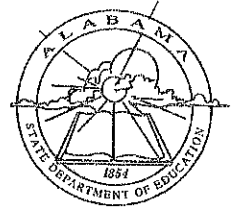




STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

September 21, 2021

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of Education

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Mr. Rodney P. Green
Superintendent
Blount County School System
Post Office Box 578
Oneonta, AL 5121

Dear Mr. Green:

Your Local Education Agency Plan for Gifted has been reviewed by staff in the Special Education Services Section of the Alabama State Department of Education. I am pleased to inform you that your plan has been approved.

Your plan will be considered in effect until such time as you submit changes for approval or state regulations require amendments. Notice will be provided to you concerning revisions required by this office.

Thank you for successfully developing this plan. Your efforts to provide appropriate services for gifted students are greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Emily P. Hurst by telephone at (334) 694-4782 or by email at ehurst@alsde.edu.

Sincerely,

Eric G. Mackey
State Superintendent of Education

EGM/EPH/MLP

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Bitsy B. Fendley
Mrs. Angela Martin
Mrs. Shanthia Washington
Dr. DaLee Chambers
Ms. Alicia Hodge
Mrs. Emily P. Hurst

LEA PLAN FOR GIFTED

Blount County

SCHOOL SYSTEM

2020-2021

SCHOOL YEAR

Rochney A. Muen
SUPERINTENDENT'S SIGNATURE

Betsy B. Jendley
SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR'S SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE OF STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR
GIFTED EDUCATION (IF OTHER THAN COORDINATOR)

02/05/2021
DATE SUBMITTED

Eric G. Mackey
ERIC G. MACKEY, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

FOR ALSDE USE ONLY

8-10-21

DATE RECEIVED

STATUS:

APPROVED

9/8/2021
DATE

BY

Emily P. Hurst
ALSDE OFFICIAL

RETURNED FOR CORRECTIONS

DATE

I. PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy is a written statement of the LEA's position/beliefs regarding gifted students and gifted education. It should include a definition (consistent with the existing state definition) and a nondiscriminatory statement. If you agree with the following statement, simply type in the name of the LEA in the blank provided. If you would like to add to it, you may.

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform at or have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted.

The Blount County School System shall prohibit discrimination against any student on the above basis with respect to his/her participation in the gifted program.

II. PROGRAM GOALS

Program Goals are statements of what the LEA expects to accomplish over the next three years (or the length of time this plan will be in effect). Each LEA may adopt the goals listed below. LEA's then have the option to add others. Some LEAs will write additional goals to *improve* or *maintain* existing programs. Others may write goals to *establish, develop, or implement* a program or additions to a program. For each Program Goal, include the steps that will be taken to achieve the Goal.

Some suggestions for areas that goals might address are:

Enrichment Model Programs (for schools with low incidence gifted)

Quality of Services

Faculty/Parent Training

Underrepresented Populations

Program Evaluation

Service Delivery Options

I. Goal: To provide training for all staff on the procedures for referring and identifying students for gifted services.

- Develop training and assemble handouts to include forms, procedures, etc.
- Schedule training annually to update procedures and inform new staff.
- Implement training.
- Maintain documentation of training provided.
- Evaluate effectiveness of training.

II. Goal: To continue working towards racial equity in the gifted program.

- Provide yearly in-service for all elementary and middle school faculties concerning the issues associated with identifying underrepresented groups.
- Utilize appropriate assessments to make screening/eligibility decisions.
- Strive to allocate gifted teachers for schools with high numbers of minority or low socio-economic students to conduct child find activities and implement enrichment programs to nurture gifted potential.

III. Goal: To continue conducting Child Find Activities

- Implement mandatory Second Grade Child Find Activity
- Review achievement or group aptitude test scores and refer any students who have high aptitude or achievement scores.
- Provide public notice in the handbook or Code of Conduct.
- Schedule gifted teachers into second grade classrooms to conduct lessons that yield gifted behaviors and products.
- Provide yearly staff development for general education teachers concerning the referral process.

