



# Muscogee County School District Student Progression Plan 2024-2025

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-Our Mission-  
TO INSPIRE AND EQUIP ALL STUDENTS  
TO ACHIEVE UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

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# I. Student Progression Plan Overview

## A. Purpose of Student Progression Plan

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) Student Progression Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive document intended to help parents/guardians and educators track a systematic grade-level progression from the time the student enters Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. The information contained in this document is based on local and state policy, legislation where applicable, and MCSD standard operating procedures.

This Plan is a guidance document, designed to provide helpful information and to be in harmony with MCSD Board policy. In case of conflict between this Plan and the Board policy documents available online, the provisions of Board policy will control outcomes and decisions. Parents and guardians with any questions or concerns regarding the information contained in this document are asked to contact their student’s school administrator to ensure complete understanding.

## B. Mission, Vision, and Values of School District

**Mission:** To inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential.

**Vision:** The MCSD is a beacon of educational excellence where all are known, valued and inspired.

**Values:** *MCSD fosters a healthy organization where...*

**WE** embrace equity and diversity

**WE** hold ourselves and others to the same high standards

**WE** commit to continuous learning and improvement

**WE** treat everyone with dignity and respect

*... as **WE** serve the needs of others.*

## C. Nondiscrimination Statement

**TO: Students, Parents, Staff and Faculty of MCSD**

- MCSD does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, including pregnancy and related conditions, religion, national origin, age, military status, disability, or any other legally protected status in its programs, activities, or employment.
- Any student, employee, or any other person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the aforesaid bases is encouraged to report the offense in accordance with the procedures outlined in the MCSD Student Handbook and in Board Policies JAA, GAAA, and IDFA. Complaints may also be made to the District’s Coordinators of Compliance who will implement the Board’s discriminatory complaints or harassment procedures.
- Equity coordinators may be contacted here: MCSD Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906/(706) 748-2000
- Equity coordinators for the school system:
  - Title VI. Title IX : Dr. Angela D. Vickers-Ward, Chief of Student Services
  - Americans With Disabilities Act and Section 504: Dr. Nikki Sutton
  - Title IX / Sports Equity: Jeffrey W. Battles, Athletics Department
  - Employment Issues: Tonya Carter, Chief of Human Resources
- Students and/or employees found to have engaged in acts of discrimination on the above bases will be promptly disciplined. Such discipline may include, if circumstances warrant, suspension or expulsion for students or suspension or termination for employees.
- Neither students nor employees will be subjected to retaliation for reporting such harassment or discrimination.

## II. Georgia Standards of Excellence Instructional Framework

### A. Georgia Standards of Excellence and Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards

The MCSD follows the state-required Georgia Standards-Based Instructional Framework and the Georgia Standards of Excellence for all core content instruction except in Mathematics, which uses Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards. On August 26, 2021, the Georgia Board of Education approved the adoption of Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards. Implementation of Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards began in August 2023.

The link below will provide related information to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies:

<https://inspire.gadoe.org/courses>

The link below will provide related information to Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards.

<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/GA-K12-Math-Standards.aspx>

### B. Provisions for Students with Disabilities

The Georgia Department of Education mandates that Georgia's Standards of Excellence (GSE) and Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards are intended for all students in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade in the areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Effective accommodations and modifications are put in place to support the involvement of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum.

Access to grade-level content standards will be tailored for each student, based upon that student's individual strengths and needs. The student's IEP or 504 team<sup>1</sup> will use an individualized analysis of a student to determine how that student will access the Georgia standards.

Students can access Georgia's content standards in many ways, including access through objectives in the Individual Education Program (IEP) that are aligned to Georgia's content standards or in the form of grade-level activities in which the student will practice and use skills and knowledge. Teachers may utilize different types of instructional materials to teach academic content, and students may show understanding and mastery of the standards using a variety of methods.

Because of the individualized nature of the programming provided for students with disabilities, parents/guardians are encouraged to reach out to building-level administrators or teachers with questions regarding a student's educational programming.

<sup>1</sup> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act are federal laws requiring that appropriate education and related services are provided to students with disabilities.

### **III. Overview of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

#### **A. Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students: A Continuous Improvement Framework**

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-driven prevention framework that uses (screening and progress monitoring data) to identify and predict which students may need advanced content and/or be at risk for poor academic and/or social-emotional/behavioral outcomes. Multi-Tiered System of Supports is now called Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students (GTSSS) by the GaDOE. MCSD is moving toward full implementation of GTSSS with the goal of having GTSSS fully implemented in every school.

GTSSS is a system that helps teachers and other key stakeholders know when students need advanced content and/or additional supports, and helps teachers put those supports into place. GTSSS is a framework that ensures successful educational outcomes for all students by using a data-based problem-solving process. The intent of the GTSSS is to provide and evaluate the effectiveness of multiple tiers of integrated academic and social-emotional/behavioral instruction as well as intervention supports.

GTSSS can be thought of as a problem-solving culture, where teachers use data to determine how much progress each student is making, and how much support each student needs. By using data to evaluate and monitor student progress, the MCSD seeks to more efficiently use its available resources to improve student outcomes.

GTSSS is set up as a tiered system that includes the following:

- Tier 1: Tier 1 is high-quality core instruction in academics, behavior, and attendance, provided to all students by classroom teachers.
- Tier 2: Tier 2 includes skills-based interventions for a targeted group of students that are not making adequate progress with Tier 1 instruction.
- Tier 3: Tier 3 includes intensive skills-based interventions provided to fewer students that are not making adequate progress with Tier 1 instruction or Tier 2 intervention.

If you have any questions about GTSSS, please contact a teacher, administrator, or the GTSSS Program Manager, Dr. Nikki Sutton, at (706) 748-2000.

#### **B. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a multi-level prevention system for behavior embedded in the GTSSS (see above). PBIS is intended to create a positive school climate as an emphasis is placed on teaching appropriate behavior in the same way that we teach math or science. Although consequences for unexpected behaviors still occur, being proactive and preventative through the use of proven behavioral strategies and intervention is the focus.

Successful implementation allows for more energy and time to be spent recognizing students who exhibit positive behaviors.

MCSD is dedicated to building this framework in all schools. It takes at least three years for a school to fully implement PBIS.

The following schools have fully implemented PBIS as of the 2021/2022 school year:

### Distinguished Schools

- Clubview Elementary
- Davis Elementary
- Downtown Elementary Magnet Academy
- Lonnie Jackson Academy
- Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary
- Midland Academy
- South Columbus Elementary

### Operational Schools

- Allen Elementary
- Blanchard Elementary
- Brewer Elementary
- Britt David Elementary Computer Magnet
- Dawson Elementary
- Dorothy Height Elementary
- Eagle Ridge Academy
- Hannan Elementary
- Johnson Elementary
- Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts
- Reese Rd. Leadership Academy
- Rigdon Rd. Elementary
- Waddell Elementary
- Wesley Heights Elementary
- Woodall GNETS Program

Parents are encouraged to contact the school administrator or PBIS coach to learn more, and to determine the PBIS status of their students' school(s).

For questions about PBIS, contact Dr. Kenya Gilmore, Director of Prevention and Intervention Practices, at [PBIS@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:PBIS@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or (706) 748-3292. Additional information is available online:

<https://muscogee.k12.ga.us/c/Divisions/StudentServices/PreventionandInterventionPractices>

## IV. Enrollment and Assignment

The information in this section is intended to guide parents/guardians as to the MCSD standard practices related to enrollment of students, which are based on relevant legal authority and GaDOE Rules and Regulations. Additional information is contained in MCSD Board Policy JBC, "School Admissions," and online at the MCSD website, or by contacting the Student Services Division of the MCSD at (706) 748-2000. All enrollment in MCSD begins with our Online Registration application.

