

# Resource Manual for Muscogee County School District Gifted Education

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## **Muscogee County School District**

### **Gifted Education**

#### **Creating Global Thinkers for a Global World**

Gifted children are an important resource for solving problems of the future and they have the potential to become leaders in society. It is the responsibility of this school system to provide a differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of gifted students. A rich and rigorous gifted curriculum will provide students the opportunity to reach their fullest potential and to satisfy their intellectual curiosity. Opportunities will be provided for gifted students to engage in meaningful research, to foster critical and creative thinking, and develop problem solving strategies. The Gifted Program will capitalize on students' unique abilities, talents, interests, and needs.

Students, grades kindergarten through twelve, in Muscogee County School District who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, academic, and/or creative ability are provided with special instructional services by the Program for Gifted Students. *Eligibility criteria for placement in this program are determined by the State Board of Education.* Referrals for consideration for eligibility for gifted services may be made by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. Referral packets can be found on the St. Elmo Center for the Gifted Website. For a summary of eligibility criteria or for further information about Muscogee County School District's Program for Gifted Students, please contact the Director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs, at St. Elmo Center for the Gifted, 2101 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Columbus, GA 31901, 706-748-3115.

#### **Professional Development**

Professional development is offered each year through the Muscogee County School District Professional Learning Department using Title IIA funding sources. In addition, funds are designated for teachers assigned to St. Elmo Center for the Gifted for professional development by attending the annual Georgia Gifted Association for Children Conference.

#### **Security**

All Gifted Education Teachers and clerical staff are expected to be thoroughly familiar with professional standards assessments which are available for review on the state website. They are responsible for managing and controlling all assessment materials used for gifted eligibility. All assessment materials are kept at St. Elmo Center for the Gifted and secured in a locked room. Copyrighted assessment protocols or answer documents cannot be shown to parents/guardians and can only be shared with other educators based upon professional need. In addition, Gifted Education Teachers are required to sign a letter of confidentiality at the beginning of each new school year.

Student scores cannot be communicated with anyone except a parent, legal guardian, or an educator whose professional role requires access to the information.

Note: **No** copyrighted tests, rating scale, or answer documents may be duplicated, altered, or divided.

### **Elementary Education Program Description**

Gifted students in the elementary school grades will be served using the **Resource Model** through St. Elmo Center for the Gifted for grades kindergarten through five. Students are served a minimum of once a week through a pull-out program. Individual elementary schools are assigned a specific day of the week that their gifted identified population is picked up at their home school and transported to St. Elmo Center for the Gifted for gifted program services. Students attending the center are excused from the class work and homework assigned in their regular classroom on the day they attend St. Elmo Center for the Gifted. The Resource Model implements integrated units where all subject areas are covered to serve all student's talents and strengths. Students will attend the gifted program following state regulations for a minimum of five segments.

#### **Resource Model – K-5**

1. All students must have been identified as gifted by GaBOE 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, pacing, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery should be differentiated to appropriately meet the needs for gifted students.
4. Gifted students may receive no more than 10 gifted FTE segments per week of resource class service.

Many of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards will be embedded and/or compacted and taught at an accelerated pace, along with the State Gifted Standards and Goals. Students will develop advanced research strategies and problem solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and become more proficient with communication skills. Creativity and logical problem solving will be addressed throughout all subject areas.

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### **Clubview Elementary School**

#### **Program Overview:**

The curriculum for Clubview Elementary School is anchored in the Georgia Standards of Excellence, but includes an inquiry-based model that allows individuals to grow their knowledge, talents, interests, confidence, abilities and global thinking. Clubview Elementary School gifted students will receive on-site gifted services provided by St Elmo resource teacher(s) assigned to the school.

Each student is supported in developing intrapersonal skills through a range of academic experiences that meet the needs of a variety of learning styles. However, realizing that meeting minimum competency in the GSE is not sufficient for gifted students, the curriculum has been differentiated to meet the needs of those students. The curriculum has been developed to provide both more rigor and complexity than is provided by the on grade level, standards-based curriculum.

Many of the Georgia Standards of Excellence will be embedded and/or compacted and taught at an accelerated pace, along with the State Gifted Standards and Goals. Students will develop advanced research strategies and problem solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and become more proficient with communication skills. Creativity and logical problem solving will be addressed throughout all subject areas.

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### **Hannan Academy Gifted Magnet:**

#### **Program Overview:**

The curriculum for the "Program for Gifted and High Achieving Students" is anchored in the Georgia Standards of Excellence. However, realizing that meeting minimum competency in the GSE is not sufficient for most gifted students, the curriculum has been differentiated to meet the needs of these students. The curriculum also meets the standards of the content area' National Standards Projects as well as the National Curriculum Standards for Gifted Education. The curriculum has been developed to provide both more rigor and complexity than is provided by the "regular" curriculum.

