

2025-2026

**The Houston County
School District
Resource Manual for
Gifted Education Services**

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**GIFTED CHILDREN:
A PRICELESS NATIONAL RESOURCE**



A STRONG GIFTED PROGRAM BENEFITS ALL

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Introduction

The Houston County School District (HCSD) enjoys a rich history of gifted education. In 1972, Gervaise Perdue, the wife of former HCSD Superintendent David Perdue, began the Gifted Program. The HCSD continues its commitment to the belief that each student should receive an education based on student needs. Gifted-identified students are entitled to a differentiated curriculum consisting of courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery are appropriately modified to further develop students' strengths and provide them with the opportunities to reach their fullest potential. Following this philosophy, the HCSD promotes using the Advanced Content model for gifted students in grades K-12.

Governance

Three **(3)** documents provide the authority and specific requirements for gifted education in the state of Georgia. They are found in state law, the State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule, and SBOE-approved Regulations that apply to traditional school systems and state charter schools. Key elements related to identification and service requirements for gifted students are in bold below.

1. Section I: Statutory Basis/Support for Gifted Education

- a. **State Law: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-152 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**
<http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2010/title-20/chapter-2/article-6/part-3/20-2-152>

Relevant excerpts include:

- (a) All children and youth who are eligible for general and career education programs 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 the 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 under 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 the 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 mental ability, achievement, and creativity tests.
- *A student's eligibility may be determined under either paragraph (1) or (2) 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.

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

- i. [GA Gifted Definitions](#)
- ii. https://bit.ly/GA_Gifted_Definitions

3. SBOE Approved Regulations for Gifted Education Programs

- i. <https://bit.ly/SBOE-Gifted-Approved>

This manual is aligned with the Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Service, a companion document to The Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS and the Board-approved Regulations for Gifted Education adopted on May 10, 2012. The information assists teachers and administrators in providing instructional services to gifted HCSD students. Parents and other interested parties can also use the resource manual to guide gifted education in Georgia. Please check the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) website for additional information or visit <https://bit.ly/FY26GaGifted-Manual>.

The Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and the Director of Gifted Education guide the identification and provision of educational services for gifted students. Personnel directly responsible for program development, delivery, and evaluation include principals, assistant principals, instructional coordinators, and gifted-endorsed teachers at each school. The administration of educational services for gifted-identified students within the HCSD, determined by the superintendent and the local Board of Education, is reflected in this manual, *The HCSD Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

Disclaimer

In compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P. L. 88-352), the HCSD 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 to identify gifted students. The HCSD shall be non-discriminatory concerning race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background. Reference: 160-4-2-.38-

Definition

A gifted student, as defined by the Georgia Board of Education, demonstrates a high degree of intellectual, creative, and artistic ability(ies); possesses exceptional leadership skills or excels in specific academic fields/ and needs special instruction and special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with the student's abilities. Students in grades kindergarten through twelve in the HCSD who demonstrate a high intellectual, academic, creative, and artistic ability identified through state eligibility requirements shall be provided special services by the Program for Gifted Students.

General District and Program Information

Houston County School District (HCSD) Mission

Our mission is to produce high achievement for all through continuous growth.

HCSD Vision

Our vision is to be the standard for world-class education.

HCSD Values

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of all.
- Produce college and career-ready graduates.
- Promote the academic success of all students. All means all!
- Ensure the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth of students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support.
- Support quality learning, by student, by standard.
- Take collective responsibility for teaching, learning, and professional development through professional learning communities.
- Use evidence-based, high-leverage practices to meet the needs of all students.
- Create partnerships with stakeholders that promote positive relationships and student success.

The HCSD Way

- Strive for excellence in all that we do.
- Go the extra mile.
- Provide quality customer service.
- Do things right; do the right thing.
- Have a professional attitude.
- Base decisions on what is best for students.
- Work hard, with dedication and love for students.
- Approach work every day with a positive attitude, hope, enthusiasm, and compassion.
- Nurture relationships in an approachable and collaborative environment.

Gifted Program Philosophy

In agreement with the Georgia Board of Education's philosophy and the HCSD's mission "to produce high achievement for all through continuous growth," the HCSD Gifted Program recognizes the differentiated needs of gifted-identified students by providing opportunities designed to accelerate, enrich, and extend their learning experiences. Learning is enhanced through materials, tasks, instruction, and experiences that are differentiated in terms of content, process, environment, and product.

Gifted Program Mission

Our mission is to identify, serve, and support intellectually gifted students.

Gifted Program Vision

Our vision is for HCSD-gifted students to impact their world positively.

Gifted Program Value

1. Education provides an opportunity for all individuals to reach their full potential.
2. All students have a right to educational experiences that challenge their individual development.
3. Differentiated instruction (environment, content, process, and product) provides accelerated, enriched, and extended instruction that enhances learning and maximizes student potential.
4. Stimulating and expanding our students' intellectual and cultural horizons prepares them for leadership roles in a global community.

5. Meeting our students' social and emotional needs is vital to their success.

Gifted Program Goals

Gifted students will develop advanced research skills and methods. The curriculum for gifted students should allow for in-depth learning of self-selected topics within the study area.

