been administered within the past two calendar years.
- Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category.

Children who are being evaluated for gifted services must be assessed in all four data categories and must have a qualifying score on a nationally norm-referenced test (see pages-12-13). If an assessment is used in one data category, it cannot be used in another category. For example, if a student has a qualifying score on a mathematics product in achievement, that same product cannot be used to determine eligibility in the motivation data category. Assessments used in the evaluation of eligibility for gifted services must be on the GaDOE approved assessment list available to district gifted coordinators.

- Data shall be used for eligibility in the four areas according to the following:

Mental Ability

- K-2 Option A: Students must have a composite score at the 99th percentile on an approved nationally age-normed mental ability test.
- 3-12 Option A: Students must have a composite score at or above the 96th percentile on an approved nationally age-normed mental ability test.
- K-12: Option B: Students must have a composite or appropriate component score at or above the 96th percentile on an approved nationally age normed mental ability test as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.
- Mental ability tests shall be the most current editions, or editions approved by GaDOE, of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability, which have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
- Mental ability tests that were designed to be administered individually shall be administered by a qualified psychological examiner.

Guidelines Related to the Assessment of Mental Ability

For establishing the required standard in the mental ability category of Rule 160-4-2-.38, an age norm component or age norm composite score must be used in the assessment process (See pages 12-13). It is appropriate to use a component score to partially establish a student's eligibility for gifted program services if the assessment meets the following circumstances:

- *The subtest contains enough items and enough variety of items to provide a comprehensive assessment of the student's abilities in a given content domain;*
- *The component battery was normed separately from the total test composite score and the other subtests;*
- *The test publisher recommends the use of component scores for identifying the abilities of gifted students;*
- *The preponderance of both test and non-test evidence collected during the assessment process supports that component score as the best measure of the student's mental ability; and*
- *The local school district can provide a match between the student's identified strengths and gifted program curriculum.*

Achievement

- Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a norm-referenced achievement test or have produced a superior student-generated product or performance, where the

superior performance is one that can be translated into a numerical score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale as evaluated by a panel of qualified evaluators.

- Norm-referenced achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and shall yield a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in mathematics concepts and applications. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
- Performances and products shall be assessed by a panel of qualified evaluators and must be produced within the two calendar years prior to evaluation.

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 authorizes two (2) different approaches to the assessment of achievement:

1. Standardized achievement tests

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS allows LEAs to use either age or grade norms for standardized achievement test scores. It is generally recommended that districts use grade norms, since the purpose is to evaluate the child's achievement in comparison to other children in that grade level (so the LEA can judge to what degree the child would benefit from additional challenge). However, there may be times when it would be appropriate to use age norms (e.g., those are the only scores available, or the child has been radically accelerated). It is important that the professionals at the local level decide which norms they want to use (or under which circumstances they might use either set of norms), put that decision in the local administrative procedures manual, and follow it consistently with all children.

Some achievement tests provide two composite scores, derived from different subtests. For example, the Iowa complete battery yields a Composite score and a Total Core score. When using a Total Battery score to establish a student's eligibility, it is recommended that LEAs use the composite score that includes the most items from the test areas, i.e., it is the most comprehensive measure of the student's academic achievement.

2. Product/Performance Assessment

The evaluation process must meet the following criteria:

- ♦ *There must be at least three members on the panel of qualified evaluators that assess the student products/performances.*
- ♦ *Panel members must be provided with training in the scoring of products/performances. They should never be asked to make broad, global judgments as to a student's level of achievement. Instead, scoring rubrics should provide detailed descriptions of various levels of performance and examples of each in order to help observers clearly and consistently distinguish between superior levels of performance and those that are more typical for a student of that age.*
- ♦ *The district must keep written documentation confirming the qualifications of each member of a juried panel.*

♦ *To ensure consistency in the scoring process, the evaluations should be conducted simultaneously, independently, and without discussion by the panel members regarding their individual ratings. Each qualified evaluator should then submit a separate evaluation, using a locally developed or adopted evaluation rubric that uses a 1-100 scale of quality. The rubric should include narrative descriptors for each area and assigned values. The independent ratings are then averaged, and the mean score is used as a measure of the student's level of performance.*

Creativity

- Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking, receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances.
- Norm-referenced tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.

Standardized tests of creative thinking should be scored by individuals who have been trained and have reached a satisfactory level of inter-rater reliability.

It is a local district decision as to whether to use the age or grade national norms. However, it is strongly recommended that the district have a consistent protocol for choosing age or grade norms.

- Rating scales used to qualify creativity shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation.

All teachers who complete rating scales must have training on the concept of creativity, the characteristics of gifted students, how the particular scale describes those distinguishing behaviors, and how the different items on the scale should be interpreted.