- IV. Goal: To ensure that there are comparable services throughout the system.**
- Communicate with principals and check teachers' schedules to make sure that students in the same grade level across the system are receiving the same number of hours of service (e.g. 3rd graders – 3 hours, 4th graders 3 to 4 hours, etc.)
 - Allocate gifted teachers equitably taking into consideration caseloads and number of schools served.
 - Strive to find classroom space for each gifted teacher that is comparable to other programs.
- V. Goal: To work towards a true continuum of services for high-end learners.**
- Provide pullout services for Grades 3-5 or 3-6.
 - Provide consultation services for Grades K-2.
 - Provide advanced courses for Grades 6 or 7-12.
 - Consult, as time will allow, with general education teachers across grade levels concerning meeting the needs of high-end learners in the general education classroom.
- VI. Goal: To provide curriculum for gifted learners that is concept and problem based.**
- Support gifted teachers in attending professional development in the areas of concept and problem-based learning.
 - Support gifted teachers in meeting with other gifted specialists to work on units of study.

III. REFERRALS

- A. **Informing the Public** Each LEA should provide the same level of notice to parents and students regarding information about the gifted program as it does with respect to other significant school activities, policies, or procedures. The notice should include information on the definition of gifted, how to refer a student, the basic eligibility criteria (excluding test scores), and whom to contact to make a referral.

The method for providing this notice must be one that reaches all parents and students and should therefore be in the Code of Conduct or Student Handbook.

The notice in the box below or one that is very similar and contains all of the required information as described above is or will be placed in the: (Check one)

Code of Conduct
 Student Handbook.

Gifted students are those who perform at or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student. Additionally, all second-grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist.

For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

To make a referral, contact the Gifted Specialists' Coordinator at 205-775-1950 or the Gifted Specialist at the student's school.

B. Gifted Referrals Screening Team (GRST) Each LEA shall establish a team (or a team at each school) to receive and review referrals for gifted services. Each team should consist of at least three people, and members should include someone knowledgeable about the student and someone knowledgeable about gifted education. It is highly recommended that the gifted specialists serve on the GRST.

The GRST will consist of at least three individuals from the following list:

(Please check all that apply)

- gifted specialist(s)
- counselor
- administrator
- general education teacher
- psychometrist
- other _____

The duties and responsibilities of this team are to:

- Receive all referrals.
- Collect all required information.
- Schedule meetings in a timely manner to review referrals.
- Notify parents when student has been referred, obtain parental consent, and inform them of their rights.
- Notify parents of team's decision.
- Base decisions on multiple criteria; do not exclude any student on the basis of a single test score.
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences.
- Make arrangements for any further assessments.
- Deliver the completed assessment information to the Eligibility Determination Team (EDT).
- Other _____

C. Screening Criteria Check One

LEA automatically accepts each referral for further assessment (administered by psychometrist if needed for placement) to determine eligibility.

LEA uses the State Screening/Eligibility Determination Form to screen students to determine if further assessment is necessary.

15 points are required to pass screening.

IV. EVALUATION

The GRST, the psychometrist, or whomever makes decisions about tests that are administered must make those decisions based on their knowledge of the student and the purpose for which the test was intended.

Information about the student can be obtained from the *Aptitude Test Selection* box on the referral form. This checklist will indicate if there is a need to administer alternative assessments (e.g., non-verbal assessments or creativity assessments) due to cultural, economic, environmental, linguistic, or disability differences. If any items are checked in the *Aptitude Test Selection* box both verbal and nonverbal abilities must be assessed (and creativity if appropriate) before determining student ineligible for gifted services.

For information on specific tests, consult the individual test manuals.

The Blount County School System will select and administer tests and evaluative materials that are sensitive to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences and that are appropriate for the special populations such as the sensory impaired, LEP, or physically impaired student. Students from underrepresented groups will have both verbal and nonverbal abilities assessed (and creativity when appropriate) before being determined ineligible.

Independent Evaluation Procedures

There is some evidence to indicate that using test scores from independent evaluators may contribute to racial inequities in gifted populations. School systems must adopt local procedures regarding independent evaluations. Check the statement below that describes the procedures used by _____ Blount County ___ School System:

_____ Tests from qualified independent evaluators will be treated the same as tests administered by school system personnel or contract personnel.

X Tests from qualified independent evaluators will be considered as a referral but the school system reserves the right to conduct further assessment.

V.
ELIGIBILITY

The LEAs must establish an Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) to implement procedures to determine eligibility of students for gifted services. Members must include someone knowledgeable about the student being assessed, someone knowledgeable about gifted students in general, and someone able to interpret the information gathered. There should be at least three members on the team. The EDT may include the same members as the GRST.

