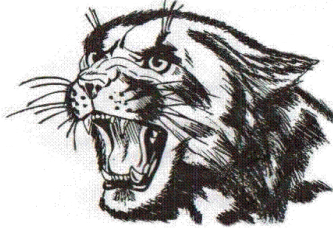


**WILDCAT PRIDE**



EDUCATING EVERY CHILD FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

**Rabun County**  
**Program for Gifted Students**  
**Administrative Procedures Manual**  
**2018-2019**

**Revised 04/23/18**

*We Will Educate Every Child For Success In Life*

## **Philosophy of the Rabun County Gifted Education Program**

The Rabun County School System is committed to providing its highly talented and gifted students with an education that both fosters and promotes their potential and abilities. This education shall provide for a differentiated curriculum where the content, instructional strategies and expectations of mastery are appropriate for the student.

The Rabun County School System recognizes that highly talented and gifted students may be identified among all ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and is committed to the use of multiple criteria for their early identification.

### **Gifted Education Program State Regulations**

There are three (3) documents that provide the authority and the specific requirements for gifted education in the state of Georgia. They are found in state law, State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule, and SBOE-approved Regulations.

The Georgia Department of Education requires that the Local Board of Education shall make a copy of its administrative procedures for the operation of its gifted education program and the LEA's gifted education curricula available for review by the public and the GaDOE.

## **Student Search, Nomination and Referral**

### **Stakeholder Communication**

Students, parents and community members will be informed concerning gifted education services, referral procedures and eligibility requirements through presentations by gifted education personnel at each school during Open House/Curriculum Night activities and/or via other avenues, as appropriate. Notice concerning these presentations will be distributed through the school newsletter.

Teachers, counselors and administrators will be informed concerning gifted education services, referral procedures (including process for school level referral and automatic referral) and eligibility requirements by the Gifted Education Coordinator or designee during school-level faculty meetings in August/September of each year.

### **Eligibility Team**

Each school shall establish an Eligibility Team that consists of, at a minimum, the Gifted Education Teacher, two other teachers with knowledge of the student and an administrator. All decisions regarding referral and eligibility shall be made by the Eligibility Team.

### **Student Search Procedures**

#### **Reported Referral:**

The Rabun County School System TABs Survey will be distributed to school personnel in order to help identify students who might be good candidates for nomination for gifted education testing. The TABs Survey is given to the gifted education teacher, who is responsible for gathering any other available pertinent data. This could include standardized test information, grade reports or report cards and/or student work samples.

Parents who wish to nominate their students for consideration may complete a TABS Form. If a student nominates him/herself, a Self Nomination Form would be completed. If a student nominates a peer, the student would complete a Peer Nomination Form.

Copies of all forms are available at each school.

### **Automatic Referral:**

The Rabun County School System has determined guidelines for achievement that automatically refer a student for consideration for gifted program evaluation. Students who score at or above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile on a school-system administered nationally normed mental ability test or any student who scores at or above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized nationally normed achievement test in Total Reading, Total Math or Composite scores will automatically be referred to the school Eligibility Team for review for further evaluation consideration. The gifted education teacher is responsible for nominating any student automatically referred based on standardized test score data. He/she may obtain work samples and any other available data pertaining to the student's academic performance/potential.

### **Review of Referrals**

Following the completion of the reported or automatic referral process, the Eligibility Team will review each referral. The Eligibility Team should document the date of the meeting/decision; the committee members present; the names of the students who were considered; the source of the nomination (automatic, teacher, parent, etc.) and the committee's decisions regarding whether each student who was considered should be referred for formal evaluation. The Eligibility Team will make one of the following decisions:

1. The student is referred for formal evaluation. When the team agrees that the data warrants continuation of the evaluation process, the system Gifted Coordinator will notify parents in writing through the use of the Notification of Consideration and Consent to Evaluate form (available in English and Spanish). If consent is obtained, the evaluation process will begin.

2. More information about the student is needed. If the Team determines more information is needed in order to determine the appropriateness of formal evaluation they will request such be gathered.

3. The data does not support a recommendation to continue the referral process. The Eligibility Team may decide that the data provided is sufficient in depth and quantity to determine that continuation for evaluation for eligibility is not warranted. The Team will notify the nominating person in writing that the referral process has been discontinued at the present time through the use of the Eligibility Team Decision form (available in English and Spanish). This decision, however, does not preclude the possibility that the student may be again referred for consideration at a later date.