While teachers will use adopted textbooks as guides, supplementary units and resources have been selected that better meet interests and academic needs of talented learners. These resources are the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska, 2003) designed for gifted learners. The curriculum will incorporate math, reading, science, social studies, art, and technology through thematic units. All curriculum is based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence, as well as the Gifted Education Standards and Goals.

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#### **Protocol for Testing and Evaluating Kindergarten Students**

- Kindergarten students are tested, system-wide during the month of October with the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 2 (NNAT2). This test is used as an automatic referral for all kindergarten students. Students scoring the required 96%tile or higher will receive a letter inviting them for further gifted testing.
- Kindergarten students are required to meet the required 90%tile or higher in either/or both for Reading and Mathematics for the ITBS and the 96%tile on the NNAT2. Those students meeting these requirements will be individually contacted and a date set up for further testing for creativity (Torrance Test of Creativity (TTCT) and motivation (Student Interview/Rating Scale).

- Kindergarten students not meeting the required 96%tile on the NNAT2 need to be observed and monitored by their teacher for possible Teacher Referral to the Gifted Education Program.
- Teachers may refer a kindergarten student for the Gifted Education Program beginning in January of the current school year.
- The referral packets for both teachers and parents can be found on the St. Elmo Center for the Gifted website.
- The packet will need to be completed including: the referral form, samples of work and testing history including: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) and/or other approved assessments.

**Rationale:** Research suggests that some students are more than likely environmentally enriched and not necessarily gifted, just because they come to school reading. Kindergarten students have a hard time focusing and listen during testing due to their maturity level and short attention spans. Testing kindergarten students in October, rather than August, gives them a chance to mature and develop, which will help them to perform better on the standardized tests.

### **Elementary Continuation Criteria**

The Muscogee County School District Gifted Education Program requires that students meet the specific performance standards in meeting the continuation criteria.

#### **Academic**

1. Maintain a **satisfactory** status in gifted education core curriculum academic classes for each grading period. (reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science)
2. Maintain **satisfactory** performance in **gifted classes at St Elmo** classes for each grading period.

\*If the above criteria are not met, a team of teachers and/or administrators will meet to formulate an improvement plan and consider the following options:

1. 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.
2. 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.

\*Parents will be notified of all decisions and may request a conference with the gifted resource teacher.

After the probationary period, the student's performance during the probationary period will be evaluated. At that time the following options will be considered:

1. Termination/Withdrawal from St Elmo Center for Gifted program.
2. Continuation of probation.
3. Termination of probation status.

### **Middle School Program Description**

The primary gifted delivery model for gifted students in the middle school grades is the advanced content model in core content areas for grades six, seven, and eight. Students will attend their gifted classes five days a week in content areas designated as their gifted strength. Students will master the Georgia Standards of Excellence in language arts/literacy, mathematics, science and social studies at an accelerated pace, along with State Gifted Standards and Goals. Students will develop advanced research skills and problem solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and develop more advanced skills.

### **Additional Middle School Advanced Course Offerings Mathematics and Science**

The *MCSD Middle School Framework for Advanced Courses* is designed for the talented/gifted students of the Muscogee County School District, addressing specific needs for middle school students in mathematics and science. Course offerings, designed by the Muscogee County School District, may be scheduled to meet the requirements identified by the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students. The manual (attached) provides course descriptions and guidelines which include student criteria which must be met for enrollment into each of the specific courses. The course descriptions address the scope of needs from struggling students to the most talented.

- *Course Placement Criteria Guidelines* assist in the identification of the advanced middle school talented/gifted mathematics students. As middle school students select appropriate advanced mathematics courses for grades six through eight, future high school courses should be considered.
- The *Student Plan for Advanced Mathematics in Grades 6-12* (Student Plan) guides the selection of mathematics courses and includes the full scope of mathematics courses from grades six through twelve. The Student Plan is reviewed by students, teachers and parents and kept on file at the middle school.
- The *Student Plan for Advanced Science Options in Grades 6-12* (Student Plan) guides the selection of science courses and includes the full scope of mathematics courses from grades eight through twelve. The Student Plan is reviewed by students, teachers and parents and kept on file at the middle school.

The Advanced Mathematics and Science course curriculum may be applied to the classes scheduled for Advanced Content Class (6-12), Cluster Grouping (K-12), or Collaborative Teaching (6-12).

The Course Guidelines and Advanced/Gifted Mathematics and Science Curricula provide the specific strategies for emphasis on process skills, higher-order thinking skills, and student expectations in the course. The maximum size specified for gifted resource classes in State

Board Rule 160-5-1-.08 must be observed. Guided by the Muscogee County School District (MCSD) Vision Statement, the Division of Teaching and Learning seeks to provide learning environments which support and challenge the District’s mathematics students. Providing learning environments required to meet the varied needs of all mathematics students is a priority of the District. Unique courses are designed to assist the struggling student and provide challenges for the talented and gifted mathematics students. Specific middle school courses are created and offered for talented students in grades six through eight to include compacted curriculum and high school options in mathematics and science. These courses provide the foundation for more advanced courses in grades nine through twelve.

