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| ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS | Issued: 05/09/2014 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION Regulation 7.55R | Responsible: Assistant Superintendent |
| REGULATION MANUAL Board Policy 7.55 Regulation- Renaissance Gifted Program Eligibility Testing Identification Procedures | Approved: <u> /s/ Ehren Jarrett </u> Superintendent Endorsed: <u> /s/ Lori L. Hoadley </u> General Counsel |

**Administrative Regulation-Renaissance Gifted Program Eligibility Testing Identification Procedures
Overview**

The Gifted Program in the Rockford Public School District functions to provide an appropriate education for gifted students based upon their exceptional abilities. Because of their unusual capabilities, these students require uniquely and qualitatively different educational experiences not available in the regular classroom. The Gifted Program exists to enable gifted students to realize their abilities and potential contributions to self and society.

The Rockford Public School District's Eligibility Testing Regulations were developed in accordance with Illinois State Gifted and Talented requirements and School Board policy and are based on research and common understandings about gifted programming. These state that Gifted Students have i) high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas, (ii) possess an exceptional leadership potential, (iii) excel in specific academic fields, and (iv) have the potential to be influential in business, government, health care, the arts, and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment.

The Gifted Program in the Rockford Public School District currently employs two processes to identify students who demonstrate a need for these qualitatively different educational experiences.

COMMUNICATION

The Gifted Program Office works with the Rockford Public School District's Communication Department to ensure that students, parents, families, and the community are aware of and informed about the testing process. Communications may include mailings, television or radio announcements, website promotion, emails, social media postings, etc. All testing sessions will be published, including, locations, and times.

ILLINOIS STATE DEFINITION

ARTICLE 14A. GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN
(Source: P.A. 94-151, eff. 7-8-05; 94-410, eff. 8-2-05.)

Sec. 14A-20. Gifted and talented children. For purposes of this Article, "gifted and talented children" means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude.

Renaissance Gifted Program Eligibility Testing Process

STEP 1: RESIDENCY

In order to be tested for the Gifted Program, students must:

- 1) be enrolled as a resident student in one of the Rockford Public schools; or
- 2) submit proof of bona fide residency prior to signing up for the testing.

Nonresidents

A student who resides more than twenty-five miles from the district's outer boundaries and who is considering relocating his or her residence in the district may apply for admission by contacting the Gifted Program Office. Any non-resident student that is offered a seat shall be required to submit proof of residency before enrolling.

OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED ELIGIBILITIES

Each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program. Hence, a student moving to Rockford with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy RPS Gifted Program eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. Based on seat availability and establishment of residency within the school district boundaries, these students could enroll in the Gifted Program during the current school year or be placed on a wait list for the current year.

OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED TESTING

A student moving to Rockford with a gifted eligibility from another state, or outside twenty-five miles from the district's outer boundaries, who does not satisfy RPS Gifted Program eligibility criteria, is eligible to participate in the next scheduled testing session. Based on seat availability and the establishment of residency within the school district boundaries, these students could enroll in the Gifted Program during the current school year or be placed on a wait list for the current year.

STEP 2: REFERRAL FOR TESTING

ANNUAL TESTING

Any resident student is eligible to participate in the Gifted Program annual testing. Eligibility for participation in the program is solely determined through identification of a child as gifted or talented, not upon culture, economic status, race, religion, gender, disability, or any other prohibited criteria.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES

The Rockford Public School District employs two processes to determine student eligibility in the Gifted Program.

- 1) Annual testing of resident students who are referred to the Gifted Program Office by a parent, teacher, peer, school staff member, self, community member, or other; and
- 2) District-wide screening of all students at one grade level.

ANNUAL TESTING REFERRAL PROCESS

The Rockford Public School District encourages any stakeholder who sees potential in a child to contact the Gifted Program Office for more information: a parent, teacher, peer, school staff member, community member, or the student himself/herself. Information about the testing will be provided and parental permission for testing will be obtained.

DISTRICT-WIDE SCREENING

The Rockford Public School District may conduct an annual screening of all currently-enrolled students at one or more grade levels. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2) is currently used for this screening. Parents are notified of the screening by the Gifted Office and the student's school. Parents have the opportunity to deny permission to test. In order to deny permission, they must notify the school principal in writing.