**Age of Enrollment:** Students are eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education program where they have reached the age of five by September 1<sup>st</sup>, and have not reached the age of 21 by September 1<sup>st</sup> or received a high school diploma or its equivalent. Students who lived in another state or country for the two years prior to moving to Georgia and were enrolled in an accredited Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade may be eligible for enrollment, and should contact the Student Services Division.

**Students With IEPs:** Students that are educated pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be eligible for enrollment until they reach the end of the semester of their twenty-second

birthday. Parents/guardians, please bring a current copy of the student's IEP information to the Program for Exceptional Students located in the Muscogee County Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA. If you need additional assistance related to a student with a disability, please email [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2225.

**McKinney-Vento:** MCSD is committed to assisting students and families that are experiencing homelessness. MCSD will follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to remove barriers to school enrollment and attendance<sup>2</sup>. Further detailed information about the McKinney-Vento Program is provided within this Plan. Students that are experiencing homelessness may be eligible for immediate student enrollment. Assistance is available by contacting the Student Services Division of the MCSD at (706) 748-2000.

## **A. Documents Required to Enroll: Student Identification and Immunization**

### **1. Proof of Student's Age & Legal Name (provide one of the following):**

- certified copy of a birth certificate, certified hospital issued birth record or birth certificate
- military ID
- valid driver's license
- passport
- adoption record
- religious record signed by an authorized religious official
- official school transcript
- affidavit of age sworn to by the parent, guardian, grandparent, or other person accompanied by a certificate of age signed by a licensed practicing physician, which certificate states that the physician has examined the child and believes that the age as stated in the affidavit is substantially correct.

### **2. Social Security Card**

In addition to one of the documents listed above, the individual registering the student shall provide a copy of the enrolling student's social security number to the proper school authorities or shall complete and sign a form stating the individual does not wish to provide the social security number.

### **3. Health/Immunization Requirements**

- Georgia Certificate of Immunization (GA Form 3231)
- Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening Form (GA Form 3300)
- Emergency Contact Information

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please see the McKinney-Vento section of this document, Board Policy JBC-1 and Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-5-1-28.

## B. Documents Required to Enroll: Verification of Residency

Proof of residence is required when a student initially enrolls in a Muscogee County school, whenever a change of residence occurs, or any time proof of residency is requested by district personnel. Additional information is available at MCSD Board Policy JBC and JBCA. The following documents provide valid proof of residency:

- a. A lease or rental agreement consisting of written evidence that the agreement is valid and current, and a current utility bill or verification letter from one of the following utility companies: gas, electric, water, sanitation or cable company. Note that rental agreements must identify the parent as the tenant of record fiscally responsible for the residence listed in the agreement. Parents listed as mere occupants of a stated residence are not considered tenants of the property for the purposes of enrollment. All records must include the name and street address of the parent and service addresses must be plainly visible in any utility document provided as proof;  
OR
- b. A current residential property tax statement or settlement statement, and one current utility bill or verification letter from either the gas, electric, water, sanitation or cable company. Parents not listed in ownership documents that are willing to provide evidence of their legal relationship to the property owner may submit legal documents for consideration as an authorized representative of the titleholder. All records must include the name and street address of the parent and service addresses must be plainly visible in any utility document provided as proof;  
OR
- c. A Muscogee County Schools Affidavit of Residency: A parent who resides full time in Muscogee County but is unable to provide the consistent records listed above may complete an Affidavit of Residency. The affidavit shall be completed in the presence of school system personnel and signed by the parent in the presence of a notary public. In addition, the legal owner or authorized tenant of the property where the student and parent reside shall complete and sign the affidavit with school system personnel and provide the documentation required as proof of residence. The affidavit will be in effect until the parent provides proof of residence as required by this policy, but no longer than the end of the current school year.

	<b>Student is Entering Pre-K</b>	<b>K-12 Muscogee County</b>	<b>Out of State Students Moving to Muscogee County, Entering MCSD for the First Time</b>	<b>Out of State Transfer Students Moving Back to the MCSD *Not for the First Time</b>	<b>Students Coming from a Different Georgia County Public School</b>	<b>In County Private or Home School</b>
Proof of Student's Age	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Security Card	X	X	X	X	X	X
Two proofs of residency – Mortgage or lease AND Current Utility Bill	X	X	X	X	X	X

Withdrawal form from school student previously attended	X	X	X	X	X	X
Must be 5 years old on or before September 1 <sup>st</sup> of the school year		X	X	X	X	X
Child must be 6 years old on or before September 1 <sup>st</sup> of the school year. Student has completed Kindergarten. Student may be admitted any time during the school year		X	X	X	X	X
Child must be 4 years old on or before September 1 <sup>st</sup> of the school year; Student may be admitted any time during the school year if seats are available	X					

### C. Nonresident Students

A nonresident student is defined as a child whose legal residence and that of the child's parent or legal custodian or guardian is outside of Muscogee County. The MCSD Board has the sole authority to approve the enrollment of any nonresident student and to charge tuition for said student. See MCSD Board Policy JBCB.

#### 1. Nonresident Tuition Information

Tuition amounts change from year to year. The amount is determined just prior to the beginning of school. When a student enters the school district during the school year, an invoice is mailed within approximately 15 days from enrollment. Tuition amount is prorated per day for number of days remaining in the school year. Students attending high school within the United States on an F-1 Visa are required to pay tuition. The tuition for the current school year can be obtained by contacting the MCSD Financial Division at (706) 748-2354.

## **2. Nonresident Military Student Enrollment**

Effective July 1, 2017, school-age children of military service members, who live on Fort Moore, may attend a MCSD school, provided space is available and the student's educational needs can be met at the school. Transportation is not provided to these students by the MCSD as a condition of enrollment; thus, the parent or legal guardian is responsible for transportation of the student(s) to and from school.

Schools that are full or with waiting lists cannot accept students. As of the time of printing of this information, the following schools cannot accept students under these provisions: Britt David Magnet Academy, Clubview Elementary, Columbus High, and North Columbus Elementary, Northside High, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts, and Veterans Memorial Middle.

### **D. Students with Disabilities Entering MCSD for the First Time**

Students with disabilities coming into MCSD for the first time are asked to provide a copy of the most recent Individualized Education Program (or Plan), most recently completed psychological evaluation or Individualized Service Plan for the student, as well as any other documents that may assist the MCSD to determine how to best serve the student. In order to ensure appropriate enrollment and assignment, students with disabilities are asked to contact the Program for Exceptional Students located at the Muscogee County Public Education Center to enroll.

If you need additional assistance with any portion of the enrollment process, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **E. Students Moving to Muscogee County from Other Countries**

All children and youth who have attained the age of five (5) years by September 1<sup>st</sup> shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education programs unless they attain the age of twenty (20) by September 1<sup>st</sup>, or they have received high school diplomas or the equivalent in their native countries.

A child who is coming from a foreign country where he/she was legally enrolled in public Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, or a Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade accredited by a country or regional association of said country, shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate grade if the child will attain the age of five (5) for Kindergarten or six (6) for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Foreign born students without valid school transcripts will be placed in an age-appropriate setting, no lower than one (1) year below grade level.

### **F. Home School Education and Private/Parochial Schools**

#### **1. Assignment of Students Coming from Approved Accredited Schools or Programs**

Students transferring from an **approved accredited** private or home school program and entering Grades K-9 will be assigned a grade placement in accordance with the procedures listed below. The student will submit an official transcript from the school/program.

- Students transferring from an accredited home school program must register through the Online Registration (OLR) application.

- OLRs from accredited homeschool programs will receive a grade placement from Central Registration in the Student Services Division prior to enrollment.
- Students between the ages of 5 through 7 will be placed in their age-appropriate grade based on student documentation. Anytime during the first grading period, the local school Promotion and Retention Committee may request that the school reviews the student's grade placement. If the Committee recommends a change in grade placement, the PreK–12 Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction must approve the recommendation. Schools should follow the MCSD Promotion/Retention Guidelines for requested changes in placement to include the cover sheet, supporting documentation, and the plan of support for the recommended placement.

