

**GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES****COPIAH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Copiah County School District provides a program of enrichment for intellectually gifted students in second through sixth grade. The classes are called "Journey" and serve second through sixth grade at each elementary school and Crystal Springs Middle School. Students at each school spend 5 hours a week in the gifted "pull-out" program and the rest of the week in their general education classrooms. Students at Wesson Attendance Elementary, Crystal Springs Elementary and Crystal Springs Middle School attend classes on their own campuses.

Mississippi Department of Education gifted regulations and state mandate require that intellectually gifted students in grades two through sixth be provided services by a teacher with a gifted endorsement for a minimum of five hours per week.

**MISSION**

The mission of the Copiah County School District gifted program is to insure that intellectually gifted children, as defined by the Mississippi Department of Education, are offered appropriate educational experiences that are qualitatively different from those available in the regular classroom in order to provide opportunities for them to realize their abilities and potential.

**GOALS**

- To provide educational experiences that will be qualitatively different from their regular classroom.
- To encourage creativity and exploration.
- To help students develop higher level thinking skills, self-directed learning skills, creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, and research skills.
- To help students become more proficient with group dynamics.
- To expose students to various careers and "The Arts".
- To stress to the students personal integrity, ethics, and social responsibility.
- To make learning an enjoyable and successful learning experience.

**MDE DEFINITION**

The State of Mississippi defines “Intellectually Gifted Children” and “Gifted Education Programs” as follows:

“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.

“Gifted Education Programs” (GEP) shall mean special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2-12,...in the public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.

Although the state of Mississippi recognized permissive programming for academically gifted students in grades 9-12; and creatively gifted children in grades 2-12, only intellectually gifted programs in grades 2-6 are mandated by law. At this time, the Copiah County School District offers the program for intellectually gifted children in the mandated grades, 2-6.

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes and equitable opportunity for inclusion of students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under IDEA guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD.

**REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL**

Referral for the gifted education program is based on consideration of performance in the regular classroom, potential ability, test performance, maturity, creativity, and leadership potential. While grades and/or achievement test scores might be an indicator of giftedness, by MDE Regulations, neither classroom behavior, grades, or achievement test scores may be used to eliminate a student from the identification process.

Referral must include documentation of two or more of the following:

- A group of measure of intelligence/cognitive abilities that has been administered within the past twelve (12) months with a minimum score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile;
- Published characteristics of giftedness measure at the superior range;
- Published measure of creativity at the superior range;
- Achievement test scores at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile;
- Existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve (12) months, and/or;

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

With parent permission, a group measure of cognitive abilities will be administered to all first grade students in a blanket preliminary screening for referral.

All students in grades served by the program comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients for gifted education services. A student may be referred for consideration, pending documentation of the above criteria, by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. A referral must be initiated by written request to the teacher of the gifted. Once a referral process has been initiated with a dated and signed referral form, only the gifted Local Survey Committee or parents can stop the identification process.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

If a student meets the criteria for referral, the Gifted Local Survey Committee will recommend individual assessment to determine eligibility for an "Intellectually Gifted" ruling. Written parental permission for testing must be obtained before any individual testing is initiated.

#### **PHASE I OF ASSESSMENT**

If parent permission is granted for testing, a student must meet the stated criteria for at least three of the following measures prior to the administration of an individual intelligence test:

- A full scale score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a normed group measure of intelligence;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed characteristics of giftedness checklist;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed measure of leadership;
- A score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test;
- Other measures as approved by the State Board of Education on the district's Gifted Education Program Proposal.



**PHASE II OF ASSESSMENT**

If the stated minimal acceptable criteria have been met on at least three of the above measures, an individual intelligence test will be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested.

The student must score at or above the 91<sup>st</sup> percentile on the composite/full scale or on MDE approved verbal or nonverbal subtests in order to satisfy eligibility criteria. If a student meets criteria, the Gifted Local Survey Committee will grant an "Intellectually Gifted" eligibility ruling.

**POTENTIALLY TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS**

In compliance with MDE gifted regulations, students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy the minimal acceptable criteria on the individual test of intelligence shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91<sup>st</sup> percentile on the nonverbal scale, or who 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 a provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

**STUDENTS POTENTIALLY AT A DISADVANTAGE FOR TESTING**

Students potentially at a disadvantage for testing, as defined in MDE gifted regulations, who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but did not score at least the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, may be administered additional measures to determine eligibility as established by MDE gifted regulations.

**OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED ELIGIBILITIES**

As each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program, a student moving to Mississippi with a 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.

### **PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM**

Once a student is ruled eligible for placement in the gifted program, the parent has the right to agree to placement or withhold placement of the child in the program. Written parental permission must be obtained before the child can be placed in the program.

Once a child is determined eligible for a gifted program in Mississippi, no re-evaluation testing is required to remain in the program. Although criteria may vary from district to district, an eligible determination is accepted by all school districts within the State of Mississippi.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

As JOURNEY students work under specific Instructional Management Plan objectives and time frames, withholding permission to attend gifted classes shall not be used as a disciplinary measure. Failure to complete enrichment class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **ANNUAL REASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUED PLACEMENT**

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 designation administrative representative.

As stated in the MDE Gifted Education Regulations, "since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the law, the 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 are the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program."

In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's performance. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress in the program, the student will be placed on probation in the gifted program for the next 9-weeks term. The parents will be notified and given an opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the decision and develop a plan of action. During this time, the student will continue to participate in the gifted program. If at the end of the period of probation, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level, the student will be removed from probation and recommended for continued placement. If at the end of the 9-weeks term the student has failed to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained.



If the committee determines that the student should exit JOURNEY due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents will 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 district shall grant the parents a hearing.

### **HEARING PROCESS**

Parents who are not in agreement with the school based committee decision to remove a student from the gifted program will present their concerns, orally or in writing to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

If the parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parents shall, within five (5) school days after the meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the Copiah County gifted contact person. The gifted contact person will schedule a meeting of the District Student Assistance Team (D-SAT) within five (5) school days or at a timeframe agreed upon by the parents. Parents will be extended an invitation to attend the D-SAT meeting. The D-SAT will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

### **REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES**

Students will be considered for reinstatement in the gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of classroom teachers. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the Local Gifted Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the students. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

**PERFORMANCE IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM**

In the event a student has difficulty keeping up with regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, teacher of the gifted, and the student, if appropriate, to discuss the problem and to determine an appropriate course of action. The conference and plan of action will be documented and follow-up conferences will be held as needed.

As the academic progress and welfare of the students are of prime consideration, special situations will be handled on an individual basis.

**LEGAL REFERENCES:**

- Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181
- Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013)