STEP 3: TESTING

ANNUAL TESTING

The primary eligibility testing is conducted in the winter for program placement in the following school year. Any student wishing to apply for the program must participate in a scheduled testing session and supply, upon request, other information pertinent to the applicant's grade level.

TESTING CALENDAR (subject to change based on school district calendar)

- District-Wide Screening
 - Test Administration at one grade level: October - December, in all schools, scheduled with school principals
 - Make-up Testing: As needed, to be scheduled with school principals
- Annual Abilities Testing
 - Test Administration for Grades 2-9: Third Saturday in November
 - Test Administration for Grades K-1: Fourth Saturday in January
 - Make-up Testing for Grades 2-9: Fourth Saturday in January
 - Make-up Testing for Grades K-1: Fourth Saturday in February
 - Make-up Testing for All Grades: Fourth week of July
 - Additional Testing scheduled as needed

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS – ACCOMMODATIONS

The Renaissance Gifted Program complies with student IEP or 504 Plan testing accommodations. Parents must contact the Renaissance Gifted Office to discuss the accommodations and to schedule an alternate testing session.

GIFTED ELIGIBILITY TESTING - CURRENTLY USED INSTRUMENTS

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

The Cognitive Abilities Test appraises the level and pattern of cognitive development of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The test measures both general and specific reasoning abilities. These abilities are assessed in three CogAT batteries: the Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal batteries. Each is represented by two or three different reasoning tasks. Having multiple measures in each domain greatly increases the dependability of the score profile that is reported for each student. The use of an abilities test, such as the CogAT, is to provide a measure of each student's level of cognitive development that captures important information not represented in school grades or in other measures of school achievement.

After testing, parents receive a report of their student's raw scores (age percentile and age stanine), a comparison of these scores to those of other students of the same age, and a comparison to other students in the same grade (grade percentile and grade stanine). More information about interpreting the scores is available at the CogAT website listed on the score report.

Writing Sample

After completing the CogAT, during the testing session, students in all grades are asked to produce a writing sample from a prompt. The writing prompts were developed by Gifted Program staff and are developmentally appropriate for each grade level. Writing samples are scored by multiple assessors using a common scoring rubric. The rubric analyzes criteria in the areas of: focus, support, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, integration and writing conventions.

Teacher Rating Scale

After completing the testing session, students will be supplied with a teacher rating scale. This scale is given to a current or past educator with a strong knowledge of the child as a learner. After completing the scale, the teacher returns the scale directly to the Gifted Program Office to be included in the students testing matrix.

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2)

The Rockford Public School District conducts an annual screening of all currently-enrolled students at one grade level. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2) is used for this screening. The NNAT2 is an assessment of general cognitive ability. It is a culturally neutral measure that yields a norm-based score that can be used to identify students who are likely to have the potential for advanced scholastic achievement. Gifted Program Test Monitors visit each elementary school in the district to administer the online assessment in a comfortable setting for students.

STEP 4: DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Rockford Public School District, under the supervision of the Gifted Director, forms a Steering Committee each year whose responsibilities include determining students' eligibility for the Gifted Program. The Steering Committee may include, but is not limited to, district and program administrators, gifted education teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, and support staff in the Gifted Program. The Steering Committee meets to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. A minimum of five members must be present in order to conduct the meeting. The Steering Committee shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the Gifted Program. The Gifted Director acts upon the ruling of the Steering Committee to notify the students' parents/guardians and the Student Assignment Center.

Eligible students are identified through a comprehensive testing matrix. No single assessment or its results denies student eligibility. The matrix includes a writing sample, teacher survey, and abilities assessments in three areas: verbal, quantitative and nonverbal. The Gifted Program Steering Committee reviews all results and makes their determination based on program eligibility criteria. To ensure impartiality, throughout the entire Steering Committee process, students are identified by number, not name.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Gifted Office conducts training annually for the Steering Committee and Testing Monitors to ensure consistency in test administration, use of rubrics and scoring, and data analysis.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CogAT

The Steering Committee looks at each student's Cognitive Abilities Test score profile, which includes Standard Age Score (SAS), Percentile Rank (PR) and Stanine (S). Each battery is considered individually along with a composite. Students who obtain a national percentile rank at or above 95 on any individual CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) battery or on the composite score are offered a seat in the Gifted Program. Students who scored at or above the 90th percentile but lower than the 95th percentile on the CogAT will have additional matrix elements, writing sample and/or teacher rating scale, considered along with the CogAT results. The Steering Committee applies consistent measures to these matrix elements.

