

## **Gulfport School District**

### **Gifted Education Program**

Definition of Intellectually Gifted Students as defined by the state of Mississippi:

“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 (Regulations for Gifted Education Programs, 2013).

### **Philosophy**

The philosophy of the Gulfport School District Gifted Program is :

- to provide a differentiated educational program for students based on their intellectual abilities and interests,
- to learn and facilitate their own educational and personal goals to strengthen their potential , and
- to be competitive and productive in a global society.

### **It is the goal of the Gulfport School District Gifted Program to:**

- provide an equitable identification process for gifted learner which is inclusive and meets requirements as outlined in state regulations,
- provide a curriculum and delivery system that addresses the cognitive, affective, and relational characteristics and needs of the gifted learner,
- provide an on-going evaluation of students’ progress and a comprehensive annual assessment of the district gifted program, and
- provide specialized training for gifted teachers and other personnel involved in educating gifted students.

### **The Gulfport School District Program Goals for Students are to:**

- provide gifted students opportunities for self-directed learning and participation in investigations of authentic problem solving,
- provide students opportunities to develop leadership skills and collaborate with peers of similar abilities and interests,
- provide students opportunities to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills in order to reach their full potential, and
- provide students access to technology and instruction in technology skills to facilitate their global awareness.

## **Student Identification, Assessment, and Eligibility**

### **Identification Process**

The Gulfport School District uses a multi-faceted process to identify those students who demonstrate unusually high achievement and/or have the potential for unusually high achievement. Intellectually Gifted students require unique differentiated educational programs outside the regular classroom.

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program. No single evaluation method or instrument adequately identifies students who are gifted; as a result, a multi-faceted identification process must be followed to ensure a fair evaluation of each individual student. The identification process shall provide an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students with an emerging potential for gifted-students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, ADD/ADHD, as well as students who exhibit classroom behavior such as extreme shyness, short attention spans, disruptiveness, continual questioning, and anxiety.

### **Referral Process**

There are two types of gifted referral processes in the Gifted Education Regulations of 2013:

1. Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
2. Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility

#### Mass Screening Referral Process

- Districts should use a normed group measure of intelligence in the Mass Screening Referral Process, as well as, assisting in identifying students in underrepresented populations.
  - Students who obtain a full-scale score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall move forward in the referral process.
  - Students who scored at or above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile but lower than the 90<sup>th</sup> on the normed group measure of the intelligence shall be subjected to an Emerging Potential for Gifted Referral checklist. Students meeting the criteria on the checklist and having the necessary data to support the areas identified, shall move forward in the referral process.

The next step is collection of substantiated student data obtained through the use of other objective and subjective measures. District personnel shall make decisions as to which measures will be used during this step of Mass Screening Referral Process.

- A student shall satisfy **two** of the following additional criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data stage:
  1. a score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
  2. a score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published measure of creativity,
  3. a score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published measure of leadership,
  4. a score **at or above the 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,
  5. a score **at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile** on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
  6. a score **at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile** on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
  7. **other measures that are documented in the research** on identification of intellectually gifted students.

#### Individual Referral Process

A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted.

A student shall satisfy a minimum of **three** (Gulfport School District's criteria are that two can be checklists) of the following criteria at this level before moving forward in the identification process:

1. score **at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile** on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,
2. score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. score **at or above the superior range** on a normed published measure of leadership,
5. 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,
6. score **at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile** on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
7. score **at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile** on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past 12 months, and/or
8. **other measures that are documented in the research** on identification of intellectually gifted students.

## LSC Review

The Gifted Local Survey Committee (GLSC) shall review all the data and make one of the following recommendations:

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

GLSC Team Members: **Gifted Teacher(s), Principal(s), Lead teacher (if there is only one gifted teacher assigned to the school), and special education teacher if student receives services under IDEA.**

GLSC Team Members for Gulfport School District Second Grade Mass Screening: **Gifted teacher(s), principal(s), Second grade lead teacher (if there is only one gifted teacher assigned to the school), and special education teacher if student receives services under IDEA.**

## Parent Permission

If the criterion has been met, the parents will be contacted and a meeting scheduled. At this time district personnel shall obtain written parental consent for testing and notify the student's parents in writing about their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## Assessment

The assessment stage is the individual test of intelligence, which shall be administered by a licensed examiner; in no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested.

1. The examiner shall review all available data on the student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use the information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence.
2. Standard operating procedures shall be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner's manuals.
3. The examiner shall provide a signed and dated report of the test administration to include testing conditions, scores on all subtests or subscales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the student.
4. A student must score at or above the 91<sup>nd</sup> percentile composite/full scale or the 91<sup>nd</sup> percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

### Emerging Potential for Gifted

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

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

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

Issues of Emerging Potential for Gifted Students will be addressed according to published Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs (2013) in Mississippi.