The EDT is:
(Check one)

central office based
 school based

The EDT will consist of at least three individuals from the following list:
(Please check all that apply)

gifted specialist(s)
 counselor
 administrator
 general education teacher
 psychometrist
 other _____

The duties and responsibilities of the EDT are to:

- Determine if all assessment information has been gathered by the GRST: vision/hearing screening, aptitude/creativity test scores, behavior rating scale for gifted, and any/all of the following available: achievement test scores, product, portfolio, work sample, teacher narrative, or grades from the last semester.
- Complete the eligibility determination process.
- Inform parents of the decision by sending a *Notification of Eligibility Determination Team Decision* form.
- If eligible, get a signed copy of the *Notification of Eligibility Determination Team Decision* form.
- If eligible, inform the teacher of the gifted; if ineligible, inform the person who referred the student (if other than the parent).
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences.

VI.
SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Gifted students may receive services through a variety of service delivery options depending on the age of the student and the resources available to the LEA. Services for students of the same grade level on different campuses must be comparable in quality and duration. This means that if third graders at one school receive 3 hours a week pullout services then third graders at all schools should receive 3 hours a week pullout service. The following are examples of appropriate services for various age groups.

Please check all that apply.

Grades K-2

Consultative services from the gifted specialist provided in the regular classroom setting
(e.g., extra materials, learning centers)

Curriculum compacting

Cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom

Cross-age grouping in areas of strength

Grades 3-6 Grades 3-5

Traditional pullout services for 3 to 5 hours a week

Cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom

Cross-age grouping in areas of strength

Curriculum compacting

NOTE: Services to grade 6 students depend on whether they are scheduled as middle school or elementary school students.

Grades 6-8 Grades 7-8

Advanced core curriculum classes provided by qualified regular or gifted educators

Electives in a variety of talent areas (art, music [choral and instrumental], technology, foreign languages) taught by qualified instructors

Elective class geared for gifted learners taught by a gifted teacher

Enrichment clusters for students who compact out of the general education curriculum-STEAM lab, etc.

Grades 9-12

Advanced core curriculum classes provided by qualified regular or gifted educators

Electives in a variety of talent areas (art, music [choral and instrumental], technology, foreign languages) taught by qualified instructors

Elective class geared for gifted learners taught by a gifted teacher

Counseling services for college and career preparation

ATTACHMENT to Section VI.

If the LEA wants to provide services that are different from the options above a plan must be submitted for approval. The plan should describe how gifted students are served at each grade-level or grade-level cluster. (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12). Include a statement of assurance that services to all students at each grade level or grade level cluster are of comparable quality and duration.

VII.
SELF-MONITORING PROCEDURES

Each LEA shall establish and implement a plan for monitoring general education classrooms that are charged with meeting the needs of gifted learners (e.g., K-2 classrooms as well as advanced level/advanced placement classes in the middle school and high schools). In other words, there must be a system in place to monitor the implementation of differentiation in grade levels that utilize indirect services for gifted learners. Monitoring plans should include a review of lesson plans, materials, course offerings, and teaching strategies.

Sample:

- I. Principals will collect evidence of the items listed on the *Gifted Service Indicators Form* in the *LEA Gifted Profile Needs Assessment*.
- II. Supervisor of principals will collect evidence/artifacts from principals.
- III. Supervisor of principals will meet with special education coordinator/gifted supervisor and other staff knowledgeable of the nature and needs of gifted students and evaluate the level of differentiation being provided for high-end learners.
- IV. Recommendations for professional development will be made in response to the evaluation.
- V. A summary report and artifacts will be compiled and ready for review during gifted monitoring.

ATTACHMENT to Section VII
If the LEA wants to provide self- monitoring procedures that are different from the procedures above, a plan must be submitted for approval.

**VIII.
POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

Procedures should exist that address flexible grouping strategies implemented to facilitate differentiated curriculum instruction. These practices should match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to the readiness and motivation of the student.

Please code the following that are **P** Practiced in your school system, or **NA** Not Allowed.

P **Grade acceleration** – Students with exceptional abilities are moved to the next highest grade.

P **Fluid movement between grades/Subject Acceleration** – Students with exceptional abilities in a particular subject may attend classes at a higher-grade level.

P **Clustering** – When the number of gifted students in a grade level is small, the gifted students are grouped together (no more than eight students in a cluster group) in one or two regular classrooms instead of one gifted student in each classroom.

P **Flexible skills grouping** – Students are regularly assessed and grouped for instruction according to skill level.

ATTACHMENT to Section VIII
***Please attach a copy of any written policy or procedure concerning the above strategies,
whether P or NA***

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED PROCEDURES FOR BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS.