Writing Sample and Teacher Rating Scale

The Rockford Public School District recognizes that some gifted students may have circumstances that make it difficult to identify them using standardized tests, particularly in situations of dual exceptionalities or limited English proficiency. Because of this, a writing sample and a teacher rating scale are also considered for inclusion in the program. Students must achieve a score at or above the superior range on the teacher rating scale. Students must exceed grade-level standards, based on a scoring rubric, on the writing sample.

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT2)

Students who obtain a national percentile rank at or above 95 on the NNAT2 are offered a seat in the Gifted Program. Students who scored at or above the 90th percentile but lower than the 95th percentile on the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test will be assessed using annual testing matrix: Cognitive Abilities Test, writing sample, and teacher survey.

STEP 5: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

The Gifted Program Office notifies in writing the parents of each student tested about the assessment results, offering to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. Parental notification takes place 6-8 weeks following the completion of each test session.

STEP 6: PLACEMENT

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.

GIFTED PROGRAM WAITING LIST

Should there be more qualified students than there are available seats in the Gifted Program, the Student Assignment Center will maintain a rank-ordered waiting list of students, organized by grade level. This waiting list will be accessible by parents using a unique identifying number to maintain confidentiality. Should a seat become available at any point during the school year, the next student in line on the waiting list will be offered that seat.

Rank Order

The wait list is rank-ordered based on the highest CogAT score, subtest or composite, or the NNAT2 score earned by each student. Should subsequent testing sessions yield students with higher composite scores than students currently on the wait list, a reranking will take place and a new list will be published.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY TESTING

After each testing session, students who meet the eligibility criteria will be offered seats based on availability. Students who attend make-up testing sessions will be considered separately, after their scores become available. They will be offered seats based on availability.

If there is a need, additional eligibility testing will be conducted throughout the year. All testing dates will be advertised, including announcement of test locations, dates, and times. If the tested student meets the entrance criteria and there is a seat available, the student will be offered that seat at any point during the school year. If there is not a seat available, that student's name will be put on the ranked waiting list for the remainder of the current school year.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

All data collected as part of the identification process are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All information/data collected as part of the identification process shall be placed in an individual eligibility file for each student. These files and the information contained therein shall not be placed in the student's cumulative record folder. Access to the information shall be restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or that have a documented need to know. Parents must be informed of the information/data that is collected. Parents may request access to these files.

VOLUNTARY EXIT AND RE-ENTRY

A student may apply for re-admittance to the program without retesting within the same academic year as the year in which the student left the program, or before the beginning of the next academic year. The student must submit an application outlining his/her reasons for leaving the program and his/her reasons for wanting to return. The Selection Committee will review the student's application and school performance and make a determination on whether the student should be re-admitted. Any student who leaves the program for a full academic year must retest in order to regain admittance.

GIFTED TESTING REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Gifted Testing Steering Committee Review is one component of the Rockford Public Schools gifted identification process. The purpose of the review is to attempt to identify students whose Abilities Test scores are *significantly* lower than would be expected, based on a child's current and past school success.

The Gifted Program Implements this Review Process Based on the Requirements of the Illinois State School Code and the Best Practice Recommendations of the National Association for Gifted Children

- (105 ILCS 5/14A-30) Sec. 14A-30 (8) The availability of a fair and impartial appeal process within the school, school district, or cooperative of school districts operating a program for parents or guardians whose children are aggrieved by a decision of the school, school district, or cooperative of school districts regarding eligibility for participation in a program.
- NAGC Programming Standard 2: Assessment - 2.2.1. Educators establish comprehensive, cohesive, and ongoing procedures for identifying and serving students with gifts and talents. These provisions include informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures for both entry and exit from gifted program services.

The Review Process

- When parents are notified of their child's testing results and are not offered acceptance into the Gifted Program, they are also notified of the Review Process. Parents are asked to request a Review application within three weeks.
- Upon receipt of this request, the Gifted Office will provide the family with a letter explaining the process and include the application. This application outlines the additional information that the family can compile and present to the Steering Committee.