*Middle School Recommendation Forms* are communication tools used between the MCSD middle schools and the PreK-12 Curriculum and Instruction Department. Students enrolled into advanced middle school courses are listed with their specific course names. The Recommendation Forms are due each year by the end of August.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS COURSE NUMBERS

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade GSE Mathematics Courses

Long Course Title	Short Course Title	Course Number
Mathematics – Grade 6	Math 6	27.0210066
Advanced Mathematics 6	Adv Math 6	27.0210067
* (G) Advanced Mathematics 6	* (G) Adv Math 6	* 27.2210067
Pre-AP Mathematics Compacted 6/7	Pre-AP Math 6/7	27.0210069
* (G)Pre-AP Mathematics Compacted 6/7	* (G) Pre-AP Math 6/7	* 27.2210069

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade GSE Mathematics Courses

Long Course Title	Short Course Title	Course Number
Mathematics – Grade 7	Math 7	27.0220076
Advanced Mathematics 7	Adv Math 7	27.0220077
* (G) Advanced Mathematics 7	(G) Adv Math 7	* 27.2220077
Pre-AP Mathematics Compacted 7/8	Pre-AP Math 7/8	27.0220079
* (G) Pre-AP Mathematics Compacted 7/8	* (G) Pre-AP Math 7/8	* 27.2220079

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade GSE Mathematics Courses

Long Course Title	Short Course Title	Course Number
Mathematics – Grade 8	Math 8	27.0230086
Advanced Mathematics 8	Adv Math 8	27.0230087
* (G) Advanced Mathematics 8	* (G) Adv Math 8	* 27.2230087
GSE Algebra I	Algebra I	27.0990086
* (G) GSE Algebra I	* (G) Algebra I	* 27.2990086
Accelerated GSE Algebra I/Geometry A	Accel Algebra I/Geo A	27.0994086
* (G) Accelerated GSE Algebra I/Geometry A	* (G) Accel Algebra I / Geo A	* 27.2994086

- Notes specific numbers for classes meeting criteria set by GaDOE for Gifted course identification.
- The **(G) Mathematics Course** numbers identify the *Gifted* Mathematics Courses. Following the:
  - ◆ Advanced Mathematics Course **Guidelines**,
  - ◆ Selected Georgia Department of Education **Model** for Georgia’s Gifted Program, and necessary components for the Advanced Course to meet the full-time equivalent (FTE) gifted requirements.

**SCIENCE: ADVANCE PLACEMENT GUIDELINES AND OPTIONS**  
**(8<sup>th</sup> Grade ONLY)**

Eighth Grade Advanced Science Courses	Placement Criteria Guidelines
MCSD Middle School Course Descriptions	Requirements: Meets any of the 5
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Physical Science (on grade level)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GPS Standards: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade</li> <li>▪ Inquiry-Based Learning</li> <li>▪ Critical Thinking Skills application</li> <li>▪ CCGPS Science Literacy integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2015-2016 GMAS Score: Distinguished or proficient for science.</li> <li>▪ 2015-2016 GMAS Score: Distinguished or proficient for math.</li> <li>▪ Yearly Science Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: ≤ 89</li> <li>▪ Yearly Mathematics Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: ≤ 89</li> <li>▪ Teacher Recommendation</li> </ul>
<b><u>Advanced Placement</u></b>	Requirements: Meets 4 of 5
MCSD Middle School Course Descriptions:	
<b>GPS 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Physical Science (for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GPS Standards, 9<sup>th</sup> grade Physical Science</li> <li>▪ Inquiry-Based Learning</li> <li>▪ Critical Thinking Skills application</li> <li>▪ CCGPS Science Literacy integration</li> <li>▪ Students are planning enrollment in AP Physics in 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade</li> </ul> <p><i>* 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are identified by April 1<sup>st</sup> for possible enrollment. The tentative identification is based on mathematics and science course averages. Final identification is made with CRCT scores.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2015-2016 GMAS Score: Distinguished or <b>high</b> proficient for science.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2015-2016 GMAS Score: Distinguished or <b>high</b> proficient for math.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yearly Science Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 90-100</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yearly Mathematics Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 90-100</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Recommendation from <b>advanced content 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics</b> Course (example: Pre-AP Compacted 7/8 Mathematics. Advanced course identification does not apply.)</li> </ul>

Complete descriptions of each course are included in the attached document: *MCSD Middle School Framework for Advanced Courses*.