MCSD accepts transcripts from schools and programs who are accredited through the below agencies:

- Cognia and/or any one of its accrediting member agencies
- Georgia Accrediting Commission
- Georgia Association of Christian Schools
- Georgia Private School Accreditation Council and/or any one of its accrediting member agencies
- Association of Christian Schools International

Approved accredited online schools or programs include:

- Acellus Academy (the parent-led program is not accredited)
- Destinations Career Academy of Georgia
- Georgia Connections Academy
- Georgia Cyber Academy
- Georgia Virtual School (most other states have an approved virtual school as well)

## **2. Assignment of Students Coming from Non-Accredited Schools or Programs**

Students transferring from a non-accredited private or home school program will be assigned a grade placement in accordance with the procedures listed below.

- The student will submit a transcript from the school/program used or other documentation from the family curriculum outlining grades and content completed.
- Students transferring from a non-accredited home school program must register through the Online Registration (OLR) application.
- Students will be given a placement test for Grades 2 through 9 which is administered by the Research, Accountability and Assessment team.
- Once testing is completed, students will be assigned to the appropriate grade pending successful completion of the placement test.
- Students entering high school and seeking a unit of credit must pass End of Course Assessment (EOC) or a local district final exam. If the student passes the EOC or local district final exam, credit will be awarded for the course. The grades on the EOC or final exam will be the grade for the class listed on the transcript.
- A grade placement will be assigned by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and distributed to Central Registration, the assigned school, and the parent/guardian.

### **3. Private School and Home School Students with Disabilities**

Private and Home School Students with Disabilities that attend school in Muscogee County request proportionate share services by contacting the Program for Exceptional Students by emailing [childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or calling (706) 748-2230.

Selection of these services are determined through an annual meeting with Private and Home School parents and the school district. Through the child find process, an evaluation may be provided and, if appropriate, accommodation and/or special education services may be provided through a service plan.

### **School Assignment**

To determine the school of assignment based on your address for this school year, see the School Attendance Zone Locator: <https://www.infofinderi.com/ifi/?cid=MCS233UKGQD4>. The school identified for a particular address reflects the assignment for the current school year. The descriptions and maps of school attendance zones available on the MCSD website, on the Columbus City Planning Division website, or in the local newspapers are intended for general reference only.

## **V. Student Transfers and Withdrawals**

### **A. Transferring Between Muscogee County Public Schools (Grades K-12)**

Parents or Legal Guardians requesting a Hardship transfer must provide evidence of a compelling reason for requesting the transfer. Bus transportation is not provided by the school district for hardship transfers. Parents of students new to the school district for the coming year may request a hardship transfer application from the Central Registration office at the time of enrollment.

Please visit the MCSD website at <https://muscogee.k12.ga.us> for more information regarding school transfers.

#### **1. Students with Disabilities**

Students with Disabilities who are transferring within the school district can register at their zoned school unless the following are required:

- To request an address change for special transportation per an IEP; or
- To receive a change in placement assignment based on an IEP determination

These factors must be addressed by coming to the Program for Exceptional Students at the Muscogee County Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA. If you need additional assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **B. Out of County, State, Country or Private, Home School, or Military Compact**

Parents of students that are out of county, state, country or private, home school or military compact for the coming year may request a hardship/open seat transfer application from the Central Registration office at the time of enrollment. Active military personnel living on federal property may request a Fort Moore transfer application at the time of enrollment.

## C. Home Schooled Students

Students transferring from **accredited** or **non-accredited** home school programs will be assigned a grade placement in accordance with State Rule 160-5-1-.5 and MCSD Board Policy JBC (4). Students transferring from an accredited home school program must have official transcripts, register with Central Registration through our Online Registration application and schedule an appointment with the Chief Academic Officer to review transcripts.

Students transferring from a non-accredited home school program must register with Central Registration through our Online Registration application and schedule an appointment with the office of the Chief Academic Officer to determine grade placement.

Students withdrawing from MCSD to home school must register at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org).

## D. Withdrawal Procedures

The school district is required by law to report to DFCS after 45 days any student who withdraws from the school district without a declaration or without enrolling in another public school. O.C.G.A. 20-2-785 (HB 530).

- **Due to Absence:** MCSD is authorized to administratively withdraw students 16 years of age or older (not subject to the Compulsory Attendance Law) who have 10 (ten) or more consecutive days of unexcused absences without any extenuating circumstances. School administrators shall document a minimum of three (3) attempts to contact a parent, guardian, or other person for the purpose of holding an attendance withdrawal conference prior to withdrawing a student.
- **Parental Withdrawal:** MCSD procedure requires that where a parent or guardian seeks to withdraw his or her child from school, the parent or guardian who registered the student must fill out a written withdrawal form.
- **Parental Withdrawal of Unemancipated Minor:** Students between the ages of 16 and 18 (unemancipated minors) must have parental permission to withdraw from school prior to earning a diploma. The principal must convene a conference with the parent of child within two (2) days of receiving notice of intent to withdraw.

## E. McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Students must be allowed to attend their school of origin "to the extent feasible." School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(G).

Changing schools significantly impedes students' academic and social growth. The literature on highly mobile students indicates that it can take a student four to six months to recover academically after changing schools. Many studies also have found highly mobile students to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. Therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act calls for school districts to maintain students in their school of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the wishes of the parent of guardian. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3). Students have the right to attend the school building of origin which provides continuity of instruction, teachers, and peers.

Considerations for changing schools, other than as a result of a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth's wishes, must be based on a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that may be considered include: the age of the child or youth; the

impact the commute may have on the student’s education; personal safety issues; the student’s need for special instruction; length of anticipated stay in temporary shelter or other temporary location; and time remaining in the school year. There may be other student-centered factors not enumerated here that will help determine feasibility. Above all, feasibility is a child-centered decision.

## VI. Elementary Education (PreK - Grade 5)

### A. Required Program of Study K-5

<b>TABLE 1 ELEMENTARY REQUIRED PROGRAM OF STUDY</b>					
<b>Grade K</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)	Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)	Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)	Language Arts* (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)	Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)	Language Arts* (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language)
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics*
Science	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
	Art	Art	Art	Art	Art
	Music	Music	Music	Music	Music
<u>Georgia Standards of Excellence</u> <u>*Promotion Retention GMAS</u> <u>Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy</u> <u>MCSD Promotion and Retention Policy</u>					

Code 20-2-776 (2009) requires each local school system to provide at least the minimum instruction in Physical Education required by the State Board of Education in Code 20-2-142. State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-12 (2011) requires local boards to develop and implement an accurate comprehensive health and physical education program that includes motor skills, physical fitness, and lifetime sports. The rule further requires 90 hours of contact instruction in physical education and health for students in Grades K-5.

Students with Disabilities on a general education track follow the same criteria and requirements as all other students unless the IEP team makes a student specific change due to an individual student’s data and identified needs. Rule 160-3-1-.07

## **1. English Language Arts**

The K-5 Standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. Fundamentally, students in Grades K-5 are focused on developing foundational skills and comprehension strategies for reading through Structured Literacy that will enable them to manipulate grade-level texts of appropriate complexity and communicate effectively both in writing and in speaking. Students will begin to anchor their inquiries and responses firmly to the text, whether literary or informational, using increasingly specific and relevant evidence to support their claims and inferences.

Students' analytical skills will extend to identifying main idea/theme, understanding character and plot development, and evaluating the impact of word choice. Additionally, students will identify structural elements in text such as scenes and chapters, distinguish narrative voice, understand the impact of aesthetic elements, and make logical connections. A key component of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) is the expectation of appropriate grade-level complexity in text choices. Complexity levels are assessed based upon a variety of indicators.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, to retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in previous grades, and to work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the Standards. Although the Standards are divided into Foundational Skills, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected. For example, the Writing Standards require that students write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening includes the necessity of presenting findings from research.

