**Special Considerations**

**Introduction**

This document is designed to provide districts with guidance in understanding how special considerations may be made when identifying students for the Gifted and Talented (GT) program. The following guidance may provide additional assistance for districts/ schools when identifying students commonly found in underrepresented populations. These suggestions also ensure districts remain in compliance with state regulations.

**Special Considerations Definition**

According to 704 KAR 3:285, “School personnel shall take into consideration environment, cultural, and disabling conditions which may mask a child’s true abilities” (704 KAR 3:285 Section 1(12). Special Considerations also include disadvantaged students, as identified, “(Those) operating under conditions detrimental to cognitive or affective growth due to socioeconomic limitations, cultural factors, geographic isolation, or various combinations of these factors (704 KAR 3:285 2(4).”

**Special Considerations Purposes/Intentions**

Special Considerations may allow students who do not qualify using formal assessment measures to be identified as GT. These students typically exhibit GT behaviors/characteristics but fail to score at or above 96th percentile on a state recognized GT assessment due to environmental, cultural, and disabling conditions which may mask their true abilities. This provision in the statute allows districts/schools an opportunity to view the whole child using external characteristics (classroom observations, additional data, and recommendations) in place of the 96th percentile score. In order to ensure proper equity and access for all students, special considerations can be used for identification purposes for students in all underrepresented groups.

**Special Considerations Implementation**

Special Considerations made during the Gifted and Talented identification process can be submitted using any one or combination of following methods:

* An ongoing process throughout the school year.
* During the annual “GT Selection and Placement” committee meeting. This committee meeting should be composed of the following shareholders: education coordinator/ teacher and representatives from the following groups: classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, special education teachers and any other appropriate personnel”
* During the annual GT Program Review process.

**Special Considerations Suggested Process of Implementation**

The following processes are suggested methods for identifying students who may have a special consideration:

* Talk with all staff, such Fine Arts and Media Specialist, during PLCs or faculty meetings, about recommendations and special considerations.
  + During these conversations, the gifted specialist must define and provide additional information about special considerations that teachers should be looking for.
  + Teachers should use the information from these conversations to begin completing checklists and behavior forms - best practice to observe over 6 weeks period time (jot downs, KOI forms).
* Gifted specialist will follow-up and look for special considerations when collecting teacher recommendation forms and additional evidences.
* Special considerations may also be a part of the district’s parent recommendation forms.
* Gifted specialist should communicate several times a year with staff about additional referrals that may include specials considerations.

**Services for Students with Special Considerations**

Services may need to be differentiated for students with special considerations. Although the students are bright and learn at a faster pace, they may have gaps in their learning. Students who are learning English or have a cultural disadvantage may need to go at a slower pace until language is acquired or other needs are met. Some student needs may be met in the regular classroom, while other students may need pull out or other services. For each student, a Gifted Student Service Plan that best meets that student’s need should be discussed and created.

**Social Emotional**

Many GT student have specific social emotional needs. Students who are disadvantaged, underachieving or have disabilities may need counselling services in order for them to attain the strategies they need to be successful. In some cultures, it is not considered “cool” to be smart. Students and parents may need special supports in place to assist them with understanding about gifted education and services. Students may need supports to assist them with organization, feelings of perfectionism and/or intense feelings that are seemingly overwhelming.

When talking with parents, teachers may want to enlist the aid of a minister or another community member to assist parents. It might also be helpful to meet in a place which is central to the community such as a church, community center or library rather than a school. Sometimes schools can be an intimidating venue for parents and meeting in place which is more familiar can help to invite questions and better support from parents.

**Resources**

* Kingore Observation Inventory -<http://www.bertiekingore.com/koi.htm>
* HOPE Scale (Marcia Gentry) -<http://purduegeri.wix.com/projecthope#!hope-scale>
* KDE Gifted and Talented Website -<https://education.ky.gov/specialed/GT/Pages/Gifted-and-Talented-Resources.aspx>
* *Social-Emotional Curriculum with Gifted and Talented Students (Critical Issues in Gifted Education)* Oct 1, 2008 by Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D. and Tracy Cross Ph.D.
* *Social & Emotional Teaching Strategies (The Practical Strategies Series in Gifted Education)* Author: Stephanie K. Ferguson Ph.D. Editors: Frances A. Karnes Ph.D., Kristen R. Stephens Ph.D.
* *On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Children* (5th ed.) Author: Tracy L. Cross Ph.D.