- As evidence of creativity, students or individuals on behalf of students may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products or performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators.

Product/Performance Assessment

The evaluation process must meet the following criteria:

- *There must be at least three members on a panel of qualified evaluators that assess the student product/performance.*
- *Panel members must be provided with training in the scoring of products/performance. They should never be asked to make broad, global judgments as to a student's level of creativity. Instead, scoring rubrics should provide detailed descriptions of various levels of performance and examples of each to help observers and consistently distinguish between superior levels of performance and those that are more typical for a student of that age.*
- *The district must keep written documentation confirming the qualifications of each member of a juried panel.*
- *To ensure consistency in the scoring process, the evaluations should be conducted simultaneously, independently, and without discussion by the panel members regarding their individual ratings. Each qualified evaluator should then submit a separate evaluation, using a locally developed or adopted evaluation rubric that uses a 1-100 scale of quality. The rubric should include narrative descriptions for each area and assigned values. The independent ratings are then averaged, and the mean score is used as a measure of the student's level of performance.*

Motivation

- Students shall receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100 point scale on a structured observation or evaluation of student-generated products and/or performances, or for grades 6-12 have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, or a numeric grade point average (NGA) of 90 percent on a 100 point scale where 100 = A and a 89 = B.
- Grades used to determine the GPA or NGA must be a two-year average of regular school program core subject grades in mathematics, English language arts, social studies, science, and full year world languages.
- Rating scales used to qualify student motivation shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.

All teachers who complete rating scales must have training on the concept of motivation, the characteristics of gifted students, how the particular scale describes those distinguishing behaviors, and how the different items on the scale should be interpreted.

- As evidence of motivation, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. Motivation-structured observations may be

conducted as well. The products, performances, or structured observations submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators.

Product/Performance Assessment

The evaluation process must meet the following criteria:

- *There must be at least three members on a panel of qualified evaluators that assess the student product/performances.*
- *Panel members must be provided with training in the scoring of products/performances. They should never be asked to make broad, global judgments as to a student's level of creativity. Instead, scoring rubrics should provide detailed descriptions of various levels of performance and examples of each to help observers and consistently distinguish between superior levels of performance and those that are more typical for a student of that age.*
- *The district must keep written documentation confirming the qualifications of each member of a juried panel.*
- *To ensure consistency in the scoring process, the evaluations should be conducted simultaneously, independently, and without discussion by the panel members regarding their individual ratings. Each qualified evaluator should then submit a separate evaluation, using a locally developed or adopted evaluation rubric that uses a 1-100 scale of quality. The rubric should include narrative descriptions for each area and assigned values. The independent ratings are then averaged, and the mean score is used as a measure of the student's level of performance.*

- GPAs of students are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the subjects of mathematics, science, English language arts, social studies, and full year world language, if such language study is included in the student's records.

All assessment procedures selected to determine a student's need for gifted program services should help district personnel identify those students who are performing at the extremely high end of whatever performance/ability continuum is being assessed.

- *If a district has chosen to use GPA or NGA in the area of motivation to (partially) establish students' eligibility for gifted program placement, the local district must set a minimum performance standard for GPA and/or NGA.*
- *The standard must be set at the 90th percentile based on local norms where GPA or NGA is being used to measure motivation. For example, the GPA criterion can, and probably will, be higher than 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, and NGA will probably be higher than 90 on a 100-point scale, but under no circumstances can the criterion be lower than 3.5 or 90, respectively.*
- *For example, the GPA criterion can and probably will be set higher than 3.5 on a 4-point scale, but under no circumstances should it be set lower than 3.5.*

- Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or LEA shall be considered as part of the referral and evaluation process. External evaluation data shall not be substituted for or used as the sole source of data the school generates during the initial eligibility process. External evaluations shall have been reviewed for bias with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

LEAs and local school personnel should review the referral and evaluation data of gifted students entering their school system. If the referral and evaluation data was completed by a fully accredited private or public school, the receiving LEA and/or school may use the transferring school's referral and evaluation data to determine gifted eligibility criteria described in Georgia State Board Rule 160-4-2.38 Education Program for Gifted Students.

LEAs should establish policies regarding evaluations completed by "outside sources." Outside sources are defined as private and/or for-profit evaluators (psychiatrist, psychologist, psychometrist, etc.)

(e) Continued Participation The LBOE shall have a continuation policy for students identified as eligible for gifted services to continue to receive such services. The LEA shall review the progress of each student receiving gifted education services each year. Any student who receives gifted education services shall continue to receive services, provided the student demonstrates satisfactory performance in gifted education classes, as described in the LBOE continuation policy and stated in the continuation policy.