## **2. Mathematics**

Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The Georgia Mathematics Curriculum focuses on actively engaging students in the development of mathematical understanding by using manipulatives and a variety of representations, working independently and cooperatively to solve problems, and estimating and computing efficiently.

With Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards, students learn by applying mathematical concepts rather than merely following a sequence of procedures. In mathematics classrooms, students will learn to think critically in a mathematical way with an understanding that there are many different ways to a solution. Implementation of the Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards places a greater emphasis on problem solving, reasoning, representation, connections, communication, and mathematical modeling.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, to retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in previous grades, and to work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the Standards.

## **3. Science**

The Science Georgia Standards of Excellence drive science instruction. Hands-on, student-centered, and inquiry-based approaches should be the emphasis of instruction. The GSE focus on a limited number of core disciplinary ideas and crosscutting concepts which build from Kindergarten to High School. The standards are written with the core knowledge to be mastered integrated with the science and engineering practices needed to engage in scientific inquiry and engineering design.

Crosscutting concepts are used to make connections across different science disciplines. The standards are a required minimum set of expectations that show proficiency in science. These standards set a maximum expectation on what will be assessed by the Georgia Milestones Assessment System in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, to retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in previous grades, and to work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the standards.

#### **4. Social Studies**

The Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence drive social studies instruction. Student-centered, inquiry-based approaches should be the emphasis of instruction. The standards are a required minimum set of expectations that show proficiency in social studies. Units and frameworks align to connecting themes and enduring understandings that transcend units and courses. Ultimately, the enduring understandings are what students will take from a course that applies to life beyond school.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, to retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in previous grades, and to work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the Standards.

#### **5. Fine Arts**

The Georgia Standards of Excellence for fine arts are based on The National Standards for Arts Education as referenced in the National Standards for Arts Education, Copyright ©2014 by NAFME: The National Association for Music Education. The National Standards outline what every K-12 student should know and be able to do in the arts. The National Standards were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Association, through a grant administered by The National Association for Music Education (NAFME).

As described in the National Standards for Arts Education, arts education benefits both student and society. The arts cultivate the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence support the arts in the "academic" standing in that mere participation is not the same as education. The standards affirm that discipline and rigor are critical to high academic achievement. Performance-based assessment has long been used in the arts that include the practice of portfolio review in the visual arts and the assessment of performance skills through auditions used in dance, music, and theatre. The content of the standards for the arts attends to creating, performing, and responding which is consistent with and informs the perspective of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) Arts and Humanities Department supports more than 145 visual art, music, band, orchestra, chorus, piano, guitar, dance and drama teachers and 30,000 students within its Grades 1-12 programs.

Fine arts instruction in MCSD is standards-driven, sequential, substantive and comprehensive. All 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade elementary school students will receive weekly art and music classes of at least 40 minutes.

## 6. Physical and Health Educational Requirements

The GADOE requires that students in Grades K-5 receive 90 hours of physical and health education throughout the school year. The Board of Education requires each elementary school to schedule recess for all students in Kindergarten and Grades 1-5 every school day provided, however, that recess shall not be required on any school day on which a student has had physical education or structured activity time or if reasonable circumstances impede such recess, such as inclement weather when no indoor space is available, assemblies or field trips exceeding their scheduled duration, conflicts occurring at the scheduled recess time over which the classroom teacher has no control, or emergencies, disasters, or acts of God. GADOE Rule 160-4-2-.12 states that alcohol, drug, disease prevention, environmental health, nutrition, personal health, safety, mental health, growth and development, consumer health, health careers, family living, motor skills, physical fitness, lifetime sports, outdoor education, and sex education/AIDS education will be taught at an appropriate level for Grades K-12. At the elementary level, this is taught through the guidance classes. Parents have the option to opt out of the sex education classes. They may get an opt out form from the counselor. The rule also states that there will be an annual assessment measuring and reporting health related fitness in the areas of aerobic capacity, body composition, flexibility, muscular strength, and muscular endurance. Georgia uses the FIT Georgia to administer this assessment. Students in Grades 4-5 are assessed annually using all 5 areas. Students in Grades 1-3 have their height and weight measured.

## B. Elementary School Student Assessment Program

The purpose of the Georgia Student Assessment Program is to measure student achievement of the state-adopted content standards and inform efforts to improve teaching and learning. Results of the assessment program are utilized to identify students failing to achieve mastery of content, to provide teachers with feedback about instructional practice, and to assist school districts in identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to establish priorities in planning educational programs. The assessment program includes customized summative criterion-referenced tests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, Georgia participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Grades 4, 8 and 12 and administers an English language proficiency test in Grades K-12.

### 1. State and National Assessments

**Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0)** is for students with a significant cognitive disability and is based on an IEP team decision. The areas assessed by GAA 2.0 include:

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science in Grades 5, 8, and 11
- Social Studies in Grades 8 and 11

**Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)** is a year-long portfolio that tracks student progress towards mastering the state required content standards for Kindergarten. The goal of the assessment program is to provide parents and teachers with information about the level of instructional support needed by individual students entering Kindergarten and later moving to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade. The areas assessed by the GKIDS include:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics

- Social Studies
- Science
- Approaches to Learning
- Personal and Social Development
- Motor Skills

## 2. Expected Performances on the Georgia Milestones Assessment System for Grades 3 and 5

**Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones)** for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Milestones-Assessment-System.aspx>

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive summative assessment program and represents a single system of summative assessments that span all three levels of the state's educational system – elementary, middle, and high school. The system is designed to send consistent signals about students' preparedness for the next level, be it the next grade, course, or endeavor, such as entering college or beginning a career after leaving the K-12 educational system.

The Georgia Milestones Assessment is given to students in Grades 3-5 in English Language Arts and Math. Additionally, students in Grade 5 are given the Science assessment.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** National assessments in reading, math and science in Grades 4, 8, and 12 for selected schools as determined by the U.S. Department of Education

## 3. Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities are required to participate in all state and federal assessment requirements. The type of assessment (standard, standard with accommodations, conditional, or Alternative) is determined through the Individual Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 process. Students also receive accommodations and supports through the IEP as guided by the present levels of performance which outline specific student need. If you need additional assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

## 4. Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is critical to the overall quality of the school district's assessment program and the data it provides. Students who are caught cheating, helping others cheat, or knowingly allowing another student to cheat on a state mandated assessment will be considered to have committed academic dishonesty. The tests of students who are confirmed to have participated in cheating will be invalidated as required by the Georgia Department of Education with no score reported. Students will be rescheduled to retake the exam in the next available re-test window. This may result in a delay of grades or promotion for students requiring the exam for course credit or a portion of the course grade.

## C. Attendance Requirements

Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program shall be required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Such mandatory attendance shall not be required where the child has successfully completed all requirements for a high school diploma.

## **D. Early Childhood/Preschool Programs**

### **Pre-Kindergarten Program Enrollment**

Pre-Kindergarten [Pre-K] Programs in MCSD include Georgia Pre-K, Blended Head Start, and Pre-K Special Education. These programs serve children from age three (3) to age five (5).

Waiver forms for Pre-K students (Bright from the Start and Muscogee County) may be obtained from the Pre-K site. Pre-K students must have an up-to-date immunization record or affidavit on file within 30 days of the date of entry into the program. Pre-K students must additionally provide proof of a medical examination completed within the last twelve months (GA Form 3300). This completed Form 3300 must be provided within 90 calendar days of the student's entry into the Pre-K program.

### **Homeless Assistance for Pre-K Students**

Appropriate exceptions and accommodations will be made to minimize the barriers related to student assignment for students identified as eligible for services through the MCSD McKinney-Vento Department in the Division of Student Services. For additional information, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/supporting-homeless-students/index.html> and related Georgia Statutes.