HELP DOCUMENT FOR Considering Student Acceleration



Contents:

- I. Acceleration Procedures**
- II. General Information**
- III. Differentiation Strategies**
- IV. Forms**

ACCELERATION PROCEDURES

The Blount County School System adopts the following procedure for the referral, evaluation, and implementation of academic acceleration.

Rationale

The Blount County School System believes in the philosophy of assisting all students in developing their academic potential. Where potential is concerned, equality resides in providing equally well for the various levels of individual differences. Some of the most cost effective and underutilized interventions to meet the academic needs of high-end learners are the various academic acceleration options such as differentiation, subject acceleration, and grade acceleration. A recent publication entitled, *A Nation Deceived*, is a compilation of 50 years of research on the effects of acceleration. The authors found that when the decision to accelerate was made based on multiple criteria and was data driven, there were great benefits both academically and socially for high-end learners (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, eds., 2004). The *Alabama Exceptional Child Education Act* (Act 106) mandates that, ".....the State of Alabama and the school district associated therewith shall provide not less than twelve years of appropriate instruction and related services for such exceptional children at public expense ..." and for gifted students that includes the right to progress through course of study objectives at a pace commensurate with their abilities. *The Alabama Administrative Code* lists acceleration as an appropriate service delivery option. See §290-8-9-.12 (6)

General Guidelines: Referral for Subject or Grade Acceleration:

- 1) Any student enrolled in the district may be referred for consideration for acceleration by a general education teacher, administrator, gifted specialist, guidance counselor, or parent/guardian.
- 2) The district will follow the written procedures outlined below for any student referred beginning with Level I, which includes differentiation at the current grade level. If at all possible, a student will be subject accelerated (Level II) for a grading period before grade acceleration (Level III) is considered (in most instances subject acceleration coupled with differentiation will be successful in meeting the academic needs of high-end learners). The committee may proceed directly to Level III if the curriculum and instruction has already been differentiated or the committee simply feels that they have enough documentation to consider grade acceleration.
- 3) Principals must ensure that all staff members are aware of the procedures including referral, evaluation, and acceleration options.
- 4) The process of considering acceleration options will take place in a timely and logical fashion. For instance, if subject or grade acceleration is going to be implemented, the best time for the student to make this move is either at the start of school or the beginning of the second semester. Consequently, the process of gathering the necessary information and subsequent committee meetings will be conducted with these dates in mind.
- 5) The referral process for subject/grade acceleration will begin at the school site.
- 6) The principal or special education/gifted coordinator will establish a committee to determine the most appropriate learning environment for the student.

- 7) The committee will include a gifted specialist, the current general education teacher, and at least one other individual. Other appropriate possibilities would be the student's parent(s), a counselor, a school and/or central office administrator, a psychometrist, or another teacher in the building who has a proven track record of working with high-ability students. The school administrator (not on the committee) should be kept informed of the committee's recommendations.

Level I: Differentiation Procedures

- 1) The committee will be charged with conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the student's educational needs.
- 2) The committee will consider the areas of concern (math, reading, etc.) utilizing pre-existing information such as: (1) achievement test results; (2) grades; (3) work samples/products; and (4) aptitude.
- 3) Based on an analysis of the data collected, the committee will provide the general education teacher with differentiation options/strategies (both individual and grouping strategies) to modify the curriculum and instruction in the present grade placement.
- 4) If the differentiation strategies are successful in meeting the student's academic needs, the student will remain in his/her present placement. The committee (including a teacher from the next grade level) will reconvene at the end of the year to develop a differentiation plan for the upcoming school year. The principal will consider the differentiation needs and ensure that the student is assigned to an appropriate teacher. This teacher will be knowledgeable of gifted learners, trained in differentiation, and demonstrate a willingness to address the needs of diverse learners. (Appropriate professional development will be provided if needed.)
- 5) The committee will waive Steps 3 and 4 if the student's curriculum and instruction has already been differentiated or the committee simply feels that they have enough documentation to consider subject acceleration.