- The LBOE continuation policy shall include a probationary period in which a student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status. The length of this probationary period shall be determined by the Local BOE.
- The LBOE continuation policy shall provide for a final review prior to discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in gifted education classes during the probationary period and criteria for resuming gifted education services for such students.

*The key to the ongoing evaluation of the match between identified students' learning needs and gifted program services should be the LEA's Continuation Policy. **The continuation criteria for gifted classes should be designed with consideration for the rigor and relevance of the gifted education program curriculum/standards that are appropriate for the advanced cognitive, creative, and motivational strengths of gifted learners.** When developing a*

continuation policy, it is important to keep in mind that the student was identified initially based on exceptional abilities and as described in this resource manual.

The plan should include strategies, supports, and/or interventions designed to assist the student in making satisfactory performance in gifted classes based upon the reason or factors contributing to the student's lack of adequate performance. The plan should include monitoring to ensure the student is making adequate progress. During the probationary period, the student continues to receive gifted education services in the content area/class/course of concern; however, eligibility for receiving gifted education services is in jeopardy and the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) must be notified.

At the conclusion of the probationary period, the review team meets again to discuss the student's progress. If the student has been able to meet the prescribed goals, placement in the gifted education program content area continues; if the goals have not been met, gifted education services will be discontinued in the gifted course where the needed scores for continuation were not met. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified in writing, including specific criteria or conditions to be met for the student to resume gifted education services in that content area.

There are circumstances in which a gifted student will voluntarily withdraw from the gifted program. These are examples of "breaks in service":

- *Attendance at a private or home school program*
- *A move to another state*

These types of absences from the gifted program should be addressed in the local administrative procedures. The SBOE Rule requires local districts to establish continuation criteria, and those criteria should address how reinstatements are handled. The adopted procedure should be followed consistently with all students. Remember there is no need for the gifted student to be re-assessed to determine gifted eligibility. The gifted student may need to be administered assessments to determine into which level of gifted course the student should be placed, but not to determine eligibility.

(f) Reciprocity Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria in this rule for gifted education services in one LEA shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA within the state.

- As described in the section on Reciprocity in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, a student transferring from one LEA to another within the state shall meet the criteria for continuation of gifted services established by the LBOE of the receiving school system.
- There is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of military personnel as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2140 et. seq.

When an eligible gifted education student transfers from a state-funded school or school district in Georgia, the receiving school or district should carefully review the student's gifted education records.

- If gifted education records are not available, school personnel should contact the transferring district or school to obtain the student's gifted education records before placing the student into the gifted education program.*
- The receiving district or school should honor the continuation policy of the transferring school.*
- The continuation or probation plan should be completed in the receiving district's gifted content area in question if the receiving district has gifted services in that content area.*
- The student should be admitted into any other gifted courses to align with the student's original schedule in good standing.*
- Gifted education programs are not federally funded or mandated, which means each state sets their own guidelines and funding standards. Therefore, a student who is eligible for services in one state is not automatically eligible in Georgia. The receiving school or school district in Georgia should complete an eligibility evaluation on out of state transfer students in a timely manner.*

Note that for purposes of this guidance, students who are dependents of military personnel are eligible if they are members of a household of at least one of the following:

- An active-duty member of the uniformed services.*
- A member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged.*
- A member of the uniformed services that died on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty.*

(g) Curriculum and Services to be Provided

- The LBOE shall develop curricula for gifted students that incorporate SBOE approved standards. LBOE curricula for gifted students shall focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation, in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, world languages, fine arts, and career, technical and agricultural education.
- LEAs shall make available to the public and the GaDOE a description of the differentiated curricula used for instruction of gifted students. The LEA shall review and revise, if revisions are needed, its curricula for gifted students at least annually.
- Students identified as gifted and whose participation has received parental consent shall receive at least five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent)

of gifted education services, using one of the approved models described in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

(h) Data Collection

- The LBOE shall collect and maintain statistical data on the number of students referred for evaluation of eligibility for gifted education services (students whose parents received permission to evaluate/test for determination of eligibility), the number of students determined eligible for services, and the number of students actually served during the school year. These data shall be archived and maintained by subgroups, which shall include at least the grade level, gender, and ethnic group of the students.
- The LEA shall evaluate its gifted program at least every three years using criteria established by GaDOE.

(i) Public Review

- The LBOE shall make available for review by the public and the GaDOE a copy of its administrative procedures for the operation of its gifted education program and the LEA's gifted education curricula.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151; 20-2-152; 20-2-161.