Rationale/Discussion: Gifted learners possess an extensive knowledge base, learn at an accelerated pace, and are capable of advanced levels of comprehension. In addition, many gifted students are highly inquisitive and intrinsically motivated, especially to pursue topics that interest them. Compared to their age peers, gifted learners tend to have longer attention spans, exhibit a stronger need to know, and follow through with assignments. If gifted students are to benefit fully from these abilities, the gifted program must emphasize developing skills that enable them to become effective independent learners.

Because of the advanced nature of their abilities and interests, gifted students need to learn how to access advanced-level reference materials, including various print and non-print references and information retrieval systems. They need learning tasks to explore personal interests through guided research, independent study, and community involvement. To conduct authentic research, students need instruction and guidance in learning to ask the right questions by looking at techniques used by experts in the specific field. They need instruction in developing a written plan of research (with emphasis on how one gathers, categorizes, analyzes, and evaluates the information in particular fields), assisting in evaluating their work, and considering implications for future research.

Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and problem-solving skills by studying various complex topics.

Rationale/Discussion: Gifted learners can generate original ideas and solutions and characteristically see diverse and unusual relationships. Their instruction must allow opportunities to further develop and apply these skills in meaningful situations. Because gifted individuals often exhibit differential patterns of thought processing (e.g., divergent thinking, sensing consequences, generalizing), a curricular need is to explore alternatives and consequences of those choices and draw and test generalizations. The original thoughts and ideas often expressed by gifted students may be perceived as odd or off-task by others in some settings. This perception results in inhibition of creative thinking. The gifted program must provide an environment where students feel free and safe to stretch beyond the "right" answer that comes so quickly to them. They should be encouraged to take risks and experiment to develop creativity.

Gifted students will develop and practice critical thinking and logical problem-solving skills in pertinent academic areas.

Rationale/Discussion: Gifted students learn new material and master new skills in less time. One strategy for differentiating instruction for gifted students is to structure lessons and units so that capable students spend a larger portion of their time on higher-order thinking, using the content they have mastered to further develop their understanding of the concepts and practice critical thinking skills.

Gifted students will develop advanced communication skills. The curriculum for gifted students should encourage the use of new techniques, materials, and formats to develop products that will be shared with real audiences.

Rationale/Discussion: It is important to remember that throughout history, we have recognized "giftedness" in individuals because of the impact they have made on other individuals and society at large through their products, whether the area of giftedness is art, science, leadership, literature, etc. Feedback from real audiences allows gifted learners to improve their communication skills further. Internal motivation develops when students pursue ever-increasing levels of excellence in their final products and receive confirmation from real audiences that others value their intellectual and academic talents.

Gifted students will develop an understanding of self and how their unique characteristics may influence interactions with others.

Rationale/Discussion: Many gifted children experience difficulty accepting some aspects of their giftedness. Their heightened self-awareness and feelings of being different can result in low self-esteem and inhibited growth emotionally and socially. Consequently, there is a need to provide gifted students with time for interaction with other gifted students, reflection, and discussion for self-understanding. A strong problem-solving aptitude allows gifted students to deal effectively with these concerns when given the opportunity and guidance needed. This type of involvement can also help give students a foundation for leadership development.

(Adapted and adopted from the Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual and www.doe.k12.ga.us)

Gifted Services

Direct services for gifted-identified students are provided primarily through the advanced content delivery model. Students enrolled in the Advanced Content model in elementary school participate in 30 (FTE) segments per week in gifted education classes. Those enrolled in the Advanced Content courses in middle and high school must take at least one gifted education course and spend a minimum of five (FTE) segments per week in gifted education classes. The students in middle school take three or four core gifted subject areas. High school students are required to take one honors or Advanced Placement course a year. The district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted but have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area as high achievers.

The HCSD uses the following descriptors as a means of distinguishing gifted education services:

1. In elementary school, gifted education services are referred to as Gifted and Talented Education (GTE).
2. In middle school, gifted education classes may be referred to as gifted, GTE, honors, and advanced content.

3. In high school, gifted education classes may be referred to as honors and Advanced Placement (AP). AP is an opportunity for college-level learning offered by the College Board to high school students, both gifted and non-gifted qualified.

Advanced Content Model

In the HCSD, advanced content classrooms consist of homogenous groups of students based on achievement and interest in specific academic content areas. Students who are not identified as gifted but have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area may be placed in advanced content classrooms. Students selected as high achievers are chosen through district criteria and guidelines. Enrollment in gifted classes is reevaluated yearly and is determined based on class space and resource availability.

Advanced content classrooms focus on a curriculum rooted in state standards. Extensions of the curriculum increase the complexity, transfer, depth, and relevance of the concepts. The curriculum learning experiences used in advanced content follow a collaborative approach to recognizing and responding to the academic needs of gifted and high-achieving students.

