

TISHOMINGO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Intellectually Gifted Education Program

Referral to Placement Guide

Grades 2-8

From Regulations for Gifted Education Programs 2013



Cliff Nunley, Gifted Coordinator
Teresa Lomenick, Gifted Contact Person

Teachers of the Gifted:

Brenda Horn, Belmont Elementary and Middle Schools
Taylor Glidewell, Burnsville Elementary and Middle Schools
Melissa Henderson, Iuka Elementary School
Brittany Osborn, Iuka Middle School
Lisa Hardin, Tishomingo Elementary and Middle Schools
2022-2023

PURPOSE

The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, as amended in 1993, mandates that each public school district within the state provide gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6.

Intellectually gifted children shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process. The needs of these students should be addressed based on the program options provided in the Outcomes for Intellectually Gifted Education Programs Grades 2-8 in Mississippi.

Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi 2013 ensure that gifted children who demonstrate unusually high potential are identified and offered an appropriate education based upon their exceptional abilities. Because of their unusual capabilities, they require uniquely, qualitatively different educational experiences not available in the regular classroom. These uniquely different programs are required to enable gifted students to realize their abilities and potential contributions to self and society.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES

The student identification processes are separated into six stages: referral, Local Survey Committee (LSC) review of referral data, parental permission for testing, assessment, assessment report, and the LSC eligibility determination stage.

The identification process shall consist of subjective and objective measures. A multi-factored identification process ensures a fair evaluation of each student.

The identification process shall provide an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students with an emerging potential for gifted—students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under IDEA guidelines, physically handicapped, ADD/ADHD, as well as students who exhibit classroom behavior such as extreme shyness, short attention spans, disruptiveness, continual questioning, and anxiety.

Each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement. Hence, a student moving to Mississippi with gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy Mississippi eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi. There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the local district. Students who have a valid Mississippi gifted eligibility ruling do not have to be reevaluated.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects all data collected as part of the identification process. Parents must be notified of their rights under FERPA. Once the referral process begins, parents must be informed of the information/data that is collected. Parents shall have access to these records.

LOCAL SURVEY COMMITTEE (LSC)

Each district shall establish a Local Survey Committee (LSC) for the GEP. The LSC shall be involved in determining a student's eligibility for an intellectually gifted program. The LSC shall include, but is not limited to, gifted education teachers and administrators. It may include regular education teachers, school psychologists or psychometrists, and parents. It should include a special education teacher when a student is being considered for eligibility under the twice-exceptional criteria.

IDENTIFICATION OF INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

Throughout the identification process, district personnel shall be careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

STAGE 1: REFERRAL

There are two types of gifted referral processes:

- Type One – Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
- Type Two – Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility.

Mass Screening Referral Process

This process requires all Mississippi districts to screen all students in at least one grade level each year. Districts should use a normed group measure of intelligence in the Mass Screening Referral Process. This process should assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations. Students who obtain a full-scale score at or above the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall move forward in the referral process. Students who scored at or above the 85th percentile but lower than the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall be subjected to Emerging Potential for Gifted Referral Checklist. If these students meet the criteria on the checklist, they shall move forward in the referral process.

The next step in the process will consist of the collection of substantiated student data obtained through the use of other objective and subjective measures. District personnel shall make decisions as to which measures will be used during this step of the Mass Screening Referral Process. A student shall satisfy two of the following additional criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. A score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist
2. A score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity
3. A score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership
4. A score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test
5. A score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability

6. A score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months

7. Other measures that are documented in the research on the identification of intellectually gifted students

Individual Referral Process

This process involves students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility. A parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted may refer a student. The person initiating the referral shall sign the referral form and date it. Once the student is referred, the district personnel shall collect the data required to satisfy the referral criteria. Once a referral form has been initiated, signed, and dated, only the LSC or parents can stop the identification process. Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy three of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

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

Documentation of measures shall be maintained in a written document approved by the local school board indicating that the district is using the state minimal scale/percentile score criteria on all referral measures. This document shall be distributed to district administrators, school counselors, and teachers and shall be available to parents at each school site.

NOTE: Any student who does not meet the minimum acceptable criteria (score in the 90th percentile) on the normed group measure of intelligence during the Mass Screening Referral Process and does not qualify for the Emerging Potential for Gifted criteria can be referred by anyone for the Individual Referral for Screening Process. The individually referred student shall not be excluded from the referral process by their performance on the normed group measure of intelligence administered during the Mass Screening Referral Process.

STAGE 2: LSC REVIEW OF REFERRAL DATA

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

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

Provisions for Emerging Potential for Gifted Populations

At this point, the LSC shall make the decision as to the possibility that the student could be eligible for consideration as a candidate for an emerging potential for gifted assessment. If it is believed that the student might have emerging gifted potential, then the Emerging Potential for Intellectually Gifted Assessment checklist should be completed for possible use during the assessment process. The Emerging Potential for Gifted category makes provisions for certain factors that exist that may put the student at a disadvantage when inappropriate instruments are used during the assessment process.