### **Pre-K Students Moving to Muscogee County**

Special needs students transferring from an out-of-state school must meet the entrance criteria for MCSD Pre-K Programs or have a current Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) for an Exceptional Student Education Program.

## **1. Pre-K Admission**

Students entering Pre-K in the Muscogee County School District must meet the admission criteria designated for each program. Blended Head Start applicants must apply and meet eligibility criteria which include age, residence and income as defined by the Federal Income Guidelines. All other students must meet the GA Pre-K age and residence criteria. All Pre-K Special Education students must meet identification criteria set by the State of Georgia and federal guidelines. Students, with the exception of Pre-K Special Education identified students, are awarded a seat via a lottery process. As vacancies occur throughout the academic school year, seats will be filled using the lottery drawn waiting list.

### **Age**

Students entering Pre-Kindergarten must meet the age requirements of the specific program. GA Pre-K eligible students must be four (4) no later than September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of planned attendance. If a child is not served as a four-year-old previously in the Georgia Pre-K program, then the child may be eligible to attend the Pre-K program as a five-year-old. Pre-K Special Education identified students are eligible for service upon attainment of their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

## **2. Pre-K Program of Study**

### **Curriculum**

The program of study for Pre-K is based on curricula that provides developmentally appropriate instruction and teaching strategies individualized for the age and needs of the student. Research-based curricula and developmentally appropriate resources provide opportunities for student learning in all areas of development. We are required to provide instruction using the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). These standards are aligned with the Kindergarten Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. This alignment allows for seamless transition from Pre-K to

Kindergarten. Parents are an integral part of our students' learning process and are invited to share their areas of expertise.

### **Experiences and Activities**

The MCSD Pre-K Program provides students with developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that enhance their cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth. Students develop concepts about themselves, others, and the world around them through observations, experimentation and discovery. Daily activities are planned to provide teacher-directed and child-initiated experiences in small, individual and large group settings.

Readiness goals for student learning are written to align with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). These goals are in the areas of personal/social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development/health and safety. Expectations for students are they will be kindergarten ready and develop a love of learning.

### **Pre-K Students with Disabilities**

Students ages 3-5 requiring special adaptations to the regular Pre-K Program shall be admitted through an eligibility staffing and shall maintain a current Individual Education Program (IEP).

An appropriate program of study will be included in each Pre-K Special Education student's IEP. Pre-K students that have been identified through Georgia's Babies Can't Wait Program must have an evaluation and, if appropriate, an IEP or IFSP developed by their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

The MCSD Program for Exceptional Students works diligently to identify and provide early intervention for young children with special needs through the Pre-K Special Education Program. Programs for all Students with Disabilities are provided in compliance with state and federal guidelines.

Parents, doctors, or other interested persons may refer a child Birth-Age 5 where there are suspected delays or concerns, to the Pre-K Special Education Program. In collaboration with Babies Can't Wait, the MCSD ensures that students Birth-Age 3 are identified, located, and evaluated.

Contact the Pre-K Special Education program at (706) 748-2230 or email [childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us) for additional information. You can also inquire in person at the Muscogee County Public Education Center located at 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906. The Columbus Health Department Babies Can't Wait Program also provides services for children Birth-Age 3. This agency can be reached at (706) 327-0189.

## **3. Placement of Pre-K Students**

### **Blended Head Start**

Placement of Blended Head Start students in the Pre-K Program is determined by age, proof of residence, and income eligibility via lottery selection.

### **Georgia Pre-Kindergarten**

Placement in the Georgia Pre-K Program is determined by age and proof of residence via a lottery process.

### **Pre-K Special Education**

Placement of Pre-K Special Education students in Pre-K programs will be determined by the Individual Education Planning Team and in compliance with the IEP/IFSP providing services in the least restrictive environment.

**Dually Enrolled**

Placement of Pre-K Special Education students in Georgia Pre-K (dual enrollment) is determined by an IEP team decision.

**4. Health**

The health and developmental services for the Blended Head Start and Georgia Pre-K programs strive to meet the following goals:

- Communicate resources to support the following: medical, dental, social-emotional and nutrition for all Pre-Kindergarten students.
- Provide an environment to meet the diverse needs of our students and their families. Every effort is made to effectively utilize resources to accommodate students with disabilities or special needs. Promote preventive health services and early intervention.

**5. Safety**

Child health and safety measures are practiced daily in all of the Muscogee County School District Pre-Kindergarten programs. Every effort is made to assure a safe and healthy environment for our children, staff, and the public.

**6. Nutrition**

Nutrition plays an important role for both students and their families within MCSD Pre-Kindergarten programs. The nutrition service area strives to assist families in meeting each student's nutritional needs and establish good eating habits that nurture healthy development while promoting life-long well-being. The nutritional staff works diligently to plan and prepare nutritious menus that meet current USDA guidelines and ensure food safety and sanitation. Nutritious meals are offered daily to students, school staff and any visiting parent/guardian.

**7. Social Emotional Development**

Each teacher has a SECOND STEP curriculum classroom kit. SECOND STEP helps our littlest learners harness their energy and potential by teaching them to listen, pay attention, control their behavior, and get along with others. When students enter Kindergarten with the self-regulation and social-emotional skills taught in the research-based SECOND STEP program, they are set up for success. All Pre-K teachers have been trained to use the SECOND STEP curriculum in the classroom.

**8. Parent Involvement**

Parent and family engagement in Pre-K is about building relationships with families that support family well-being; supporting strong relationships between parents and their children; and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. Parents immediately become involved in their child's Pre-K education at parent orientation. Parent trainings, workshops and conferences are planned to assist families in gaining knowledge in the area of child development, self-sufficiency and personal growth. Fatherhood initiatives are offered to promote the involvement of fathers in all aspects of the student's development and well-being.

**9. Education**

The Muscogee County School District Pre-Kindergarten programs believe in a strong comprehensive program that nurtures and educates students. The program allows students

and families to learn new skills and receive support and guidance from staff and community agencies. Students learn best through active learning experiences that have a purpose and are meaningful to them. Teachers assess and make observations to plan for and guide students based on their individual needs. Parent input is crucial in planning for student success. Classroom environments are nurturing where students learn how to get along with others, solve problems, and acquire the academic skills needed for school success.

## **10. Screening/Assessment**

### **Universal Childhood Screenings**

BESS (Behavioral and Emotional Screening System) is designed to help teachers and parents check their child's development. This questionnaire will not determine eligibility or access to programs such as special education. The goal is early detection and assistance for families who want to learn about helpful services in the community. The BASC-3 Bess Screening tool is also used to screen a student's emotional and behavioral skills.

### **Work Sampling Online**

All Georgia Pre-K classrooms use a formative assessment called Work Sampling System to measure children's progress across 69 indicators in 7 domains of learning. All indicators are aligned with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS).

Teachers assess children throughout the year and use the data to individualize instruction and provide guidance to families. In addition, DECAL and the GaDOE have partnered to make sure the assessment data is transferred at the end of the Pre-K year and is available to the child's teacher at the beginning of Kindergarten.

## **11. Completion**

### **Pre-K: Transition to Kindergarten**

Students in Pre-K who attain the age requirement for Kindergarten will automatically transition to the MCSD Kindergarten program.

### **Pre-K Special Education Transition to Kindergarten**

Recommendations regarding the transition of students in the Pre-K Special Education Program will be the responsibility of the IEP Team and will be based on the individual needs of the student.

Consideration for an additional year of Pre-K Special Education shall be for the sole purpose of continued development and will not be considered a retention. Transition meetings will be held for all students transitioning from Pre-K Special Education to Kindergarten.