**Courses follow the GADOE rules for approved gifted deliver models:**

**Advanced Content Class (6-8)** -- Students are homogeneously grouped on the basis of achievement and interest in a specific academic content area. 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. In that case, the local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify students who will be successful with the advanced curriculum, CCGPS and GPS based curriculum, to be offered in these classes. (Identified gifted students may also be required to meet the specific achievement criteria.) Identified gifted students in the advanced content course may be counted at the gifted **weight during the current school year only if** (a) **the maximum class size specified by the Local School Board of Education is met**; (b) a description of the course curriculum (showing very clearly how the advanced course content, pacing, process skills emphasis, and expectation of student outcomes differ from the course more typical students at that grade level would take in that content area) is developed and maintained by the local board of education; and (c) the teacher has the following qualifications:

**International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses (Richards Middle School)** -- The teacher must have the appropriate content area certification. In addition, the teacher must (a) have been trained by the International Baccalaureate Program in that specific IB subject area and be state gifted endorsed to receive credit for IB and gifted.

**Cluster Grouping (6-8)** -- Identified gifted students are placed as a group (recommended 6-8, maximum 12 students) into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom, rather than being dispersed among all of the rooms/courses at that grade level.

1. The regular classroom teacher must have a current GaPSC approved gifted endorsement.

2. **A maximum of two gifted FTE segments per day** may be counted at the gifted weight. The teacher must document the curriculum modifications made for the gifted student(s) by completing individual or group contracts which include the following requirements:

a. A description of the course curriculum which is based on Georgia standards that very clearly show how the advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills and assessments differ from courses more typical for student(s) at that grade level.

b. Separate lesson plans which show reason(s) why the gifted student(s) needs an advanced curriculum in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages;

c. Dates and amount of time (in segments) the student(s) will be engaged in the higher-level activities; and

d. The means by which the gifted student or student's learning will be evaluated (e.g., formative and summative assessments).

**Collaborative Teaching (6-8)** -- A maximum of eight identified gifted students are placed as a group into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom. Direct instruction is provided by the students' regular classroom teacher who collaborates with a designated gifted teacher. There must be substantial, regularly scheduled collaborative planning between the regular classroom teacher and the gifted teacher. The following requirements must be met to earn at the gifted FTE weight:

1. The collaborating gifted teacher must have a clear renewable GaPSC approved gifted education endorsement.
2. The gifted teacher, the regular classroom teacher, and the gifted student(s) (when appropriate) collaborate and document the development of differentiated instructional strategies, Georgia standards based curriculum, and evaluations practices.
3. The collaborating regular classroom teacher and gifted teacher must be provided adequate planning time which must be documented and approved by the LEA.
4. The gifted education teacher must be given one full period each day or its weekly equivalent during which he/she has only gifted education collaborative planning responsibilities (as determined by the local system) for every three classes in which he/she has collaborative teaching responsibilities.
5. **The total number of gifted students whose instruction may be modified through this collaborative approach may not exceed eight per class.** For example, if the gifted program teacher is working with three classroom teachers during the first period of the school day, there may be no more than 24 gifted students (for whom curriculum is being differentiated divided among the three classes).
6. Instructional segments (8 segments per class, 3 classes plus one gifted endorsed teacher) that have been modified for gifted learners may be counted at the gifted FTE weight if the gifted education teacher, and regular education teacher document the curriculum modifications made for the gifted students in the following way:
  - a. separate lesson plans which show the reason(s) why any student whose instruction is counted at the gifted FTE weight needs an advanced curriculum in that particular content area (e.g., National norm reference tests and/or benchmark tests,);
  - b. a time and discussion log of the collaborative planning sessions between the teachers
  - c. individual or small group contracts indicating the differentiated learning standards for the gifted student(s) and the alternative instructional strategies in which the gifted student(s) will be engaged.

## **Middle School Continuation Criteria**

The Muscogee County School District Gifted Education Program requires that students meet the following performance standards for each grade level, within their gifted education classes, for continuation criteria for in the Gifted Program.

### **Academic**

1. Maintain satisfactory status in gifted education core curriculum academic classes for each grading period. (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science).
2. Maintain a grade of 85 in gifted education classes.

\*If the above criteria are not met, a team of teachers and/or administrators will need to meet with the student to formulate an improvement plan and to consider the following options:

1. A probationary period during which the student will continue to participate in gifted education class.

\* Parents will be notified of all decisions and may request a conference with the gifted education middle school teacher.

After the probationary period, the student's performance during the probationary period will be evaluated and discussed with the student. At that time the following options will be considered:

1. Termination/Withdrawal from Gifted Education program.
2. Continuation of probation.
3. Termination of probation status.

## **High School Program Description**

Gifted students in the high school grades will be served for gifted through the Advanced Content model in the Advanced Placement (AP) and honors program classes. Students will attend their classes on a block schedule and will be served a minimum of 5 segments per week.

Students will master the Georgia Standards of Excellence (mathematics and ELA), State Gifted Standards and Goals for Gifted Education in the subject areas of their gifted classes. Students will develop advanced research skills and problem solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and become more proficient with their communication skills.