All students who qualify for Gifted services are provided with a curriculum that is differentiated in content, pacing, process skills emphases, and expectations of student performance from the courses that more typical students in that grade level would take. The advanced content curriculum is enhanced using differentiated instruction, including 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 experience, integrates interdisciplinary themes, and supports rigor, broad-based issues, depth & breadth, flexible progression in the content.
- **Process:** Instructional strategies designed to foster self-initiated and self-directed learning, model academic discussion, promote the creative application of ideas, and use Georgia Department of Education 5 Goals for Gifted Education: Communication, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Research Skills, and Affective Thinking through an emphasis on higher-level thinking, problem-solving and communication skills
- **Product:** Projects of varying complexity that demonstrates a developmentally appropriate capacity for self-directed learning, effective communication, effective problem solving of challenging and complex issues, and meaningful collaboration.
- **Environment:** Physical setting and work condition that supports self-Contained gifted identified students & high achieving students, changes the actual place where students work, provides opportunities for independent study and in-depth research, and encourages mentorship.
- **Assessment:** Various methods and opportunities to document mastery of the curriculum by pre/post assessments, self-assessment through rubric usage, the creation of a goals-based checklist, and opportunity for conferencing, commentary, and qualitative feedback for growth.

Through the application of the advanced content curriculum, students will gain a deeper understanding of the state standards and meet the following desired learning outcomes. These students will be:

- Self-directed Learners
- Strategic Thinkers
- Global Leaders
- Problem Solvers
- Quality Producers

In addition, the curriculum learning experiences used in the K-12 advanced content gifted programming model are sensitive to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students and encourage the development of a meta-cognitive understanding of their gifts and talents.

Collaborative Model

Another approved model of services used in the HCSD is the collaborative model. This model is based on a maximum of ten identified Gifted students placed as a group in a heterogeneous non-gifted classroom. Direct instruction is provided by the student's regular classroom teacher, who collaborates with a designated gifted teacher. Substantial, regularly scheduled collaborative planning must exist between the regular classroom teacher and the gifted teacher.

Gifted Personnel

Certified teachers endorsed in gifted education or who are in the process of earning their gifted endorsement serve gifted-identified students in elementary school (grades K-5) through middle and high school (grades 6-12). In compliance with Georgia guidelines, teachers of AP (grades 9-12) and Gifted/Honors (grades 6-12) must have the following qualifications:

- **Advance Content Course:**
 1. The teacher has a current Georgia Professional Standard Commission (GaPSC)-issued gifted endorsement/certification.
- **Advance Placement Courses:**

Content Teacher with appropriate content area GaPSC approved certification and one of the following:

 2. The teacher has a current GaPSC-issued gifted endorsement/certification OR
 3. 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-clock hour gifted professional development course in characteristics of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted students.

Gifted Professional Development

Professional Development is provided to teachers of gifted-identified students and teachers seeking gifted endorsement. The HCSD provides professional learning support by offering a yearly cohort to earn gifted endorsement and sending teachers and administrators to state and national conferences.

Site-based priority objectives determine in-service topics. The GaDOE, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), the Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC), and the Middle Georgia RESA (MGRESA) offer additional staff development opportunities. Gifted teachers are provided training and updated information regarding local and state guidelines/requirements yearly.

Other Gifted Program Provisions

Class Size- The SBOE establishes Gifted Education class sizes; Code: IEC 160-5-1-.08. As authorized by O. C. G. A., 20-2-244 (H), the maximum individual gifted education class size is listed below:

Gifted Education Program	Maximum Class Size
Elementary (K-5)	17
Middle (6-8)	21
High (9-12)	21

Class size may be adjusted based on waivers included in approved Charter Systems or Strategic Waiver Systems.

Data Collection - The local gifted program evaluates its program at least every three years using criteria established by GaDOE. At the local level, data is maintained 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 served during the school year. The data is archived and maintained by subgroups, which include the grade level, gender, and ethnic group of students.

Funding - Gifted funding is earned for all gifted-identified students who receive gifted education services as authorized by O. C. G. A., 20-2-161 QBE Funding Formula.

Public Notice - General information regarding the HCSD Gifted Program and its referral procedures may be found in all HCSD student handbooks or obtained via the HCSD's website (<https://www.hcbe.net/districtstudenthandbooks>). This information is also available in print upon request from each school's gifted lead teacher (GLT).

Program Evaluation - The Director of Gifted Education will conduct local program evaluations each year to review the HCSD Gifted Program administrative procedures and Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services. This review is conducted annually and is the basis for program revisions and curriculum modifications.

Referrals

Referrals are generated by two methods:

Reported Referral. Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and others with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student for consideration for gifted educational services.

Automatic Referral. Students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test shall be considered automatically, as defined in Appendix A of the GaDOE *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*. HCSD uses the Fall and Winter MAP Assessment as an automatic referral. Students must receive a score of 90th percentile or higher on the math and/or reading. Assessment scores obtained using a read-to setting are not deemed automatic referrals but may be used as data in the referral process.