## Student Assessment and Eligibility

### General Assessment Requirements

The gifted program teacher will gather pertinent biographical information including parental permission for evaluation and any previous test results. In compliance with Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2.38, the gifted program teacher or other authorized party will gather information in each of the following areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation, as defined in Table 1. All assessments utilized by Rabun County Schools meet standards of validity and reliability and are nondiscriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disability or economic background. Test scores on utilized instruments may be **no older than two years**. In addition, tests may not be re-administered within one full calendar year. Decisions concerning the need for administration of secondary assessments may be made in each area, as defined below.

### Methods of Acquiring Student Data

#### Category One: Mental Ability

The CogAT (with verbal, quantitative and nonverbal components) will be the primary assessment administered to students in grades K-12 who are referred for testing. In order to establish eligibility, either the composite score or component scores may be utilized. Scores should be determined by the gifted program teacher or authorized party using norms current within ten years and by establishing the student's percentile ranking **by age**. The test should be administered in a group setting and the appropriate test level should be determined. In grade 2, the CogAT scores of the system-wide group administration may be utilized and will also serve as methods of automatic referral, as outlined in the Student Search, Nomination and Referral process.

Any student who does not meet criteria but scores at a minimum of the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on either the composite or a component test may be administered a secondary assessment, if additional testing is recommended by the Eligibility Team. In order to determine the appropriate secondary assessment, the highest component score should be considered.

- If the verbal component score is highest, the WISC may be administered by the school system psychologist **if** all other assessments have been administered and a qualifying score would establish gifted education program eligibility. All other categories of student data must be established and criterion met before a WISC referral can be made. Referrals can be made through the Gifted Coordinator or Central Office using the WISC referral form.

- If the nonverbal component score is highest, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test may be administered to a group of students by the gifted program teacher or authorized party. The Naglieri may also be utilized as the primary assessment if the Eligibility Team determines that a student's lack of English language proficiency could negatively impact test performance or if its administration is recommended based upon other data reviewed.

### **Category Two: Achievement**

The ITBS will be the primary assessment administered to students in grades K-8 to assess achievement. In order to establish eligibility, the total battery (composite) score, reading total or math total may be utilized. The gifted education teacher or authorized party will administer the tests to a group, score the tests using norms current within ten years and establish the student's percentile ranking **by grade**. Fall norms should be used until December 1<sup>st</sup>, midyear norms from December 1<sup>st</sup> to February 29<sup>th</sup>, and spring norms should be used from March 1<sup>st</sup> until the end of the year.

The Stanford TASK will be the primary assessment administered to students in grades 9-12 to assess achievement.

The Stanford Achievement Test can be utilized as a secondary achievement measure in grades K-8, if additional testing is recommended by the Eligibility Team, and the Woodcock Johnson can be utilized as this measure in grades 9-12. In most cases, the ITBS(K-8) or Stanford (9-12) score would be the best indicator of the student's instructional needs, but there may be cases in which the team determines that this score does not accurately reflect the student's achievement. In this case, the gifted education teacher or authorized party will administer and score the tests using norms current within ten years and by establishing the student's percentile ranking **by grade**.

### **Category Three: Creativity**

The Torrance Test of Creativity (Figural or Verbal) will be the primary assessment administered to students in grades K-12 to assess creativity. The gifted education teacher or authorized party will administer and score the TTCT using norms current within ten years and by establishing the student's percentile ranking **by age**.

The GIFT can be utilized as a secondary creativity measure in grades 4-6, if additional testing is recommended by the Eligibility Team. In most cases, the TTCT score would be the best indicator of the student's instructional needs, but there may be cases in which the team determines that the score does not accurately reflect the student's creative ability. The Elementary Level GIFT should be used for students in grade 4 and the Upper Elementary Level should be used for students in grades 5-6.

#### **Category Four: Motivation**

The Gifted Rating Scales will be the primary assessment used for motivation in grades K-3.

The Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory will be used for motivation in grades 4-6.

Students in grades 7-12 may meet criteria in the area of motivation through achieving an overall average at or above 3.5 over the two years prior to evaluation in core subject areas. These areas include: Mathematics, Language Arts/Reading, Science, Social Studies and Foreign Language (if applicable). Numerical grades will be averaged with the average computer and rounded to the second decimal place. Weighted averages will not be computed, as the criteria clearly specify that numerical averages be computed on a 4.0 scale.

The GRS can be utilized as a secondary motivation measure in grades 7-8, if additional assessment is recommended by the Eligibility Team. There may be cases in which the team determines that the score does not accurately reflect the student's motivation.