**Advanced Content Class (9-12)** -- Students are homogeneously grouped on the basis of achievement and interest in a specific academic content area. 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. In that case, the local district must establish criteria and guidelines that identify students who will be successful with the advanced curriculum to be offered in these classes. (Identified gifted students may also be required to meet the specific achievement criteria.) Identified gifted students in the advanced content course may be counted at the gifted **weight during the current school**

**year only if (a) the maximum class size specified by the Local School Board of Education is met;** (b) a description of the course curriculum (showing very clearly how the advanced course content, pacing, process skills emphasis, and expectation of student outcomes differ from the course more typical students at that grade level would take in that content area) is developed and maintained by the local board of education; and (c) the teacher has the following qualifications:

1. Advanced Placement (AP) Courses – The teacher must have:
  - a. Appropriate content area GaPSC approved certification in the specific content area.
  - b. Appropriate training by the College Board in that specific AP course and must have completed a 10 clock hour professional development course in characteristics of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted students; or
  - c. The teacher has a current GaPSC issued gifted endorsement.
  
2. International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses (Hardaway High School) -- The teacher must have:
  - a. Appropriate content area GaPSC approved certification in the specific content area.
  - b. Appropriate authorized training by the IBO in the specific IB diploma course, and must have completed a 10 clock hour professional development course in characteristics of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted students; or
  - c. The teacher has a current GaPSC issued gifted endorsement.
  
3. Honors Courses -- The teacher of a locally developed honors course curriculum:
  - a. The teacher must have the appropriate content area Georgia Professional Standards Commission approved certificate in the specific honors course.
  - b. The teacher has a current GaPSC issued gifted endorsement.Students will also be eligible to participate in areas of interest and strengths in the Academic Decathlon and Enrichment Intersessions.

### **High School Continuation Criteria**

The Muscogee County School District Gifted Education Program requires that students adhere to the following adopted continuation criteria:

Maintain an overall average of 85 or above in gifted education classes including advanced content and cluster group classes Advanced Placement (AP) classes and Honors Program classes (HP).

\* If the above criteria are not met, a team of teachers and/or administrators will meet with student to formulate an improvement plan and to consider the following options:

1. A probationary period during which the student will continue to participate in Gifted Program classes.

\* Parents will be notified of all decisions and may request a conference with the gifted education teacher.

After the probationary period, the student's performance during the probationary period will be evaluated. At that time the following options will be considered:

1. Termination/Withdrawal from Gifted Education program.
2. Continuation of probation.
3. Termination of probation status.

### **Testing Criteria:**

As described in Rule 160-4-2-.38, students in kindergarten through grade twelve in Muscogee County School District must meet eligibility criteria in at least three of the four criteria.

All students who are referred are assessed in each of the four criteria:

1. Mental Ability
2. Achievement
3. Creativity
4. Motivation

Data is collected in each of the four areas, documented on an Eligibility Form, and reviewed by an Eligibility Committee to determine final Eligibility.

Muscogee County School District is nondiscriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, or economic background in regards to testing and evaluating students in their gifted education program.

### **Reciprocity**

Any student who meets the Georgia eligibility criteria for gifted education services shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any school system within the state. However, a student transferring from one school system to another within the state shall meet the criteria for continuation of gifted services established by the local board of education of the receiving school system. *There is no mandated reciprocity between states*; however, the school system should immediately take steps to see that the advanced learning needs of a student transferring to their system are being met while the Georgia Gifted Eligibility is completed. During its 2009 session, the Georgia General Assembly enacted several laws relating to the education of children of military families that impact the gifted education reciprocity of students whose households include a member of the United States uniform services. The goal of the legislation is to maximize a student's educational continuity despite the frequent movement across states and school districts. These laws are codified at O.C.G.A. 20-2-2140 through 20\_2-2180. Eligible students are school-aged children whose household includes at least one of the following:

1. An active duty member of the uniformed services.
2. A member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged.

3. A member of the uniformed services that died on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty.

Nothing in this Code section shall preclude the school in the receiving state from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student.

*Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or school system must be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process. However, these outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process and may never be the sole source of assessment data.* Systems shall never rely on them exclusively for determination of eligibility for gifted program services. Instead, outside test data may be used as part of a comprehensive profile of test and non-test evidence of advanced instructional needs. If any system elects to use outside test data to help establish students' eligibility, the local board of education shall collect and maintain statistical data that will allow the Department of Education to evaluate the impact of this practice on the identification of gifted students from all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

Local school systems shall obtain written consent for testing from parents or guardians of students who are being considered for gifted education services. Written consent from parents or guardians is also necessary before students determined to be eligible for gifted education services can receive these services.

## **Mental Ability**

Students must achieve a score at or above the 96% national age percentile on a standardized mental ability test on either a composite or an appropriate component score.

Muscogee County School District administers the following mental ability tests:

- Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT) - Administer this test first to students. Use verbal, quantitative, nonverbal and/or total score.
  - The CogAT is administered, system-wide, to all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders during October of the current school year. These scores are used for automatic referral for gifted education eligibility.