Referral Schedule

Elementary Schools (Kindergarten - 5th Grade)

Students currently enrolled in the HCSD may be referred for testing at any time during the school year by a countywide screening activity, automatic referral, and/or by a parent, teacher, peer, or self-referral. Teachers and parents may refer students by submitting a completed initial referral and TABs form. All referrals will be reviewed by the school's eligibility team for consideration for gifted education evaluation. The eligibility team for each school will submit a list of student referrals to the gifted program throughout the year. Testing, scoring, and norming will be completed based on evaluation dates by HCSD gifted education diagnosticians throughout the year. Parents are notified of eligibility once a formal evaluation has been completed.

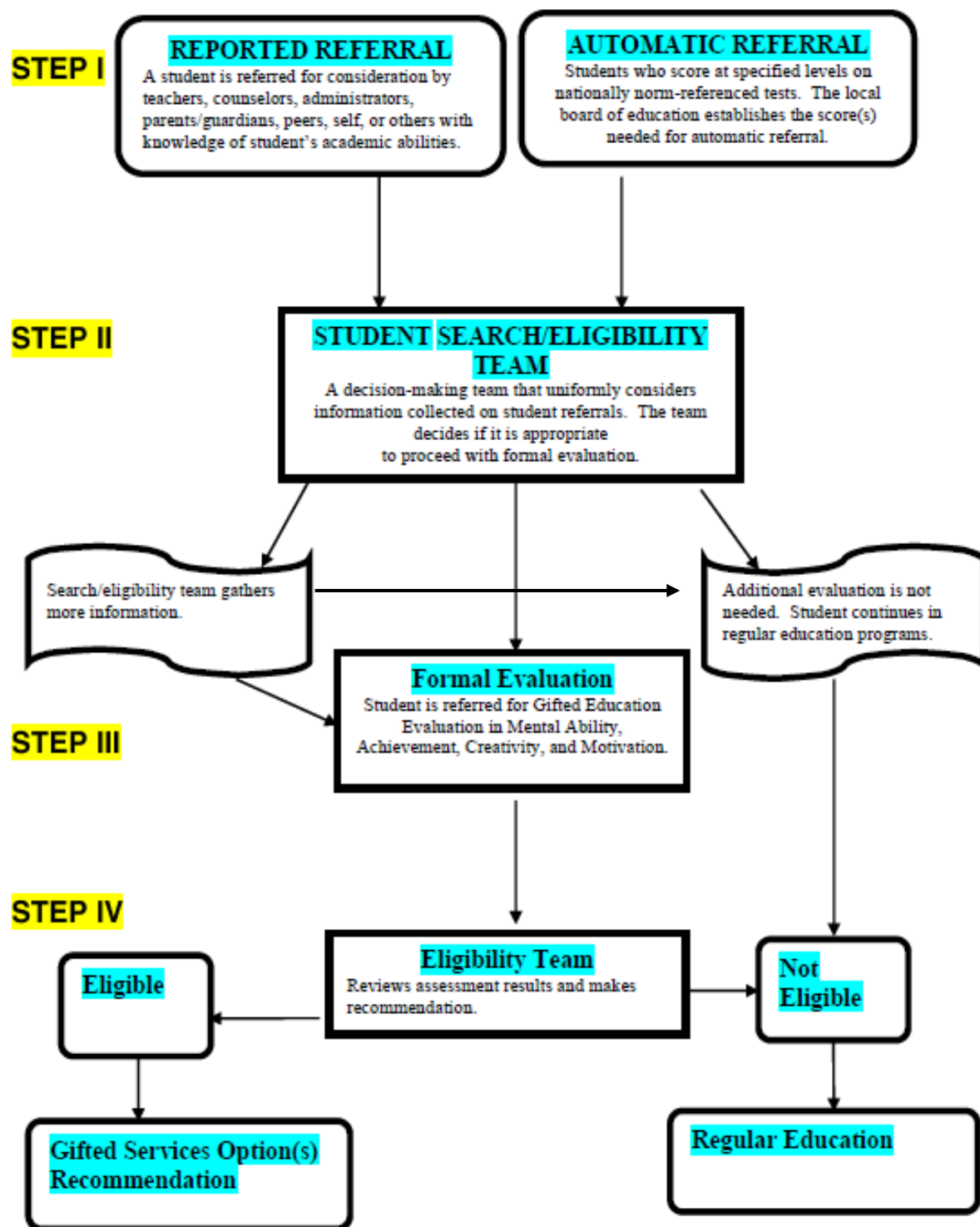
Middle Schools

Students currently enrolled in the HCSD may be referred for testing anytime during the school year. Parents will submit a completed initial referral and TABs form. All referrals will be reviewed by the school's eligibility team for consideration for gifted education evaluation. The eligibility team for each school will submit a list of student referrals to the gifted program. Testing, scoring, and norming will be completed based on referrals by the HCSD gifted education testing diagnosticians throughout the year. Parents are notified of eligibility once a formal evaluation has been completed. With parental consent, gifted-identified students will be enrolled in gifted education classes no later than the beginning of the following semester.