## **12. Attendance**

### **Attendance**

When a Pre-K student has been absent repeatedly, the Director/Principal or designee may ask the parent/guardian to provide verification for reason of absence. Students absent 10 (ten) consecutive days without a medical exemption will be withdrawn from the program and the child's seat will be offered to a student on the waiting list. Students absent for a total of 15 days or more may be withdrawn from the program and the child's seat will be offered to a student on the waiting list.

### **Tardiness**

When a Pre-K student is repeatedly tardy, the Director/Principal may recommend the student be unenrolled from programming and their seat offered to a student on the

waiting list. Students who may have a shortened or customized schedule made by an IEP team will not be unenrolled due to tardiness or absences.

## **E. Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs**

### **1. Gifted Services**

Gifted students in Grades K-5 will be served using the Resource Model through St. Elmo Center for the Gifted or, if enrolled at Clubview Elementary or Hannan Elementary, through in-house gifted services at those schools. Students are served once a week through a pull-out program for five hours of the day. Individual elementary schools are assigned a specific day of the week that their gifted identified population is transported to St. Elmo Center for the Gifted from their home school for gifted program services. Students attending the center are excused from the classwork and homework assigned in their regular classroom on the day they attend St. Elmo Center for the Gifted. The Resource Model implements integrated units where all subject areas are covered to serve all students' talents and strengths. Students will attend the gifted program following state regulations for a minimum of five segments.

Students who qualify in the **Spring Referral Cycle (December 2-16)** will begin Resource Pull-Out at St. Elmo Center for the Gifted beginning in August of the following school year. This does not include Hannan or Clubview students who will be served immediately in-house.

Students who qualify in the **Fall Referral Cycle (August 30 – September 30)** will begin Resource Pull-Out at St. Elmo Center for the Gifted beginning in January of the following calendar year. This does not include Hannan or Clubview students who will be served immediately in-house.

All students will be served immediately at their home schools upon qualifying eligibility until their start date at St. Elmo through cluster or collaborative models as appropriate at their schools.

### **2. Resource Model – K-5**

- All students must have been identified as gifted by GaDOE criteria. Please refer to eligibility criteria in *Section XI. Other Programs and Requirements* in this manual.
- The curriculum must have an academic content foundation based on the Georgia curriculum standards, but it should focus on interdisciplinary enrichment activities using the gifted standards and not any one content area.
- The content, pacing, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery should be differentiated to appropriately meet the needs for gifted students.
- Gifted students may receive no more than 10 gifted FTE segments per week of resource class service.

Many of the Georgia Standards of Excellence will be embedded and/or compacted and taught at an accelerated pace, along with the State Gifted Standards and Goals. Students will develop advanced research strategies and problem-solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and become more proficient with communication skills. Creativity and logical problem solving will be addressed throughout all subject areas.

### **3. Elementary Continuation Criteria**

Below are the criteria for Muscogee County School District which follow SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38. Criteria for evaluation of gifted classroom performance: Student must satisfy

performance requirements for gifted education courses; student must have satisfactory attendance, and student must have appropriate classroom conduct.

When a student fails to fulfill any criteria for evaluation, his/her performance shall be deemed unsatisfactory. The teacher of record should notify their principal and the Regional Gifted Facilitator at the end of each semester with a list of gifted students who do not complete the above criteria. The Regional Gifted Facilitator will initiate the following plan of action.

Consequences of unsatisfactory performance plan of action:

- At the end of the first semester, all gifted students' performances are evaluated. The student must satisfy performance requirements in their gifted courses. If performance is deemed satisfactory, services are continued.
- If performance is deemed unsatisfactory, student performance will be under review for nine weeks (in compliance with SBOE probationary period).
- If at the end of this review period, the student's performance is satisfactory, services will no longer be under review.
- If at the end of the review period, the student's performance is unsatisfactory, the services will be discontinued.

**Continued Participation—Elementary School, Resource Model:**

- Student satisfies performance requirements for gifted education courses as assessed by the Gifted standards report card.
- Student maintains satisfactory attendance: Elementary gifted resource students will be under review after three consecutive unexcused absences.
- Student maintains appropriate classroom conduct with minimal chronic disciplinary problems or out of program suspensions and no more than three behavior incidents resulting in disciplinary action by the Director.

The gifted resource teacher must notify the student and the parent/guardian if achievement, attendance, and/or behavioral data indicates a review is a possibility. The gifted resource teacher must also coordinate with the appropriate Regional Gifted Facilitator, as well as the Director.

**Continued Participation – Elementary School, Gifted Cluster Model:**

- Student satisfies performance requirements for gifted education courses: Elementary gifted students served through the gifted cluster model will receive classroom grades from their teacher (progress reports and report cards) and should maintain a minimum of a 75 or 2.5 GPA in gifted cluster courses.
- Student maintains satisfactory attendance: Student attendance must remain in good standing without more than 15 absences.
- Student maintains appropriate classroom conduct with minimal chronic disciplinary problems or out of program suspensions and no more than three behavior incidents that result in referral.

The gifted teacher must notify the student and the parent/guardian if achievement, attendance, and/or behavioral data indicates a review is a possibility. The gifted teacher must also coordinate with the appropriate Regional Gifted Facilitator, as well as the Director.

Please reference section **XI. Other Programs and Requirements** in this manual for continuation procedures.

For more information regarding gifted services at the elementary level, please visit our website at <https://e044550.wixsite.com/my-site-1>.

## **F. Promotion, Placement and Retention**

### **1. General Requirements for Promotion and Retention**

MCS D Board Policy IHE authorizes the district administrative staff to develop procedures or regulations that specify how the state-adopted assessments and what local promotion criteria will be used in making decisions concerning promotion, placement or retention of students in Grades K-8.

Promotion and placement decisions related to students with disabilities served pursuant to an IEP are determined by the student IEP team on an individualized basis.

#### **a. Requirements for Grades K – 8**

- Each school principal shall distribute student data from the Georgia Milestones Assessment System End-of-Grade test, or comparable assessments, to teachers prior to the beginning of each school year. Each teacher shall use data to focus instruction on identified student academic performances in Grades K-8.
- Each school principal or designee shall establish a Placement Committee for each student who does not meet the standards established for academic achievement in the classroom and/or standardized test scores in grades other than 3, 5, or 8. The Placement Committee shall:
  - Determine whether each student shall be retained or promoted based on a review of the overall academic achievement of the student;
  - Develop an accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction plan for each student who does not achieve at grade level and;
  - Develop a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- Prior to the time that a student is retained, a parent conference must be scheduled for the purpose of informing the parent of the review team and principal's decision.
- A student who fails two or more yearly core courses in Grades 6, 7 or 8 will be retained. Students, based on the recommendation of their school's administration, shall be offered an opportunity to enroll in a course recovery program during the summer as a means of meeting promotion requirements.
- Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160- 3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.

#### **b. Additional Requirements for Grades 3 and 5**

**Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows:**

- Based provision in Georgia State Law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283 and State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11, no 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Grade student shall be promoted to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Grade if the student does not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner," "Proficient Learner," or "Distinguished Learner" on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
- When a student does not perform at grade level in Grades 3 or 5 on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments the following shall occur:
  - Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Georgia Milestones End-of- Grade Assessments individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian.

- The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and the student shall be retested with appropriate section(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments.
- Those students who do not earn a passing score after taking the test again may be considered for retention.
- Parents, teachers, or principals have the right to appeal on behalf of the student who is not promoted to the next grade level.
- All schools across the district follow the same appeals process, which requires a unanimous decision from the placement committee to place the student in the next grade.
- The placement committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- A Student Plan for Improvement for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed and be uploaded to the Student Information System for each student who does not achieve grade level performance.
- A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the retest administration day(s).
  - Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
- A student's failure to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in Grades 3 or 5 in language arts and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) shall result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
- For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.