## **What is the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)?**

The CogAT is a group-administered mental ability test, typically referred to as an IQ test. The test has three batteries: *Verbal*, *Quantitative*, and *Nonverbal*. The *Verbal Battery* appraises the child's verbal inductive and deductive reasoning skills as well as flexibility, fluency, and adaptability in working with verbal materials and solving verbal problems. The *Quantitative Battery* appraises high-level problem solving with quantitative symbols and concepts. The *Nonverbal Battery* appraises general inductive reasoning skills in using and adapting cognitive strategies. This battery contains the most novel problems

and uses only geometric shapes and figures. The battery requires no reading and no outside fund of knowledge.

The CogAT is typically administered to the K-5 student over three days. Each testing session takes approximately one hour. The resulting score for each battery is reported as a national percentile ranking in the Mental Ability section on the Data Collection Instrument. The national percentile ranking allows you to compare your child's results to others of the same age across the nation. The typical child will score around the 50% while a 96% is a qualifying score for the mental ability category.

- Naglieri's Nonverbal Ability Test 2 (NNAT2)\* - Use only a total score. Beneficial for ESOL, ELL, and minority students. Use this as a second test for students that demonstrate strength in quantitative and/or nonverbal domains.
  - As an automatic referral screener, the NNAT2 is administered, system-wide, to all kindergarten students in September of the current school year.

### **What is the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 2 (NNAT2)\*?**

The NNAT2 is mental ability test that only measures nonverbal abilities. It is similar to, but more in-depth, than the Nonverbal battery of the CogAT. It consists of four sub-tests that require students to complete patterns, sequences, and analogies as well as combine two or more geometric designs. The battery requires no reading and no outside fund of knowledge.

The NNAT2 is administered in one 45-minute session. The resulting score is reported as a national percentile ranking to parents in the Mental Ability section on the Data Collection Instrument. The 96% is the qualifying score.

*\*NNAT 2 will be phased into NNAT 3 on January 9, 2017*

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## **Achievement**

Students must achieve a score at or above the 90th national grade percentile on the core total, total mathematics and/or total reading score of a standardized achievement test that meets criteria outlined in assessment instrument eligibility.

Muscogee County School District administers the following achievement test:

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - Use total reading, total math and/or total composite score.
  - The ITBS is administered, to all kindergarten-third grade students system-wide in September of the current school year.

- The ITBS is the primary testing instrument used in meeting the criteria for achievement.
- Students in grades 8 and 9 are given the PSAT test

### **What is the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)?**

The ITBS is a nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement testing (NRT) series developed by Riverside Publishing. It is a NRT because it compares students' abilities rather than to a criteria. Thus, the ITBS allows educators to get a look at the performance of their students in relation to the rest of the nation. A NRT is designed to highlight achievement differences between and among students.

The ITBS measures the skills and achievement of students from kindergarten through grade eight and provides an in-depth measure of important educational objectives. It also yields reliable and comprehensive information both about the development of students' skills and about their ability to think critically. It measures students against their peers. Test subjects in the ITBS are in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. The percentile scores that may be used to determine gifted eligibility are Reading Total, Math Total, or Complete Battery. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is the qualifying score.

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### **Creativity**

Students may be assessed using any of the following measures:

- Students must receive a score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale. \* *If a rating scale is used to determine creativity, a rating scale may not be used for motivation.*

Students must achieve a score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> national age percentile on the total battery of a standardized test of creativity that meets criteria of creativity instruments.

Muscogee County School District administers the following tests for creativity:

- Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) - Use only for ages 6 and up. Use Age norms, not grade level norms. This is also an appropriate test for ELL students.

### **What is the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)?**

The TTCT requires responses that are mainly drawing or pictorial in nature. However, it does not measure artistic talent nor is artistic talent required to do well on the instrument. The TTCT requires students to use their imagination, solve problems, think of new ideas, and elaborate on their ideas.

The TTCT is administered in one 30 minute (actual testing time) session. The resulting score is reported as a national percentile ranking to parents in the Creativity section of the data collection instrument. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is the qualifying score.

- Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (SAGES) - Use only for ages 7 to 12. Must administer test to an individual not a group. *This is a secondary test to use only when students demonstrate a need.*
- Product Portfolio - Portfolios may be used for evidence of exceptional creativity or motivation, when a student has met the criteria in two of the other areas of identification. Panel members must be provided training in the scoring or product portfolios. Scoring rubrics are provided with detailed descriptions of various levels of performance. *This is a secondary test to use only when students demonstrate a need.*
  - Student portfolios are collections of artifacts (8 to 10) that represent **independent work** on projects/performances that extend and/or enrich learning.
  - A variety of materials should be included that address the characteristics of the specific target area.
  - Original paperwork must be kept with the students gifted eligibility file.
  - Work gathered should be labeled and dated.
  - Work completed within the previous two years may be included.
  - Unfinished work may be included, but should be labeled as such.
  - If an art project is submitted, the student is to write an explanation to go along with the project explaining why it is included in the portfolio.
  - Worksheets, workbook pages, and copies of tests will not indicate a gifted level of ability and should not be included in the portfolio.
  - Product/Performance Portfolios are evaluated by 3 individuals considered as experts in the area of the portfolio.
    - Each evaluation is done independently.
    - Evaluators are not privileged to each other's rubric assessments.
    - A specific rubric is used in assessing Product/Performance Portfolios.
    - Rubrics are totaled and averaged. 90% is required to meet the criteria for Creativity.