Adopted: May 10, 2012

Effective: May 30, 2012

Section X: Gifted Education Organizations

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/>

Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC)

www.gagc.org

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

www.nagc.org

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC)

<https://www.world-gifted.org/>

Section XI: Reference

- Cobb County Board of Education. (2012). *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*. (Available from Cobb County Advanced Learning Programs, 514 Glover Street, Marietta, Ga 30021)
- Coleman, M.R. & Hughes, C. (2009). Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students Within an RtI Framework. *Gifted Child Today* (32) 3, 14-17.
- Gibbons, Kimberly, et al. *Effective Universal Instruction: An Action-Oriented Approach to Improving Tier 1*. The Guilford Press, 2018.
- Hall, T., Stangman, N. & Meyer, A (2011). *Differentiated Instruction and Implications for Universal Design for Learning*. Retrieved December 14, 2011, from The National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials Web Site:
https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/DI_UDL.pdf
- Tomlinson, C. & Imbeau, M. (Speakers). (2011). *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*. (webinar). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. ASCD.org/professions

Appendix:

Changes and Dates (FY25 manual)

Clarification for CTAE codes that can be gifted courses: pages 15, 16, and 18 (July 10, 2024).

Clarification for gifted endorsement with gifted service delivery models: Addition of “**or** is actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program” as requirement for earning gifted funding that was earlier inferred, but not explicitly mentioned: pages 16, 17, and 18 (August 28, 2024).

Clarification: Remove the word “clock” in reference to the 10-hour course on pages 17, 18, and 24 (August 28, 2024).

Clarification: Add description of the 10-hour course to include the wording “gifted professional development” page 18 (August 28, 2024).

Clarification regarding the collaborative model and the gifted endorsed teacher or teacher actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program content certification: Addition of the wording ‘when possible’ on page 18 (August 28, 2024).

Changes for Spring (March) 2025 for FY26 Manual

Added the word ‘education’ to gifted teacher to become ‘gifted education teacher’ throughout the manual.

Aligned page numbers in the narrative to align with the FY26 manual.

Made grammar corrections for clarity...For example instead of stating he, we used ‘the teacher.’

For clarity on page 16 added: “Best practice would be for the teacher to apply for an N3T or I3T certificate while the teacher is working on the gifted endorsement program.”

On page 17 eliminated ‘K-5’ because it can apply to all grades.

For clarity on page 22 we changed “Further, the maximum FTE segments per class could be ten students,” to “Further, the maximum FTE segments per class should not exceed ten students.”

Re-worded part of the Innovative Model guidance for clarity on pages 20-22:

2. For the FY26 school year and following years, the Innovative model plans must be submitted by April 15th of the previous school year in essence in the spring (April 15th) before the new school year starts.
3. The Gifted Education and Advanced Academics team may approve the submissions for one or two years of implementation. The request for the two-year implementation must be included in the initial submission.
4. On September 1st of each school year the superintendent must sign assurances that this model is being used appropriately, and that the proper documentation is being collected and evaluated for its effectiveness.

The words AP, IB, and Cambridge added if one was omitted from a previous version of the manual.

On page 28 the following statement was added for clarity regarding the class size waivers: “However, the use of these class size waivers cannot be used to generate additional funding.”

On Section VIII (page 29) elimination of the ‘Assessments’ section per our GaMTSS team’s suggestion.

Slight wording clarifications on Section VIII (pages 29-36) are from our GaMTSS team, including GaMTSS notation.

For clarity on page 38 the following was added in the box under Eligibility:
“Assessments used in the evaluation of eligibility for gifted services must be on the GaDOE approved assessment list available to district gifted coordinators.”

For clarity on page 45 these statements were added: *“Remember there is no need for the gifted student to be reassessed to determine gifted eligibility. The gifted student may need to be administered assessments to determine into which level of gifted course the student should be placed, but not to determine eligibility.”*

Changes for Summer (July) 2025 for FY26 Manual

On page 28 the following statement was added for clarity regarding the class size waivers: “Be mindful that the expressed legislative intent of the additional gifted funding weight is to provide additional resources and lower student to teacher ratios directly for gifted students,” and the following statement was deleted: “However, the use of these class size waivers cannot be used to generate additional funding.”

Changes for the Spring 2026 for FY27 Manual

Page 15 Added statement that the order of assessments is a local decision.

Page 16 Added statement to clarify N3T and I3T with in-field.

Page 16 Added statements regarding the coding for the all-day elementary resource room model and FTE.

Pags 16-20 Omitted the wording regarding collaborative model.

Page 19 Added clarity regarding two segments per gifted identified student plus intentional differentiation for cluster grouping.

Page 20 Rephrased for clarity dates for Innovative Model.

Page 20 Deletion of the section regarding the requirements for the collaborative gifted service delivery model

Page 25 Added paragraph regarding deep learning and fostering engagement.

Page 28-32 Slight phrasing change for GaMTSS provided by GaDOE's GaMTSS team to align with GaMTSS more closely