#### **Collection of Data Following Established Eligibility**

If a student's eligibility for gifted services is established before assessments in all four areas have been administered, the Eligibility Team may utilize other data collected throughout the nomination and referral process (i.e. Talent Survey results) in order to provide assessment results for the remaining areas.

#### **Statistical Data**

Statistical data will be maintained on the number of students tested, the number and type of referrals, the number of students eligible, and the number of students actually served during a year. This information also includes gender and ethnicity data.

#### **Test Data from Outside Rabun County School System**

The Eligibility Team may consider test data that were gathered and analyzed outside the public school system in order to make decisions concerning referral. However, in compliance with Rule 160-4-2-38, these outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process in order to establish eligibility, unless eligibility is established in accordance with State of Georgia reciprocity.

## Test Data from Non-Standard Testing Administrations

Scores from nonstandard administrations of tests may not be used to establish gifted program eligibility, as addressed in the Georgia DOE Test Coordinator's Manual.

## Eligibility Criteria

Students in Georgia may become eligible for gifted program services through the process detailed below. Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 defines eligibility criteria for program placement.

### **Eligibility via the Psychometric Approach:**

To be eligible for gifted education services under the psychometric approach, a student must score at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile (grades K-2) or the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile (grades 3-12) on the **composite** score of a standardized test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria as detailed in Table I.

### **Eligibility via the Multiple Criteria Process:**

To be eligible for gifted education services under the multiple criteria process, a student must meet criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation, as detailed in Table I.

## Identification of Students Who Meet Eligibility Requirements

When all needed data has been obtained in each criteria area, the Eligibility Team will meet to formally determine student eligibility. An Eligibility Report Form will be completed and a decision made as to the eligibility status of the student.

If the student is eligible for Gifted Program placement, the gifted education teacher will notify the parent or guardian in writing using the Notification of Eligibility form (available in English and Spanish). Additionally, a copy of the Program Description and Continuation Policy will be sent to the parent or guardian at this time.

If the student is determined ineligible for program placement, the Eligibility Team will notify the parent or guardian in writing using the Notification of Talent Development Team Evaluation or Notification for Future Review (available in English and Spanish), depending on the team's decision.

Upon receipt of the form detailing the decision of the Eligibility Team, parents or guardians shall be afforded an opportunity for a conference to discuss student eligibility criteria and



placement. Interpreters, if needed, shall be provided by the school during conferences for parents who do not speak English as a first language.

### **Reciprocity**

Students who have met eligibility criteria in other Georgia public school systems will be placed in the gifted education program upon transfer into the Rabun County School System, through in-state reciprocity. Students who have been identified as gifted in another state or private school system will not be granted automatic eligibility. However, if recent assessment data is available that enables the Talent Development Team to qualify the student using Georgia criteria, no additional testing is necessary.

### **Program Continuation Requirements**

The Rabun County School System has developed criteria that an identified, placed student must meet in order to continue to receive services in the gifted program. Student progress is assessed on an annual basis (or more frequently, if deemed appropriate).

The student must maintain satisfactory performance in gifted education classes by maintaining a grade of at least 80% in each class where gifted services are provided **OR** by completing all required assignments and actively participating in class activities.

\*Students may not be removed from gifted education classes based on performance in general education classes, unless performance in gifted education classes is also a concern.

If continuation criteria are not met:

- The student will be placed on probation for one grading period. Parents or guardians shall be informed through the use of the Notification of Placement Review.
- A plan for improvement will be developed. The improvement plan will include steps to be taken in order to facilitate the student's increased performance. A copy of the plan will be provided to the parent/guardian. A copy of the plan will be placed in the student's central office file.
- At the end of the probationary period, the student's progress will be reviewed to determine if continuation criteria are being met. If criteria are met, gifted services will continue, and probation is terminated. If continuation criteria remain unmet, those persons involved in the development of the improvement plan will reconvene to determine the specific course of action (continued probation with a plan of improvement or termination of program services).

If a student is suspended from the gifted program, he or she is required to submit evidence of academic performance, for a minimum of two consecutive grading periods that meets continuation criteria in order to be reinstated.

If it is determined that participation in the gifted program is not in the student's best interest, the parent or gifted program teacher may request a change. A student may be placed on voluntary inactive status for up to one year during a three-year time period.

### **Student Needs/Services Options Match**

The final step in the determination of gifted program placement is the matching of the student's advanced learning needs and interests (as documented by assessment results) to programming options. Once assessment activities and data collection are complete, it is the responsibility of the Eligibility Team to:

- a. review all pertinent student information, gathered from multiple sources
- b. determine gifted program eligibility
- c. make recommendations regarding needs for curriculum differentiation and special program services.