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## Motivation

Students may be assessed using any of the following measures:

- Students in grades 6 to 12 must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 on a scale of 4.0, or numerical average of 85 or higher in the subjects of math, science, English/language arts, social studies, and a full-year world language, over the previous two years.
- Students shall receive a rating at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized motivational characteristic rating scale which relates to the construct of motivation.
- Students shall receive a rating at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a Product Performance Portfolio which relates to the construct of motivation.

- Students in grades K-2 must receive a rating at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a normed student interview.

*\* If a rating scale is used to determine motivation, a rating scale may not be used for creativity.*

### **Why is my child only being recommended for some instruments and not all of them?**

The Gifted Eligibility Team will use only one instrument for each category: Mental Ability, Creativity, Achievement, and Motivation. Based upon previous testing experiences and/or classroom performance, some children may already have information in their permanent record that can be used in one or more categories. Children will not be tested unnecessarily. The Gifted Eligibility Team has more than one option of instruments for some categories. The team will use all pertinent data about the student to select the best instrument at this time. The team will not exhaust all of its options in each category during this referral process. If a child is found ineligible now, he or she needs additional time to mature before being referred again for gifted identification testing.

### **Referral Process**

A student may be referred for consideration for gifted educational services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.

The following information must be provided by the person completing the referral and given in its entirety to the gifted education teacher for submission to the Referral Committee:

1. Completed Referral Form including complete biographical information.
2. Photocopies of standardized testing history and most recent report card for grades 6-12 ONLY (last two years completed).
3. Observations (five weeks) of the student using gifted behavior rating scales completed by the classroom teacher (Use Teacher Referral Form and/or Teacher Rating Scale). In addition, parents are requested to complete a different checklist rating observed characteristics.

### **Automatic Referral Process**

Muscogee County School District test students, system-wide, in grades Kindergarten (NNAT2) and 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade (PSAT). Test results are used for automatic referral for possible gifted eligibility.

The automatic referral process is an opportunity to consider potentially eligible students who might not otherwise be nominated and serves as an active child-find strategy. This procedure is an important step in ensuring equal access to gifted programs and in broadening the range of child-find or student talent search activities. The criterion score chosen for the automatic nomination procedures has no effect on the acceptance of reported referrals, which may continue

to be made. A student may be nominated “automatically” for gifted formal evaluation by the following criteria:

- 90%tile in Reading Total, Math Total and/or Core Total on State ITBS.
- 90%tile on any nationally normed achievement test in any grades within two current years in Reading, Math, and or total composite.
- 90% percentile on PSAT Reading and/or Math
- 96%tile total composite score on any nationally normed cognitive abilities test within two current years and 99%tile for total composite score for grades K-2 (If using multiple criteria- grades K-2 only needs 96%tile on total composite score).

*Tests that are not nationally normed may be used in the child-find process, but may not be used for eligibility or automatic nomination process.*

The DRA test is another screening tool that can be utilized in the child-find process. The scores from these tests may be used in conjunction with other data that is gathered to determine if a student should be nominated for gifted testing.

The Referral/Eligibility Committee shall meet monthly for referrals, to review the needs of students who have been nominated.

Completed profiles of students may be submitted throughout the current school year in order for the nomination to be considered for referral for gifted testing. Considerations made for 1<sup>st</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades shall be for placement during the current school year, while considerations made for kindergarten students shall be for placement beginning January of the current school year. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Nomination Committee and Gifted Coordinator.

Once the Nomination Procedure is complete, the Nomination Committee will review a profile of the student through observational data, existing performance data, and/or standardized testing history to determine appropriate action based on evidence. The Nomination Committee will recommend one of the following three options on the Nomination Form:

- **Referred for Evaluation (Consent to Evaluate)**  
The student may be referred for formal evaluation. This decision is appropriate when the committee believes that collected information about the student shows a special need and warrants continuation of the referral process. The Gifted Education Program must receive parent consent to begin the formal evaluation. After consent is obtained, the formal evaluation will begin.
- **Incomplete Information- more information will be needed (More information Notice)**  
When the committee deems that collected information is insufficient to make a decision concerning formal evaluation, the committee may request that the nominating person supply a further piece of specific data. Examples of insufficient information include no testing history data, no recent report card, and/or no work sample.