High Schools

Students currently enrolled in the HCSD may be referred for testing anytime during the school year. The school's eligibility team will review all referrals for consideration for gifted education evaluation. Testing, scoring, and norming will be completed based on referrals by the HCSD gifted testing diagnosticians throughout the year. Parents are notified of eligibility once a formal evaluation has been completed. With parental consent, gifted-identified students will be enrolled in gifted education classes no later than the beginning of the following semester.

Flowchart of the Referral Process



Communication

The HCSD notifies the parents and/or guardians of all students about the eligibility criteria for participation in the Gifted and Talented Education program, the referral process for determining eligibility, and descriptions of program services. General and specific communication takes place through the district website, student handbooks, Central Office and school-level personnel, and GLTs.

Parents or guardians of students who are referred for possible gifted program evaluation will receive the following information:

- Permission to Test Notification
- Notice for No Further Evaluation

Parents or guardians of students who are determined to be eligible for Gifted Program placement also receive the following:

- Copy of Eligibility Report
- Program Description
- Continuation Criteria
- Explanation and Requirements for Eligibility
- Placement Notification/Permission
- Annual Reviews (at the end of the school year)

Parents or guardians of students not determined eligible for Gifted Program placement will receive a notification.

- Copy of Eligibility Report
- Notice for No Further Evaluation
- Explanation and Requirements for Eligibility

Eligibility

SBOE Rule 160-140-2.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS allows local education agencies (LEAs) to use two procedures for determining students' eligibility for gifted education services. The HCSD employs both methods:

Option A: A student in grades K-2 may qualify by scoring in the 99th percentile on the composite score of mental ability and the 90th percentile or higher in achievement. A student in grades 3-12 may qualify by scoring in the 96th percentile or higher on the composite score of mental ability and the 90th percentile or higher in achievement.

- OR -

Option B: A student may qualify through a comprehensive multiple-criteria assessment process by achieving the required score in three of the four areas of evaluation: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

Option A: Must have a qualifying score

Students must have a qualifying score in the mental ability AND achievement categories.				
School Division	Mental Ability	Achievement	Creativity	Motivation
Grades K-2:	99 th percentile composite score on a nationally age normed mental ability test	≥ 90 th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test	Evaluation data required	Evaluation data required

Grades 3-12:	≥96th percentile composite score on a nationally age-normed mental ability test	≥ 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test		
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Option B: Categories for Multiple Criteria (GaDOE Rule 160-4-2-.38)

School Division	Mental Ability	Achievement	Creativity	Motivation
Percentiles	≥96%	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%
Elementary	(Component or Composite score)	Nationally Normed Achievement Test (Total Reading or Math or Core Total or Total Composite)	Creativity Test Or Observation Checklist Or *Qualifying Performance Activity	Observation Checklist Or *Qualifying Product
Middle	(Component or Composite score)	Nationally Normed Achievement Test (Total Reading or Math or Core Total or Total Composite)	Observation Checklist Or Creativity Test Or *Qualifying Performance Activity	≥ 3.5 on 4.0 scale over the last two years in core content areas and a full year of foreign language Or *Qualifying Product
High	(Component or Composite score)	Nationally Normed Achievement Test (Total Reading or Math or Core Total or Total Composite)	Observation Checklist Or Creativity Test Or *Qualifying Performance Activity	≥ 3.5 on 4.0 scale over the last two years in math, science, English, foreign language & social studies Or *Qualifying Product

- At least one of the criteria must be met by a GaDOE-approved nationally normed reference test score.
- Any data used to establish eligibility in one category shall not be used to establish eligibility in another.
- If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, it shall not be used to evaluate motivation.
- Any information used to establish eligibility shall be current **within two calendar years**.
- Local school systems must establish policies regarding using data gathered and analyzed by private entities.

*Performance Activities may include participation in the Governor's Honors Program in fine or performing arts or any county, district, state, or national competition winner.