Level II: Subject Acceleration Procedures

- 1) If the differentiation strategies are implemented (for a reasonable time such as a grading period) and the student's academic needs are still not being met, the committee will reconvene to consider if subject acceleration is appropriate. The possible receiving teacher (in the next grade level) should be added to the committee at this time.
- 2) Parent permission will be documented on a referral form if one has not already been completed. After parent permission has been obtained any additional individual assessments (particularly subject specific) will be conducted if needed. If the student has never been referred for gifted services, a gifted referral will also be initiated.
- 3) If, after considering all collected data and information, the committee decides that subject acceleration is appropriate, a consideration of the student's desire for accelerated placement will be considered, and parents will be notified and permission obtained. If the student or his/her parents are not in favor of the decision the student will not be subject accelerated.
- 4) The committee will reconvene after a grading period to determine if the student's academic needs are being met. If the student's academic needs are being met the plan will remain in place until the end of the school year when the committee will reconvene to develop a plan for the next school year. The principal will consider the differentiation needs and ensure that the student is assigned to an appropriate teacher. This teacher will be knowledgeable of gifted learners, trained in differentiation, and demonstrate a willingness to address the needs of diverse learners. (Appropriate professional development will be provided if needed.)

Level III: Grade Acceleration Procedures

- 1) If the committee determines that subject acceleration has not adequately met the student's academic needs and grade acceleration **should** be considered, the committee will invite a central office staff member (special education coordinator, gifted supervisor, psychometrist, Director of Instruction, etc.) to participate. This individual will ensure that the appropriate steps have been followed.
- 2) Students being considered for whole grade acceleration will be evaluated using an acceleration assessment process (such as the Iowa Acceleration Scales) approved by the Alabama State Department of Education. The acceleration process should include a review of: (1) all previously collected information listed above (aptitude and achievement test scores, grades, and work samples/products), (2) birth date, (3) physical description, (4) social/emotional maturity, (5) documentation of previous attempts to meet academic needs through differentiated curriculum and instruction and subject acceleration, and (6) input from the student, parents, general education teacher and gifted specialist.
- 3) The committee will submit a written decision to the principal who will determine how the parent/guardian will be notified (unless the parent/guardian was a member of the committee). If the committee cannot reach a consensus recommendation, a decision will be determined by a majority vote. The *Acceleration Determination and Approval Form* will be completed.
- 4) If the committee determines not to grade accelerate the student, the parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to review the information considered. If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision to the local Superintendent, it should be in writing and within thirty days of the decision. The Superintendent will review the decision and notify the parent of his/her determination within 30 days of receiving the appeal.
- 5) If the committee determines that the student will be grade accelerated, a written plan will be shared with the parent/guardian. This plan will include the decision, strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting, and parent/guardian permission to implement. This plan will become part of the student's permanent record. If the parent or student is not in favor of the committee's recommendation this will be noted on the *Acceleration Determination and Approval Form* and the student will not be grade accelerated.
- 6) The committee will establish an appropriate transition period for the accelerated placement. At any time before or during the transition period, a parent/guardian of the student may request in writing that the student be withdrawn from the accelerated placement without repercussions. If during the transition period, school personnel decide that the accelerated placement is inappropriate, the committee will be reconvened. The parent/guardian will be included, and a consensus will be obtained before changing the placement.
- 7) At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement will become permanent, and the student's records will be revised to reflect the new placement. A committee consisting of at least a gifted specialist, general educator, counselor, and school administrator will continue to meet regularly (at least annually) to review the student's progress and social/emotional adjustment.
- 8) At an appropriate time, the committee should meet to discuss and plan for any effects a proposed acceleration may have on the student's social-emotional development and academic progression /programming throughout his/her school career. This will include input from the Gifted/Talented Specialist and/or other appropriate representatives from the next level (i.e., Middle School or High School).

General Information

- I. If your system does not have a policy that prohibits acceleration options, simply adapt the attached procedure to meet your needs. Email the procedure (or one you already have in place) to Mrs. Emily P. Hurst at ehurst@alsde.edu or Mrs. Ashley Strickland at ashley.strickland@alsde.edu. We will contact you when your Acceleration Procedure has been approved. It will then become a section in your LEA Plan for Gifted. You will be responsible for sharing it with all administrators in your system. If you have Board policy prohibiting grade acceleration, please contact Emily Hurst or Ashley Strickland immediately.
- II. The *Referral Form for Considering Acceleration* does not have to be completed unless subject or grade acceleration is being considered. Committees can review pre-existing information to offer differentiation strategies without obtaining parent permission, and general education teachers can implement differentiation strategies without parent permission.
- III. A pre-existing team of school personnel such as the Gifted Referral and Screening Team (GRST) can be used to form the committee as long as a gifted specialist and the current general education teacher are included. If the committee decides that subject/grade acceleration should be considered, a general education teacher in the grade level above the student's present placement must be included.
- IV. The person requesting the referral should be very specific in providing a reason for the request. Avoid statements that are too general and difficult to support with evidence. (Ex. The student should be moved ahead because he never has homework and is bored in class.)
- V. A suggested list of appropriate individual achievement tests for considering subject and grade acceleration:
 - a. Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Scale
 - b. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
 - c. Stanford Diagnostic Math Test
- VI. A suggested list of appropriate individual aptitude assessments for considering subject and grade acceleration:
 - a. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children: most current edition
 - b. Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale: most current edition
 - c. Differential Ability Scales
 - d. Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales
- VII. Iowa Acceleration Scale is published by Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.
- VIII. The *Acceleration Determination and Approval Form* should be completed once the committee has made the determination.
- IX. Example transition strategies:
 - a. Teacher will notify gifted specialist/counselor of any signs of stress.
 - b. A classmate will be assigned to the student to assist in learning new procedures etc.
 - c. The receiving teacher will conduct individual conferences with the student periodically until the teacher is sure that the student is comfortable with the new environment and procedures.