- Parents will have approximately three weeks to complete the application, collect evidence of their child’s abilities, and return the information to the Gifted Office. The Review Process Application asks parents to provide:
 - A Statement of Need: “Why do you think that the Gifted Program is the most appropriate educational placement for this applicant?”
 - A minimum of 4 pieces of supplemental evidence. Although families can submit their choice of evidence, the application delineates appropriate examples for supporting documentation in each of the following categories:
 - ◆ General Learning Ability Level: e.g. individual psychological testing reports, standardized ability test results
 - ◆ Scholastic Achievement Level: e.g. standardized achievement test scores, school criterion-based test results, ISAT scores
 - ◆ Past Academic Performance: e.g. report cards, reading level, progress reports
 - ◆ Letters of Recommendation
 - ◆ Student Work Samples: e.g. portfolio of student accomplishments or student performance, student’s unedited work, original writings/art pieces
- The Gifted Program Administrator will redact identifying information and assign each review application and accompanying evidence packet a unique number to ensure impartiality during the review process.
- After the deadline for submission, the Gifted Program Administrator will schedule a committee review meeting. The Selection Committee will be comprised of a range of district administrators, no fewer than five, that may include district-level administrators, curriculum administrators, a district psychologist, and Gifted Program administrators, teachers, and/or counselors.
- At the review meeting(s), committee members will consider all applications and evidence. Evidence will be judged based on a scoring rubric. Consistent criteria will be applied to all applications.
- Each member of the Selection Committee will score the review application and evidence using the rubric. The members will submit the applicant’s score to the Gifted Program Director. Applicants that receive a majority of scores (minimum - 3 of 5) that meet the rubric criteria will be offered a seat in the Gifted Program, pending residency and seat availability.
- The review process does not guarantee a child’s placement in the program.

The Review Appeal

- Concerns with respect to any matter relating to the review process should be directed to the school district’s superintendent, deputy superintendent, or an assistant superintendent.
- Parents may file a signed, written complaint. The following information must be included:
 - A statement alleging the violation(s) and the facts on which the statement is based
 - The name and address of the student and school of attendance
 - The signature and contact information for the complainant
 - A proposed resolution for the problem
- The complaint must allege that the violation occurred not more than one year prior to the date on which the complaint is received.
- Upon receipt of the complaint, the district will review all relevant information and make a determination as to whether the district violated a policy.

- The district will issue a written decision which addresses each allegation and includes findings of fact and conclusions, the reasons for the decision, and orders for any corrective actions.

Considerations for Review Team Members

Before the Review Meeting

- Review the Gifted Program Eligibility Testing Procedures.
- Examine and familiarize yourself with the Gifted Program Testing Review guidelines and the Review Rubric.

During the Review Meeting - Keep in Mind:

- Parents have the right to request a review if they believe their child's scores *significantly* lower than would be expected, based on a child's current and past school success.
- The purpose of the Review Committee is to evaluate additional eligibility evidence provided by the parents and compare this additional evidence with the student's CogAT or NNAT2 scores, teacher rating and writing sample score.
- This evidence will be stripped of identifying information (name, school, etc.) for the committee's consideration. Should a committee member recognize a student or family based on information that remains, he/she will need to recuse him/herself from assessing that student.
- The goal of the Review Committee is to determine whether the additional materials provide a compelling case that the original testing results were not an accurate picture of the student's abilities and that the student would benefit from the services provided by the Gifted Program.
- Each member of the Selection Committee will score the review application and evidence using the rubric.
- The members will submit the applicant's score to the Gifted Program Director. Applicants that receive a majority of scores (minimum - 3 of 5) that meet the rubric criteria will be offered a seat in the Gifted Program, pending residency and seat availability.
- The review process does not guarantee a child's placement in the program.

After the Review Meeting

- All information examined and discussed in the review process should remain confidential.
- All communications regarding the review process and results must come from the Gifted Department. The Gifted Office will notify parents of results by mail. No information will be given over the phone or by email.
- If you are contacted by a parent, teacher or principal, refer that person to the Director of Gifted, Honors, and Advanced Placement.