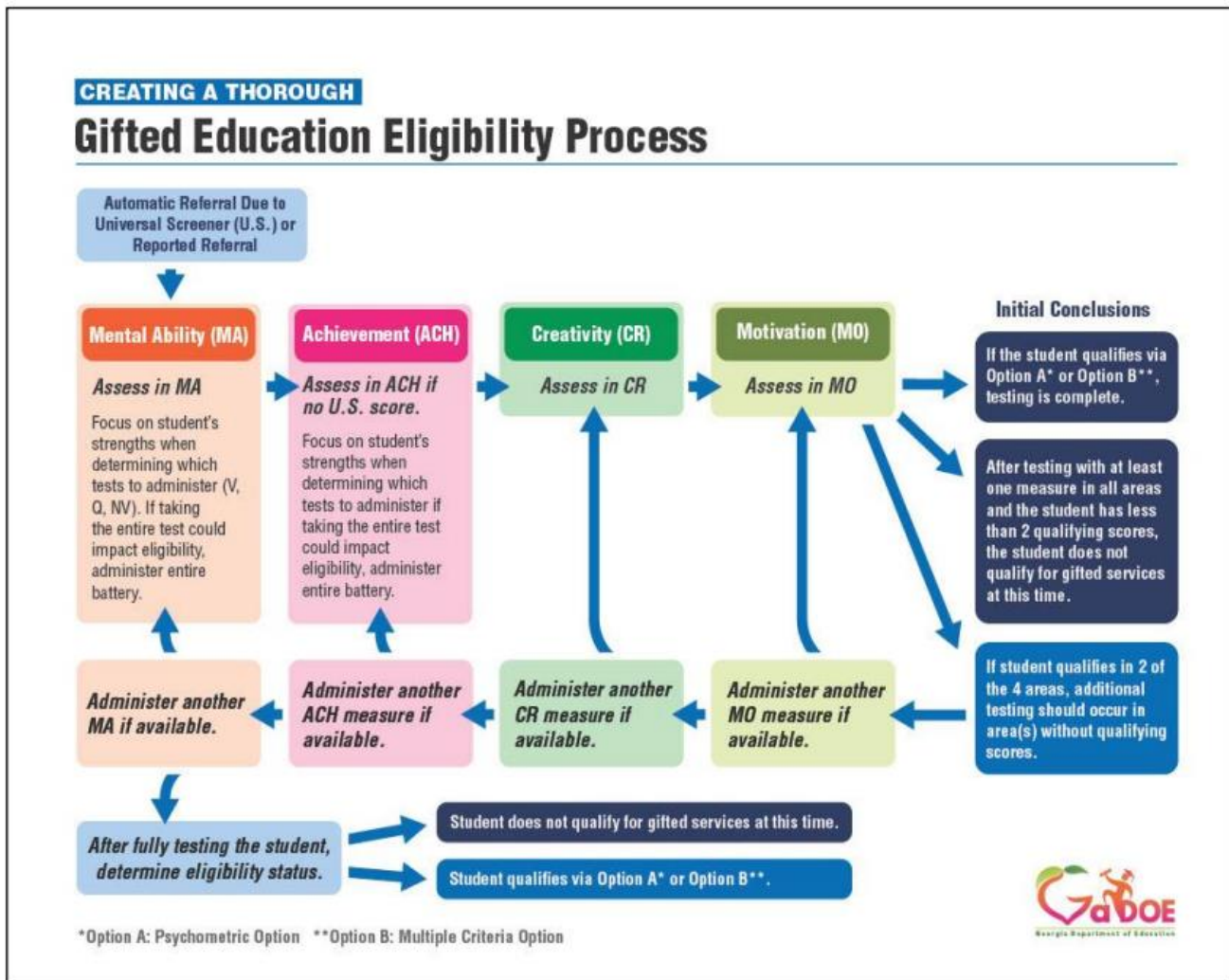
*Products may include but are not limited to county-level winners of individual academic competitions such as the Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Science Fair, and Social Science Fair or acceptance into Duke TIP.

Private Evaluations

Data gathered and analyzed through private testing may be considered as part of the nomination and referral phase of the evaluation process. Test data must be current (within two years) and nationally normed. This data may not be used in place of the county or school-generated data and may only be used in one of the testing categories during the referral process. To be considered, the test(s) MUST be administered by a licensed school or clinical psychologist whose Georgia license number must be included with the test results.

Follow-up Evaluation Policy and Procedures

The HCSD Gifted Department, in agreement with the GaDOE, recognizes the occasional need for further testing based on special circumstances and/or specific individual needs. These circumstances/needs must be documented in the student's eligibility report. Additional testing occurs for a qualification area when a student scores one standard deviation from the state qualifying score.



Continuation of Services

The HCSD follows the guidance of the GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services, utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) recommendations for students eligible for gifted services to continue receiving gifted services. Following the state BOE policy, the HCSD establishes the following guidelines:

Elementary

GRADES - Satisfactory performance is required for enrollment in the HCSD Gifted Program and continued services in gifted education advanced content classes.

- The student shall demonstrate satisfactory performance with a minimum 76 average in each gifted education class throughout the grading period (nine-week grading period).
- When a student earns a grade of 70-75 in a gifted education class, then the student is placed on Academic Watch for that class.
- Any student failing to meet continuation criteria (below 70) shall be placed on probation for one grading period (nine-week grading period) for that individual class.

ACADEMIC WATCH - Academic Watch is designed for students whose grade average is 70-75 in any gifted class. It consists of two components:

1. The gifted education teacher will arrange a face-to-face conference to include the parent, student, and teacher. During this conference, the parents will sign the Parental Notification of Academic Watch Status to acknowledge their awareness of the student's academic status.
2. The teacher and student will create an Action Plan designed for the student in an effort for the student to achieve/regain a more satisfactory performance status. The Action Plan may be modified and refined.
 - If a student's grade rises above 75, the student is released from Academic Watch.
 - If a student's grade falls below 70, the student is placed on Academic Probation.