The decision of the Eligibility Team should be based on a review of the information gathered during both the student talent search/nomination phase, the formal assessment results, and any other pertinent data. Schools must utilize a variety of service delivery options that may include but are not limited to resource room pull-out, consultation, mentorships, advanced classes, and independent study. Gifted students' need for complexity and accelerated pacing must be accommodated for in the general education program. Accommodations may include strategies such as flexible skills grouping, cluster grouping with differentiation, curriculum compacting, subject and grade acceleration, dual enrollment, and advanced classes. All decisions regarding matching student needs to programming options shall be made in accordance with Board of Education policy, as detailed below:

The Rabun County School System supports the use of educational acceleration in order to effectively match student ability and talent with optimal learning opportunities. According to NAGC, "the purposes of acceleration as a practice are 1) to adjust the pace of instruction to the students' capability in order to develop a sound work ethic, 2) to provide an appropriate level of challenge in order to avoid the boredom from repetitious learning, and 3) to reduce the time period necessary for students to complete traditional schooling. Acceleration benefits many highly capable individuals by better motivating them toward schooling, enhancing their involvement with extracurricular activities, promoting more challenging options in the middle school and high school years, and preparing them to begin contributing to society at an earlier age."

Research-based practices that may be considered by a school include grade skipping, early entrance into college, and acceleration in content areas through such programs as Move On

When Ready, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. Adaptations in the classroom, such as curriculum compacting, are highly encouraged.

Group and individual decisions concerning acceleration can be made by the Eligibility Team at each school. Examples of decisions of this type include gifted program placement, AP or advanced content program placement, referral for Talent Search programs such as Duke TIP, or the need for curriculum compacting in the regular classroom.

Decisions concerning grade skipping or early entrance to college should be made on an individual basis by a child study team comprised of, at a minimum, the parent(s) and teacher(s) of the candidate, the school counselor, and an administrator. A guidance tool such as the Iowa Acceleration Scale should be used in order to help guide decision making. Acceleration decisions of this type should be made thoughtfully with the needs of the whole child in mind by considering the child's intellectual and academic profile, socio-emotional and physical development, and preferences of the child. A written acceleration plan that specifies a monitored transition period should be developed by the team. Other considerations in the plan may include (when applicable) determination of which grade-level achievement test the student will take, clarification of transportation issues, procedures for determination of class rank and the process for awarding course credit, and procedures for inclusion in appropriate extracurricular activities.

## Curriculum and Instruction

### Gifted Program Curriculum

The Rabun County School System Gifted Program seeks to enrich students' mastery of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (where applicable) and Georgia Performance Standards by providing instruction that incorporates advanced research and communication skills, social and emotional support and creative and critical thinking. Specific standards for gifted students have been established that align to the regular classroom curriculum. Rich and rigorous instruction is achieved through the use of a variety of models, including resource services, advanced content classes and collaboration among classroom and gifted endorsed teachers. At the high school level, mentorship opportunities, Advanced Placement classes, and Dual Enrollment classes are offered. The goals of the Rabun County Schools program are as follows:

**Gifted students will develop advanced research skills and methods through in-depth learning of self-selected topics within the area of study.**

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 curious and intrinsically motivated, especially to pursue topics that interest them.

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As compared to their age-peers, gifted learners tend to have longer attention spans, exhibit a stronger need to know, and can follow-through with assignments. So that gifted students may more fully benefit from these characteristics, the gifted curriculum emphasizes the development of 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 a variety of print and non-print references and information retrieval systems. Gifted curriculum allows them to explore personal interests through guided research, independent study, and community involvement. In order to conduct authentic research, students receive instruction and guidance in learning to ask the right kinds of questions by looking at techniques used by experts in the specific field. They receive instruction in the development of a written plan of research (with emphasis on how one gathers, categorizes, analyzes, and evaluates information in particular fields); assistance in evaluating their own work; and in considering implications for future research.

**Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills with a variety of complex topics within the area of study.**

Gifted learners have the ability to generate original ideas and solutions, and they characteristically see diverse and unusual relationships. The gifted curriculum provides 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, making generalizations), a curricular need is to be able to explore alternatives and consequences of those choices, and to draw and test generalizations. The original thoughts and ideas often expressed by gifted students may, in some settings, be perceived as odd or off-task by others. This results in the inhibition of creative thinking. They are encouraged to push themselves, to take intellectual risks, and to experiment so that creativity can be developed