### Potential Twice-Exceptional Students

Issues of Potentially Twice-Exceptional and Potentially Disadvantaged Students will be addressed according to published Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs (2013) in Mississippi.

### Out of State 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 the 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.

### **Assessment Report**

Assessment reports will contain the following components that are addressed according to published Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs (2013) in Mississippi.

### **LSC Eligibility Determination**

Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the Local Survey Committee (LSC) shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program.

Parent Notification

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

## Placement in the Gifted Program

### Permission for Placement

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.**

Participation in the Gifted Education Program is **NOT** a reward. It is an Entitlement under State Law (Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181). Therefore, a student may not be restricted from participation as punishment.

### Participation in Program

Mississippi Department of Education gifted regulations require intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6 be provided with instruction by a teacher with gifted endorsement for a minimum of 240 minutes per week. Participation is necessary on a regular basis. (A regular classroom teacher may not prevent an eligible student from attending the gifted class due to issues within the regular classroom. A student may not choose to miss a gifted class without prior consent from the general education and gifted teachers and the parent/guardian).

### Homework/Classwork

As outlined in Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013), gifted students in grades 2-6 may not be required to make-up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted class. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating the mastery of content and information on regularly scheduled tests.

In the event a student has difficulty keeping up with the regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parents, classroom, teacher, gifted teacher, 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 always of prime consideration, special situations will be handled on an individual basis.

### Activities/Specials and Recess

Gifted students need to attend activities/specials and recess on the days that they participate in the district's gifted program.

### Progress Reporting

Parents of students participating in the Intellectually Gifted Program will be notified of progress/participation in writing at District scheduled report card time.

### 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 designated administrative representative this meeting will be documented.

As stated in the MDE Gifted Education Regulations (2013), "since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the law, the student 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."

### Removal/Reinstatement Procedures

Placement and participation in the Intellectually Gifted Program is based on a voluntary decision by the eligible student's parent/guardian. A student may be removed and reinstated from the program with written parent/guardian consent.

#### **Parent removal**

If parent removal occurs the student will be removed from the program no less than one nine weeks.

#### **Reassessment determination**

If the reassessment committee determines that the student is failing to make progress, two or below average on the gifted report card, in the Gifted Program; the student will be placed on probation for the next nine week term. The parents will be notified in writing that the student is on probation, and the student will remain in the gifted program. At this time, a conference with the reassessment committee, the parents and gifted student will be scheduled. If at the end of the nine-week probationary term the student fails to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. The student's parents must be notified in writing and given an opportunity to discuss the decision with district personnel before the student is removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained. If the parent does not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the district shall grant the parents a hearing.

### Reinstatement

Arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the reassessment committee and documented in the student's gifted file. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the student. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can reenter the program.

### Appeals & Hearing Processes

In the event a parent is not in agreement with the school-based reassessment committee's decision and wishes to appeal the results of the gifted screening process and/or assessment results. The district recognizes the following policy for appeals:

1. The parent must notify the school, in writing, within ten (10) school days of receiving the student's assessment report of the grounds for his appeal.
2. Within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the written request for appeal, the gifted review team, composed of the site Administrator, Gifted Teacher, Referring Teacher, Guidance Counselor, and Gifted Chairperson will review all data presented and inform the parent of the committee's decision in writing.
3. If the appeal is approved, the student will be tested within 30 calendar days.
4. If the appeal is not approved, the parent may contact the Director of Special Services in writing of the decision to continue with the next step of appeals to request a formal district hearing.

#### Formal District Hearing:

1. Time of hearing: The hearing will be set no sooner than five days or later than 30 days from the date of the parent's proper completion of a written request for a hearing, unless otherwise agreed by both parties involved.
2. Define Issue(s): Whether the Gulfport School District's actions in response to site level gifted review team's decision in regards to the parent's appeal were correct.
3. Parent's Written Notice Requirement: Written notice of specific grievances/claims that the Parent intends to pursue at the hearing, together with a summary of factual basis therefore, a list of witnesses and a copy of documentary evidence supporting the specific parent claim. If the Parent fails to timely (not less than 5 days before the hearing) to provide this information, the grievance/claims will be dismissed.
4. District's Written Notice Requirements: Not less than five days before the hearing date, the District will provide a list of witnesses and a copy of documentary evidence it intends to present in response to Parent's claim.

If the appeal is denied, the student will be required to wait until the next screening time, and follow all district mandated screening criteria.

No private, outside testing will be considered after the student has been referred for testing following the district process and tested by district assessors.