ACADEMIC PROBATION - Any student who fails to maintain a grade average of 70 or above in a gifted education class shall continue receiving services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance. It consists of three components:

1. The gifted education teacher will arrange a face-to-face conference to include the parent, student, and teacher. During this conference, the parent will sign the Parental Notification of Academic Probation to acknowledge their awareness of the student's academic status.
2. The teacher and student will create an Action Plan designed for the student in an effort for the student to achieve/regain a more satisfactory performance status. The Action Plan may be modified and refined.
3. Probation Outcomes
 - a. Successful Completion- The student will return to "satisfactory performance" standing at the end of the following grading period if s/he has passed the gifted education class(es). The parent will receive written notification that the student has successfully completed their probationary period.
 - If the student earns a grade in the 70-75 range, the student will progress to Academic Watch status.
 - If a student's grade rises above 75, the student is released from Academic Watch/Probation.

- b. Withdrawal from the program- A student who does not pass the gifted education class during the probation period shall be removed from the gifted class and placed in a regular education classroom setting.
 - The school shall provide a final review during a parent conference before discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to perform satisfactorily in gifted education classes during probation. The parent will acknowledge their awareness of the withdrawal by signing the Notification of Termination of Gifted Education Services.
 - The GLT will explain the requirements for re-entry into Gifted services.
 - The students will continue to receive an annual review of services.

RE-ENTRY AFTER WITHDRAWAL - Re-entry is available at the parent's request under the following conditions:

- Re-entry may be considered only at the beginning of a school year.
- The student must have demonstrated satisfactory performance in all academic classes with a minimum of 90 average for two consecutive grading periods from withdrawal to requested re-entry.
- A student may re-enter without being retested if re-entry is requested and granted within two calendar years.

Middle School and High School

GRADES - Satisfactory performance is required for enrollment in the HCSD Gifted Program and for continued services in gifted education classes (English Language Arts, Accelerated or Honors Math, Science, Social Studies, and Advanced Placement).

- The student shall demonstrate satisfactory performance with a minimum of 76 average in each gifted education class throughout the semester grading period (nine-week grading checkpoints recommended).
- When a student earns a grade of 70-75 in a gifted/honors education class, then the student is placed on Academic Watch for that class.
- Any student failing to meet continuation criteria (below 70) shall be placed on probation for one grading period (nine-week grading checkpoints recommended) for that individual class.

ACADEMIC WATCH - Academic Watch is designed for students whose grade average is 70-75 in any gifted/honors class. It consists of two components:

1. The gifted education teacher will arrange a face-to-face conference to include the parent, student, and teacher. During this conference, the parents will sign the Parental Notification of Academic Watch Status to acknowledge their awareness of the student's academic status.
2. The teacher and student will create an Action Plan designed for the student in an effort for the student to achieve/regain a more satisfactory performance status. The Action Plan may be modified and refined.
 - If a student's grade rises above 75, the student is released from Academic Watch.

- If a student's grade falls below 70, the student is placed on Academic Probation.

ACADEMIC PROBATION - Any student who fails to maintain a grade average of 70 or above in a gifted education class shall continue receiving services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance. It consists of three components:

1. The gifted education teacher will arrange a face-to-face conference to include the parent, student, and teacher. During this conference, the parents will sign the Parental Notification of Academic Probation to acknowledge their awareness of the student's academic status.
2. The teacher and student will create an Action Plan designed for the student in an effort for the student to achieve/regain a more satisfactory performance status. The Action Plan may be modified and refined.
3. Probation Outcomes
 - a. Successful Completion - The student will return to "satisfactory performance" standing at the end of the following grading period if s/he has passed the gifted education class(es). The parent will receive written notification that the student has completed their probationary period.
 - If the student earns a grade in the 70-75 range, the student will progress to Academic Watch status.
 - If a student's grade rises above 75, the student is released from Academic Watch/Probation.
 - b. Withdrawal from the program - A student who does not pass the gifted education class during the probation period shall be removed from the gifted class and placed in a regular education classroom setting.
 - The school shall provide a final review during a parent conference before discontinuing gifted education services for students who fail to perform satisfactorily in gifted education classes during probation. The parents will acknowledge their awareness of the withdrawal by signing the Notification of Termination of Gifted Education Services.
 - The GLT will explain the requirements for re-entry into Gifted services.
 - The students will continue to receive an annual review of services.

RE-ENTRY AFTER WITHDRAWAL - Re-entry is available at the parent's request or satisfaction of the re-entry agreement under the following conditions:

- Re-entry may be considered only at the beginning of a school year.
- The student must have demonstrated satisfactory performance in all academic classes with a minimum of 90 average for two consecutive grading periods from withdrawal to requested re-entry.
- A student may re-enter without being retested if re-entry is requested and granted within two calendar years.

Annual Review -The HCSD shall review each student's progress in receiving gifted education services yearly. All gifted-identified students receive an Annual Review at the end of each academic year. Parents are asked to accept or decline services yearly.

Break in Gifted Services

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
- Parent requests based on student needs.

The general re-entry procedure is as follows:

- Re-entry may be considered only at the beginning of a school year.
- The student must have demonstrated satisfactory performance in all academic classes with a minimum of 90 average for two consecutive grading periods from withdrawal to requested re-entry.
- A student may re-enter without being retested if re-entry is requested and granted within two calendar years.