- **Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Notices**

The Gifted Education Program will notify the parents in writing whether or not their child meet the required criteria for Georgia Gifted Eligibility Services.

St. Elmo Center for the Gifted collects and maintains 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. Data is kept by grade level, gender, and ethnic group of the students.

### **Discontinuation of Gifted Services**

**Discontinuation due to performance:** A student's progress and performance during probation will determine if gifted service is discontinued. For middle school discontinuation of service occurs only when a student no longer demonstrates a need for **any** advanced content classes. There **must be documented evidence** of an implemented intervention plan for each Advanced Content class where service was provided.

**High School Only:** Gifted students not receiving gifted services through AP, Honors, or gifted resource class for more than two consecutive semesters must be discontinued from service.

**Voluntary discontinuation:** A parent may request a student be removed from gifted service at any time by providing written notification.

Gifted service must be discontinued for a minimum of 18weeks before reconsideration of service can occur. To discontinue service, the Gifted Education Specialist should follow these procedures:

1. Complete the Discontinuation of Service Form
2. Attach a copy of the Record of Intervention and Support Form to the Discontinuation of Service Form and send a copy to the Department for Gifted Education, St. Elmo Center for the Gifted.
3. Change student status on Infinite Campus.

**Note:** For state reporting accuracy, it is important that the Data Entry Clerk make proper coding changes whenever services are discontinued.

### **Re-Entry**

All re-entry decisions are based on demonstrated need as determined by student performance during the break in services. All re-entry decisions are made by the Eligibility Committee (district level). **Local schools may not schedule a student for gifted services until confirmation is received from district level.**

- When a student has been removed from gifted service due to academic performance or parent request, the student may not re-enter for a minimum of 18 weeks.

- When a break in service occurs due to change in enrollment status (i.e.: residence, private school, etc.), the student may be considered for re-entry immediately upon enrollment in Muscogee County School District.

### **To re-enter a student**

1. Complete the Gifted Program Re-Entry Form, to obtain parent signature.
2. Send form and documentation to the district level office (St Elmo Center for Gifted).
3. The District-level Eligibility Committee will review previous student records to determine re-activation status for continuation of services. If the committee approves the re-entry, the parent will be notified and sent the Parent Consent to Serve form to initiate provision of gifted services and student is flagged as gifted in Infinite Campus. Schools will be notified of change in status so student can be scheduled for gifted instruction.

### **Intervention and Support**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process used to provide students with additional academic and/or behavioral support required to close gaps in skills or knowledge. Gifted students are on Tier 4 of RTI based on their need for specialized instruction to prepare them for future success. Gifted students who experience difficulty require interventions and support to ensure success. The Record of Intervention and Support is used to document the assistance given to these students in lieu of County General Education RTI Forms. At the elementary level, the general education teacher of a gifted student may use the gifted Record of Intervention and Support form to document interventions.

### **Intervention Guidelines**

The purpose of the intervention process is to improve a student's academic performance. With the district's implementation of GSE, grades should reflect content mastery. Although work study habits and/or behavior may impact a student's academic performance, these factors should not be the primary cause for placing a student on probation not the primary focus of the intervention plan. Assessments and, therefore, grades should reflect a student's mastery of content performance standards.

A quality intervention plan should include two elements central to producing improved student performance:

- Individualization of strategies based on a need of a student and building upon student's identified strengths.
- Instructional strategies/interventions focused on mastery of content.

### **Twice-Exceptional Students**

Students that have been identified as both Special Education and Gifted are classified as twice-exceptional. A gifted student who has a 504 plan is also classified as twice-exceptional.

**Gifted Program Assessment and Eligibility Criteria**

<b>Mental Ability</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
<b>Standardized Test of Mental Ability:</b> Full scale or appropriate component score $\geq$ the 96th percentile (by age)	<b>Standardized Test of Academic Achievement:</b> Score $\geq$ the 90th percentile (by age or grade) on -- Total Reading, or Total Math, or Total Battery  <b>OR</b>  <b>Superior Student-generated Product or Performance:</b> Score $\geq$ 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators	<b>Standardized Test of Creative Thinking:</b> Score $\geq$ the 90th percentile (by age or grade) on the Total Battery  <b>OR</b>  <b>Standardized Creativity Characteristics Rating Scale:</b> Score $\geq$ the 90th percentile  <b>OR</b>  <b>Superior Student-generated Product or Performance:</b> Score $\geq$ 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators	NGA/GPA (as defined in Rule and Regulation) on a 4.0 scale for grades 6-12 only  <b>OR</b>  <b>Standardized Motivational Characteristics Rating Scale:</b> Score $\geq$ the 90th percentile  <b>OR</b>  <b>Superior Student-generated Product or Performance:</b> Score $\geq$ 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators

Information shall be gathered in each of the four data categories. At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a nationally normed standardized test. Any data used in one category to establish a student's eligibility may not be used in any other category. Assessment data must be current within two years.