Differentiation Strategies

Differentiation strategies that the Acceleration/GRST Committee could suggest before recommending subject or grade acceleration are:

- a. Cluster Grouping
- b. Flexible Skills Grouping
- c. Individualized Programs in Math/Reading such as Accelerated Math
- d. Tiered Centers
- e. Tiered Assignments
- f. Compacting
- g. Learning Contracts
- h. Literature/Socratic Circles
- i. Independent Study Projects
- j. Honors/Advanced Classes
- k. Advanced Placement Classes
- l. Distance Learning
- m. Dual Enrollment Programs

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acceleration Options

Subject Acceleration – Students remain in their normal grade placement for part of the school day, but are assigned to a higher-grade level classroom for particular subjects. This practice helps provide access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more areas. For instance: A first grade student who is reading well above grade level goes to a second-grade class for reading instruction.

Whole Grade Acceleration – Students with exceptional abilities are moved ahead of normal grade placement. For instance, a student who has completed first grade is placed in a third-grade classroom full time at the beginning of the next school year. In this case, the student will have skipped second grade.

Grouping Strategies That Facilitate Differentiation and Do Not Require a Special Process

Clustering- Cluster grouping is an administrative procedure in which gifted students are assigned together in groups of 5-8 in one general education classroom instead of being distributed across all classrooms. Every classroom at the grade level remains heterogeneously grouped (having a low, middle, and high group) since the next highest ability students are divided between the rest of the classes. Cluster grouping simply reduces the number of levels in a classroom. Many systems actually cluster according to the strengths of the students. For instance, the highest ability math students are clustered together with the strongest math/science teacher while the highest ability language arts students may be clustered together with another teacher. Cluster teachers should be provided training in differentiation for high-end learners. Research suggests that cluster grouping combined with differentiation will (1) raise standardized test scores for all student groups, (2) appropriately challenge high-end learners, and (3) reduce the strain on teachers who are trying to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Flexible Skills Grouping – Flexible skills grouping is an administrative procedure in which students are regularly assessed and grouped for instruction according to demonstrated performance of skills. Students are allowed to progress at a rate more appropriate for their

ability level. Research suggests that flexible skills grouping results in substantial achievement gains for all readiness groups.

Differentiation Strategies – (Can be implemented without a special process)

Tiered Centers – Learning centers or stations, which allow the student to work at their readiness level and produce a product commensurate with their ability.

Tiered Assignments – Assignments are given to students based on their ability/readiness levels. All tiers are based on the same standard, but are differentiated according to content, process, or product.

Compacting – Students demonstrate mastery over content through a “pre-test” and are compacted out of the normal lessons to pursue topics more in-depth.

Learning Contract - Student enters into an agreement with a teacher to move through required content at his/her own pace (which is at an accelerated rate). Contracts can also be used to guide students through an independent study.

Literature/Socratic Circles – Students read and discuss text of their choosing (within parameters set by a teacher). Students are not assigned traditional literature circle roles. Analysis and discussion of the text at a conceptual level are the primary goals.

Independent Study Projects – Students study topics in their interest areas with guidance from a general education teacher or gifted specialist.

Acceleration Options for Middle and High School That Do Not Require A Special Process

Honors/Advanced Classes – Academic classes taught at a faster pace, and that focus on developing critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills.

Advanced Placement Classes (AP) – An academic program of college level courses, which focus on developing critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills. Students have the option of taking the College Board AP Exam, which may earn them college credit and/or advanced standing in college based on their scores on the AP Exam.

Distance Learning – This strategy involves transmitting instructional classes via interactive video conferencing (IVC) equipment or via an on-line e-course. Distance Learning provides an opportunity for students to enroll in courses not offered on their home campuses.

Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit – Students take college courses while still enrolled in high school. If the school system has an agreement with a local postsecondary school the students can earn both high school and college credit.

Dual Enrollment – Students take college courses while still in high school, but the student earns only college credit and not high school credit.

Referral Form for Considering Acceleration

(To be completed when considering subject or grade acceleration)

Name _____	Present School _____		
Grade _____	DOB _____	Age _____	Date of Referral _____
Parent/Guardian _____	Work Phone (Mom) _____ (Dad) _____		

Specific grade, subject, or course acceleration recommended by this referral:

Reason for acceleration referral:

Documentation of previous enrichment/differentiation opportunities within normal grade sequence:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Signature of person making referral: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Signature of Gifted Specialist _____

Signature of Building Principal _____

I give my permission to school personnel to conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine if acceleration would be appropriate for my child. I also understand that I will be informed of the results of this evaluation and will be consulted before any subject or grade acceleration is implemented.

Signature of parent/guardian _____ Date _____

Acceleration Determination and Approval Form

Name _____	Present School _____	Grade _____
Parent/Guardian _____	Work Phone _____	Date _____

Level of skill development in math and reading:

_____ Percentile	Test Used: _____	_____ Percentile	Test Used: _____
------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

Based on interviews with the student and information from parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and other appropriate personnel, as well as the data listed above, this student:

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| Yes | No | |
| ___ | ___ | Understands and desires acceleration. |
| ___ | ___ | Has adequate social-emotional development for the accelerated placement. |
| ___ | ___ | Does not have a sibling in the same (current) or next grade level. |
| ___ | ___ | Demonstrates skill proficiency in the top 20% of the subject in question. |
| ___ | ___ | Impact of acceleration on student's long-range plan has been explained to parent(s)/guardian(s) and student. |

(For Grade Acceleration Only)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | Student's Full Scale/Composite IQ is at least one standard deviation above the mean. |
|-----|-----|--|

Other observations by the evaluation team: _____

The committee **DOES/DOES NOT** recommend this student for **SUBJECT/GRADE** acceleration, based on the data collected and the proposed impact on the student's academic, intellectual, and social development.

Committee Members:

_____ Gifted Specialist	_____ Current Classroom Teacher	_____ Parent/Guardian
_____ Receiving Classroom Teacher	_____ Counselor/Psychometrist	_____ Administrator

Agree With Committee Decision _____	Disagree With Committee Decision _____
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s) _____	

ACCELERATION PLAN

Name _____	Present School _____	Grade _____
Parent/Guardian _____	Work Phone _____	Date _____

Specific grade, subject, or course acceleration recommended:

From _____ To _____

Teachers Involved: _____

Transition Period (If applicable) Begins _____ Ends _____
(This would be appropriate any time that transition issues may arise.)
M/D/Y M/D/Y

Strategies to ensure a successful transition:

Strategies to ensure continuous progress following the transition period:

Staff member assigned to monitor the implementation of this plan:

**IX.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Each LEA shall establish and implement a plan for professional development concerning the nature and needs of gifted students. A two-year plan should be developed which will include a needs assessment and follow-up evaluation. This plan should include steps for on-going staff development to ensure continuous improvement. All levels (K-12) should be addressed. Progress towards implementing the professional development plan will be evaluated during monitoring visits.

- A. Professional development for gifted specialists.
- B. Professional development for general education teachers who are charged with meeting the needs of high-end learners in the regular classroom.
- C. Professional development for general education teachers who are serving in the capacity of advanced level or advanced placement classes in the middle and high schools.
- D. Professional development for counselors concerning the nature and needs of gifted students.

***ATTACHMENT to Section IX
A copy of the plan for professional development should be attached.***

***IX PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR BLOUNT COUNTY
2020-2021
2021-2022
2022-2023***

FALL 2020- INSERVICE FOR GIFTED SPECIALISTS

FALL 2020- SECOND GRADE- GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS- INSERVICE ON IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS

FALL 2020- INSERVICE FOR COUNSELORS ON EVALUATING AND IDENTIFYING

FALL 2020- SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR AND GIFTED SPECIALISTS ATTEND STATE GIFTED UPDATE

FALL 2020- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ON ENRICHMENT AND DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FALL 2021- INSERVICE FOR GIFTED SPECIALISTS

FALL 2021- SECOND GRADE- GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS-INSERVICE ON IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS

FALL 2021-SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR AND GIFTED SPECIALISTS ATTEND STATE GIFTED UPDATE

FALL 2021-INSERVICE FOR COUNSELORS ON EVALUATING AND IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS

**FALL 2021- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ON ENRICHMENT AND DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FALL 2021- INSERVICE FOR GIFTED SPECIALISTS**

FALL 2022- INSERVICE FOR GIFTED SPECIALISTS

FALL 2022- SECOND GRADE- GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS-INSERVICE ON IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS

FALL 2022-SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR AND GIFTED SPECIALISTS ATTEND STATE GIFTED UPDATE

FALL 2022-INSERVICE FOR COUNSELORS ON EVALUATING AND IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS

FALL 2022- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ON ENRICHMENT AND DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

X.
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Each LEA shall establish grievance procedures consistent with local policy through which parents may resolve concerns regarding identification, evaluation, eligibility, or services for gifted students. Parents are required to follow this procedure before filing a formal complaint and/or requesting mediation through the ALSDE.

ATTACHMENT to Section X
Attach a copy of the grievance procedures through which parents may resolve concerns regarding identification, evaluation, eligibility, or services for gifted students.

The procedure to be followed by parents with a personal grievance regarding identification, evaluation, eligibility, or services for gifted students is to discuss the matter with the individual who represents the school system at the particular level.

If the problem is unresolved, the complainant may, within five working days after the meeting, request in writing that a meeting be arranged with the Coordinator of Special Education.

If the problem remains unresolved, the complainant may, within five working days after the meeting with the Coordinator of Special Education, request in writing a hearing before the Superintendent of the Board of Education.

Upon receipt of the request for a hearing, the Board with whom the request is filed shall set a time and place for the hearing, which time shall not be less than five working days or more than fifteen working days. The Board shall give notice of the time and place of the hearing to all interested parties. The hearing date may be reset by mutual agreement of both parties.

When attempts to resolve the issue at the local level fail, parents may utilize the Complaint Procedures, or Mediation Procedures developed by the State Department of Education as appropriate administrative remedy for matter pertaining to violations of state law or regulation regarding the identification, evaluation, eligibility, or services for gifted students.

**XI.
ALTERNATIVE/ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

Some LEAs have started programs of their own that provide enrichment opportunities to all students, or to students who meet specific criteria, or to students who do not qualify for gifted services according to state standards. If your LEA has such a program, please provide the following information:

- Name of program
- Brief description of program (target audience, purpose, type of service provided, etc.)
- Location of services (which schools and/or where within a school--regular class, resource room)
- Number of students currently being served according to grade and race
- Contact person

*ATTACHMENT to Section XI
PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES ENRICHMENT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS OTHER THAN THE PROGRAM DESCRIBED
IN GIFTED STUDENTS' GEPS.*

THE BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOL SYTSTEM DOES NOT UTILIZE AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM AT THIS TIME.

XII. **VIRTUAL OPTIONS**

Please describe below how students will be referred, identified and provided services when enrolled in the virtual options/virtual school.

1. **Identification:** Describe how the LEA will comply with regulations to identify students for gifted services in the virtual school.

The LEA will inform the Administration and Teachers of the Virtual School that students can be referred for consideration for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. For each student referred, information is gathered in the following three areas:

- A. *Aptitude*
- B. *Characteristics*
- C. *Performance*

The scores from the assessment/items used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services. Arrangements will be made with parents to administer assessments of students who attend the virtual school/Bridge Academy.

2. **Professional Development:** Describe how the LEA will comply with regulations to provide professional development to virtual teachers on the nature and needs of gifted learners and differentiation strategies to meet the needs of gifted learners enrolled in the virtual school.

The LEA will provide the Virtual School with yearly activities on evaluating and identifying gifted students as well as provide Professional Development on enrichment and differentiated instruction.

3. **Services:** Describe how the LEA will comply with regulations to provide services for gifted students in the virtual school. (Consider the grade level clusters of K-2, 2-3/6, 6/7-8, and 9-12 when determining comparable services).

GRADES K-2 CONSULTATIVE SERVICES

GRADE 2- CHILD FIND FOR GIFTED

GRADES 3-6 GIFTED SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED IN AN ONLINE PLATFORM LIKE SCHOLOGY

GRADES 7-8 ADVANCED CORE CURRICULUM CLASSES WILL BE OFFERED

GRADES 9-12 THE LEA WILL PROVIDE ADVANCED CLASSES, ELECTIVES, AND COUNSELING SERVICES TO GIFTED STUDENTS.