STAGE 3: PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING

At this time, district personnel shall obtain written parental permission for testing. District personnel shall also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT

Once the LSC has determined that a student has satisfied minimal referral criteria in order to move forward to the assessment stage, district personnel shall review and compile all data available on the student. This data shall also be made available to a licensed examiner.

The assessment stage is the individual test of intelligence, which shall be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner shall review all available data on the student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use that information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures should be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner's manuals. The examiner shall provide a signed and dated report of the test administration to include testing conditions, scores on all subtests or subscales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the student. A student must score at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

District personnel shall make decisions as to whether the minimal acceptable criteria set in regulations will be used, or if higher minimal acceptable criteria will be used. The assessment criteria and acceptable minimal scale/percentile scores to be used shall be documented in writing in the district's Gifted Education Program Proposal submitted to and approved by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

If a district decides to raise its minimal acceptable scale/percentile score for gifted eligibility above the state minimum scale/percentile score, justification shall be provided to the MDE in writing. Included in the justification must be documentation that the district continuously addresses the Emerging Potential for Gifted guidelines as outlined in the regulations.

Emerging Potential for Gifted

Students who have satisfied criteria on the Emerging Potential for Gifted Checklist who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but, did score at least at the 84th percentile or have a scale score that falls within the range of the 90th percentile confidence interval of the state minimum scale/percentile score, may be administered one of the following additional measures to determine eligibility:

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

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

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students

Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria but did meet at least one referral criterion shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence (composite score or approved subtest score) or in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

STAGE 5: ASSESSMENT REPORT

District personnel shall write an Assessment Report, which must contain the following components:

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

STAGE 6: LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program. In the GEP of Tishomingo County if a student does not qualify, he/she may be re-tested one time, but not in the same school year as the initial testing occurred.

Parent Notification

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

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR PLACEMENT

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

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT

A committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the gifted program. The committee must include at least the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative. Documentation of the meeting must be maintained and must include the name(s) of the student(s) discussed, a list of the committee members present, and the date of the meeting. Since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under law (Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181), students should remain in the gifted program as long as they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular education program is the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program. Should the committee determine that a student should exit the program due to lack of progress in the program and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents must be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program the local district shall grant the parents a hearing. Each local school district should have a policy in place as to how this hearing will be conducted and how the lack of agreement will be resolved (page 148-149 of Tishomingo County's School Board Policy).

MISSION/VISION/PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The mission of Tishomingo County Schools' Gifted Education Program is to identify and serve the intellectually gifted student. By participating in the GEP, students will develop individual talents both educationally and emotionally through a qualitatively differentiated curriculum in a safe environment.

The vision of Tishomingo County Schools' Gifted Education Program is to diligently work to see that giftedness and high potential are fully recognized, valued, and nurtured and to support children from all backgrounds in reaching their personal best, ever contributing to others and their community.

To achieve our mission and vision Tishomingo County School's Gifted Education Program is committed to ensuring gifted children are identified, served in classrooms providing uniquely qualitatively different educational experiences, and nurtured to realized their abilities and potential contributions to self and society.

INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED PROGRAMMING (GRADES 2-8)

A group of all intellectually gifted students is provided services by a properly endorsed teacher in a self-contained room for a recommended 300 minutes per week, or a minimum of 240 minutes per week. The activities in the gifted class should develop and enhance the process skills in the outcomes document, the teaching strategies notebook, and required components of the gifted program standards document. Some of the activities should be short-term exploratory activities that introduce students to ideas and concepts not normally covered in the regular education program. The activities should enhance the integration of advanced content and individual student's interests utilizing higher-level thinking skills, creative problem solving, critical thinking skills, research skills, personal growth and human relations exercises, leadership skills, and creative expression. Activities should also create an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

Gifted students in grades 2-8 may not be required to make-up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. It should be noted that some gifted students will not be high academic achievers for a variety of reasons. It is not reasonable to expect intellectually gifted students by virtue of having been granted gifted eligibility ruling to make all A's and B's.

PROGRESS REPORTING

Parents of students participating in the Intellectually Gifted Education Program will receive a progress report at the District scheduled report card time.

OUTCOMES FOR TISHOMINGO COUNTY SCHOOLS' GEP

In compliance with the State of Mississippi's Gifted Program, the Tishomingo County Schools offer the following Outcomes for the gifted student: Thinking Skills, Communication, Creativity, Information Literacy, Success Skills, and Affective Skills.

TCSD's GEP

Tishomingo County Schools' Gifted Education Program is called "GEMS," which is an acronym for Great Expectations Mean Success. The motto is, "Be the Best of Whatever You Are," from a poem by Douglas Malloch.