Transfer Students

Transfer Within Georgia (Reciprocity)

Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria in this rule for gifted education services in one Local Educational Agency (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. New-to-the-county students enrolled in a gifted program in Georgia will be placed in the HCSD Gifted Program upon written confirmation of eligibility.

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 unavailable, school personnel should contact the transferring district or school to obtain the student’s gifted education records before placing the student into the 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.

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Military Compact)

Though reciprocity exists within the state of Georgia, there is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of military personnel as provided in OCGA § 20-2-2140 et. seq.

INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

ARTICLE V. PLACEMENT AND ATTENDANCE

- A. Course placement--When the student transfers before or during the school year, the receiving state school shall initially honor placement of the student in educational courses based on the student's enrollment in the sending state school and/or educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state if the courses are offered. Course placement includes but is not limited to honors, international baccalaureate, advanced placement, vocational, technical, and career pathways courses. Continuing the student's academic program from the previous school and promoting placement in academically and career-challenging courses should be paramount when considering placement. This does not preclude the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and continued student enrollment in the course(s).

Transfer Outside of Georgia (Non-military)

There is no mandated reciprocity because individual states establish definitions of giftedness and eligibility criteria for gifted program placement. Non-military transfer students enrolled in a gifted/honors/AP program from another state will be evaluated for placement in a gifted classroom upon written confirmation of eligibility and records review. Additional testing may be needed for transferring students to comply with the state of Georgia as determined after a records review. A student may be placed conditionally in a gifted classroom as a non-gifted student until the gifted evaluation is complete if seats are available.

Gifted Program Testing Diagnosticians and the school Eligibility Team will examine student records for assessment data that is less than two years old. Scores nationally normed and current (within two years) may be accepted from a student's former school system as part of the gifted education evaluation process. If the assessment and results meet the criteria established in Georgia's eligibility rule, the scores may be used to (partially) qualify the student for Gifted Program placement. If not, then an additional evaluation may be needed to establish eligibility. The school's Eligibility Team and the county gifted testing diagnosticians will determine each student's Georgia eligibility requirements and make placement recommendations.

As per Georgia Law and the testing guidelines, students must have current testing scores that meet the requirements for option A (mental ability and achievement) or option B (three of four areas of testing: mental ability, achievement, creativity, motivation) to confirm gifted eligibility. Students must be evaluated using approved Georgia testing instruments to determine their gifted-qualified placement. All available testing data will be reviewed before formal evaluation.

High Ability/Achiever Students

The HCSD has elected to extend advanced content classrooms to students who are not identified as gifted but have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area. This program is referred to as GTE (GTE). As a general education student, the student is identified as a candidate for placement in the GTE program through their continued academic achievement,

motivation, and district-wide scoring rubric/screeners. Placement is based on various academic criteria and available enrollment slots per school and grade level. Enrollment in GTE classes for general education is an annual consideration by the school and by grade for all schools across the county for grades 1st through 12th.

GTE teachers utilize state standards, Programming Standards for Meeting the Needs of Gifted & High-Ability Learners, and the HCSD curriculum units of study. Additionally, teachers and students focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade using principles of differentiation. As per some of the most acceptable research in gifted education, teachers will enrich, enhance, and extend their students' learning experiences. They will inject and infuse gifted pedagogy and strategies from best practices of gifted education.

Placement in the GTE classroom comes with an enrollment commitment of an entire school year as long as the student remains in the same school. If a student transfers to another school within the calendar year, the student will be placed in a general education classroom and lose the GTE slot.

Placement in the GTE classroom is determined on an annual, available basis. Eligibility requirements will be reviewed yearly to determine placement for the following school year. GTE is not offered to students who are enrolled in a virtual environment. Parents can elect not to have their student placed in an advanced content classroom by notifying the school offering the GTE placement. As part of the GTE program, parents and students must understand the following:

- Placement in the GTE class is a full academic year commitment if the student remains in the same school. Students or Parents cannot "opt-out" during the school year once assigned to the class.
- Students can be moved to another grade-level class during the school year after being placed in the GTE classroom if the school determines their placement is not appropriate for their growth.
- If a student is withdrawn from the current school during the school year, their GTE slot will not be guaranteed at the receiving school.
- Students enrolled in the Houston Virtual Distance Learning Program will not be offered a GTE slot.
- Placement in the GTE classroom is determined yearly and based on slots available each school year and the student's prior year's district-wide scoring rubric, growth, and achievement.
- Students are not guaranteed placement in the GTE classroom for the next school year.

Resources

- (1) *Georgia DOE Response to Intervention: An overview of the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention*, which examines the use of RTI to identify and provide differentiated instruction for gifted learners and describes how gifted education fits into the Pyramid of Intervention (see pages 29, 50 & 51)
- (2) Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services (page 17)
<http://www.tiftschools.com/docs/GAGiftedResourceManual12-13.pdf>

- (3) How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms by Carol Ann Tomlinson
(4) Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services (page 41)

Gifted Education Organizations

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
<https://exceptionalchildren.org/>

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
<https://www.nagc.org>

Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC)
<https://gagc.org/>

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC)
<https://www.world-gifted.org/>

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