**c. Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who are following the general education program, take the state assessment, and are pursuing a general education track are affected by the same guidelines for retention as are students in general education. These students will follow the same process outlined in the Retention and Promotion policy for MCSD. The IEP team will act as the placement team for decision making purposes and an IEP will be written to reflect the data, supports, services and accommodations needed to support the student for the upcoming year.

Retention decisions for students with disabilities who are following a functional curriculum and are participating in alternate assessment are made based upon the recommendation of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team.

**d. English Learner (EL)**

English Learners (ELs) should receive the same consideration any other student receives when determining any type of program eligibility available to all students. The ELs in the mainstream classroom will need language development and other types of support that must be included in general classroom instruction. For ELs, that includes accommodations to the instructional activities, tasks and assessments.

Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and placement in an

ESOL class automatically is considered a Tier 3 intervention. In the mainstream classroom, ELs should receive Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to successfully access and comprehend instruction. As the student progresses in language and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support him or her should decrease accordingly.

Retention committees (including the ESOL teacher) should review all data for a particular EL student and determine whether the lack of content knowledge is an academic issue or a lack of language proficiency. According to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA, 1974), identified ELs cannot be penalized with retention for their lack of language proficiency.

## **G. Grading and Reporting Student Progress**

### **1. Progress Reports**

Each student is provided a Progress Report near the midpoint of each nine weeks grading period, with specific dates listed on the official MCSD School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/calendar>. The report includes data on the student's current grade in each class as well as attendance and optional teacher comments. Progress Reports should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals prior to the end of the grading period so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained.

Students with disabilities receive progress reports within the same guidelines for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each nine weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748- 2230.

### **2. Report Cards**

Each student is provided a Report Card through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal at the end of each nine weeks grading period, with specific dates listed on the official MCSD School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/calendar>. The Report Card includes data on the student's final grade in each class for that nine-week grading period as well as attendance and optional teacher comments. Report Cards should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals for each course so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained. Report Cards can be found in the Parent Portal located here: <https://campus.muscogee.k12.ga.us/campus/portal/muscogee.jsp>.

Students with disabilities receive report cards on the same schedule as typical peers for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each nine weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748- 2230.

### **3. Grading System**

Students are given a numerical grade, from 0 to 100, in each class. These grades appear on report cards and on permanent records. Grade Distribution:

90 -- 100	A (excellent)
80 -- 89	B (above average)
70 -- 79	C (average)
69 and below	F (unsatisfactory/failure)

Students with disabilities are graded based on the required grading process by the school district and state as directed through the IEP. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each nine weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

#### 4. Parent/Student Portal

The Muscogee County School District provides parents and students with a secure electronic interface to access student information. Information provided includes: student attendance, student schedule, assignments and grades earned, and reports. Information is accessible to parents in real-time. To create a Parent Portal account, you will need to visit your child’s school to verify all data is accurate in the system and show a picture ID. You will then receive a letter with your unique Activation Key. There is also a mobile app with notifications that you can use with mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

More information can be found by clicking the Infinite Campus Parent Portal link found on the “Families & Students” section of the Muscogee County School District website at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Families>.

Students with disabilities and their parents have the same access to the parent and student portal information. If you need assistance, please contact your local school to obtain the required portal information.

## VII. Middle School (Grades 6-8)

### A. Program of Study: General Requirements for Grades 6, 7, & 8

#### 1. Language Arts

Three completed successful years of Language Arts are required for promotion to high school:

6 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Course:	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Course:	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Course:
Language Arts 6 or Advanced Language Arts 6	Language Arts 7 or Advanced Language Arts 7	Language Arts 8 or Advanced Language Arts 8

**6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades Language Arts:** These courses focus on oral and written language, as well as media and technology for expressive, informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Each course enables students to become skilled readers of more sophisticated literature by learning how to study and analyze literature through voice and style. The student will compose writing in a variety of genres: argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative. The student will analyze and edit his or her writing by focusing on conventions, voice, and style. There is an increase in writing, editing, and proofing. Research becomes a critical component of these courses. The student will also engage in viewing, listening, and speaking activities.

#### 2. Mathematics

Students will take mathematics courses each year while enrolled in middle school, each aligned with the Georgia K-12 Mathematics Standards and utilizing the Georgia Department of Education Instructional Learning Plans.

The table below illustrates the various mathematics course sequence options that lead to meeting the mathematics course credit requirements for promotion.

<b>MCS D Mathematics Sequence Options for 6-8</b>			
Grade	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
		<i>Honors</i>	<i>Enhanced</i>
6	Grade 6 Mathematics	Honors Grade 6 Mathematics	Honors 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics
7	Grade 7 Mathematics	Honors Grade 7 Mathematics	Honors 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics
8	Grade 8 Mathematics	Honors Grade 8 Mathematics	Enhanced Algebra; Concepts & Connections

**Descriptions:**

**Grade 6 Mathematics:** Sixth grade mathematics course content regularly incorporates the 8 Mathematical Practices, the Framework for Statistical Reasoning, and the Mathematical Modeling Framework through three big ideas of content: (1) numerical reasoning, (2) patterning and algebraic reasoning, and (3) geometric and spatial reasoning. The fundamental purpose of Grade 6 mathematics is to formalize and extend the fundamental mathematics that students learned in the previous grades. Students will build upon their numerical reasoning to perform more operations with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals, explore positive and negative numbers, and part-to-whole and part-to-part relationships. Reasoning with patterns will guide their exploration of one-step equations and inequalities to represent real-world phenomena. Students will also extend their geometric and spatial reasoning to explore complex shapes and volume. The Mathematical Practices, Mathematical Modeling Framework and Framework for Statistical Reasoning apply throughout each course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

**Grade 7 Mathematics:** Seventh grade mathematics course content regularly incorporates the 8 Mathematical Practices, the Framework for Statistical Reasoning, and the Mathematical Modeling Framework through four big ideas of content: (1) numerical reasoning, (2) probability reasoning, (3) patterning and algebraic reasoning, and (4) geometric and spatial reasoning. Students will build numerical reasoning skills through positive and negative number operations including all rational numbers in context then extend that learning to formally explore simple probability models to explain real-world phenomena. Students will build their algebraic reasoning skills to rewrite expressions, work with multistep equations and inequalities, and use proportional relationships to solve multistep percent problems, discover scale drawings using similar triangles to explain slope. Students will also explore geometric relationships involving area of a circle, volume of 3D shapes including cylinders, and exploring angle measure relationships. The fundamental purpose of Grade 7 mathematics is to formalize and extend the mathematics that students learned in the previous grades. Seventh grade standards use algebra to deepen and extend understanding of geometric knowledge from prior grades. The Mathematical Practices, Mathematical Modeling Framework and

Framework for Statistical Reasoning apply throughout each course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

**Grade 8 Mathematics:** Eighth grade mathematics course content regularly incorporate the 8 Mathematical Practices, the Framework for Statistical Reasoning, and the Mathematical Modeling Framework through four big ideas of content: (1) numerical reasoning, (2) functional & graphical reasoning, (3) patterning and algebraic reasoning, and (4) geometric and spatial reasoning. Much of the Grade 8 mathematics curriculum focuses on functions and linear relationships as building blocks to algebra and geometry. In this course, students will create, interpret, solve, and graph linear equations and inequalities in one variable, analyze the connections between proportional and non-proportional lines and equations, extend their knowledge of numerical reasoning and real numbers to include irrational numbers, develop an understanding of the properties of exponents, perform operations with numbers expressed in scientific notation, apply their geometric and spatial reasoning to interpret and solve problems involving the Pythagorean Theorem.

**Enhanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections:** Enhanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections is a course option that thoughtfully blends Grade 8 content standards with Algebra: Concepts and Connections standards. This course awards high school credit for middle school students who score at proficient or better on the associated GMAS Algebra EOC. In the Enhanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections course, instructional time should regularly incorporate the 8 Mathematical Practices, the Framework for Statistical Reasoning, and the Mathematical Modeling Framework through six big ideas of content: (1) mathematical modeling, (2) numerical reasoning, (3) functional & graphical reasoning, (4) patterning and algebraic reasoning, (5) data and statistical reasoning and (6) geometric and spatial reasoning. In this course, students will create, interpret, solve, and graph linear equations and inequalities in one variable and nonlinear (quadratic and exponential) equations and functions. Students will interpret quadratic and exponential expressions. Students will continue to enhance their algebraic reasoning skills when analyzing and applying a deep understanding of systems of linear inequalities and sums and products of rational and irrational numbers. Students will apply their algebraic and geometric reasoning skills to make sense of problems involving distance, midpoint, slope, area, perimeter, and statistical reasoning.

### 3. Science

**Grade 6 Science:** The middle school earth science course is designed to give all students an overview of common strands in earth science including, but not limited to, meteorology, geology, astronomy, oceanography, resources, and human impact on the earth. Sixth grade students observe and explain how an aspect of weather can affect a weather system. They use different models to represent systems such as the solar system and the sun/moon/earth system. They use what they observe about the earth's materials to infer the processes and timelines that formed them. Sixth graders write instructions, describe observations, keep and analyze the data they collect, and show information in graphical form. When analyzing the data they collect, sixth graders can recognize relationships in simple charts and graphs and find more than one way to interpret their findings. The students replicate investigations and compare results to find similarities and differences.

**Grade 7 Science:** The middle school life science course is designed to give students the necessary skills for a smooth transition from elementary life science standards to high school biology standards. The purpose is to give all students an overview of common strands in life science including, but not limited to, diversity of living organisms, structure and function of

cells, heredity, ecosystems, and biological evolution. Students will develop the skill necessary to keep records of their observations and use those records to analyze the data they collect. They observe and use observations to explain diversity of living organisms and how the organisms are classified. They use different models to represent systems such as cells, tissues, and organs. They use what they know about ecosystems to explain the cycling of matter and energy. They use the concepts of natural selection and fossil evidence in explanations. Seventh graders write instructions, describe observations, and show information in graphical form. When analyzing the data they collect, seventh graders can recognize relationships in simple charts and graphs and find more than one way to interpret their findings.

**Grade 8 Science:** The middle school physical science course is designed to give students the necessary skills for a smooth transition from elementary physical science standards to high school physical science standards. The course provides an overview of common strands in physical science including, but not limited to, the nature of matter, laws of energy, matter, motion and forces, and energy transformation. The eighth grade physical science students work conceptually to develop understanding the concepts of conservation of matter, conservation of energy, physical change, chemical change, motion, forces, and energy transformation. Eighth grade students keep records of observations and analyze the data they collect. They describe observations and show information in graphical form. When analyzing data eighth graders can recognize relationships in simple charts and graphs and find more than one way to interpret their findings.

#### **4. Social Studies**

**Sixth Grade Social Studies:** Sixth Grade Social Studies is the first year of a two-year World Area Studies course. Sixth grade students study Latin America, Canada, Europe, and Australia. The goal of this two-year course is to acquaint middle school students with the world in which they live. The geography domain includes both physical and human geography. The intent of the geography domain is for students to begin to grasp the importance geography plays in their everyday lives. The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas so as to help students begin to understand the variety of governments in the world. The economics domain builds on the K-5 economics; however, the focus shifts from the United States to ways in which other countries answer the basic questions of economics. The history domain focuses on major events in each region during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

**Seventh Grade Social Studies:** Seventh Grade Social Studies is the second year of a two-year World Area Studies course. Seventh grade students study Africa and Asia. The goal of this two-year course is to acquaint middle school students with the world in which they live. The geography domain includes both physical and human geography. The intent of the geography domain is for students to begin to grasp the importance geography plays in our everyday lives. The government/civics domain focuses on selected types of government found in the various areas so as to help students begin to understand the variety of governments in the world. The economics domain builds on the K-5 economics; however, the focus shifts from the United States to ways in which other countries answer the basic questions of economics. The history domain focuses primarily significant events in each region from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

**Eighth Grade Social Studies:** Eight Grade Social Studies is the study of Georgia's geography, history, government, and economics. While the four strands are interwoven, ample opportunity is also provided for in-depth study of the geography of Georgia and the government of Georgia. U.S. historical events are included, as appropriate, to ensure students understand Georgia's role in the history of the United States.

## 5. Physical and Health Educational Requirements

The GaDOE requires that each school containing any Grade 6-8 shall make available instruction in health and physical education. GaDOE Rule 160-4-2-.12 states that alcohol, drug, and sex education will be taught at an appropriate level for Grades K-12. At the middle school level this is taught through the health classes. Parents have the option to opt out of the sex education classes. They may get an opt out form from the teacher or counselor. The policy also states that there will be an annual assessment measuring and reporting health related fitness in the areas of aerobic capacity, body composition, flexibility, muscular strength, and muscular endurance. Georgia uses the FIT Georgia to administer this assessment. Students in Grades 6-8, who are taking physical education classes, are assessed annually using all 5 areas.

## 6. Connection Courses

Connection Courses are elective courses designed to provide middle school students with the opportunity to explore careers, the fine arts, and languages. Career, Technical and Agricultural Education programs in the middle schools vary at each school. However, each includes career development activities allowing students to make the connection between class work and workforce.

## B. High School Courses Taken in Middle School

**\*\*NOTE:** *Any middle school student who earns high school credit is not eligible to retake a course in high school that is assessed using the same Georgia Milestones End of Course assessment.*

### 1. Mathematics

Middle school students may earn high school Algebra credit by taking the Enhanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections course that thoughtfully blends the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and Algebra: Concepts & Connections standards into a single course that may be taken after completing 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics.

Middle school students taking a high school mathematics course must meet all requirements required for high school credit, to include taking the Georgia Milestones End-of-Course test for the applicable course. The Georgia Milestones End-of-Course test scale score will count as 20% of the student's final grade for the course. In addition to earning a passing grade in the class, middle school students **must earn an achievement level of Proficient or Distinguished** on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Course test **to receive high school credit for the course.** Those students that do not earn high school credit must take the Algebra: Concepts & Connections course their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.

### 2. Science

Qualified 8th graders in MCSD middle schools may be provided the opportunity to complete the High School Physical Science course. This course option is suggested for students who plan to enroll in Honors/AP Chemistry or Honors/AP Physics in high school. The chart on the following page outlines the requirements for admittance to this course:

<b>Advanced Content</b> <b>MCS D Middle School Course Descriptions</b>	<b>Requirements: Meets 3 of 4</b>
<p><b>GSE High School Physical Science</b> (for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GSE Standards, High School Physical Science</li> <li>• Inquiry-Based Learning</li> <li>• Critical Thinking Skills application</li> <li>• Integrates Science and Engineering Practices</li> <li>• Integrates Cross Cutting Concepts</li> <li>• GSE Science Literacy integration</li> </ul> <p><i>* 7<sup>th</sup> Grade students are identified by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> 9-weeks grading period for possible enrollment. The tentative identification is based on mathematics and science course averages. Final identification is made with GMAS scores.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Previous Year</b> Score: Proficient or Distinguished for math</li> <li>• Yearly Science Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 90-100</li> <li>• Yearly Mathematics Average for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 90-100</li> <li>• Teacher Recommendation from <b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics</b> Course</li> </ul>

**Assessment Requirements:**

**End-of-Course-Test:**

- The High School Physical Science Milestones End-of-Grade Test is required for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students enrolled in the Honors Physical Science course.
- Students enrolled in the Honors Physical Science course **will not** take the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade End-of-Grade test for *regular* 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science.
- MCS D requires that any students enrolled in the advanced course, during the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, meet or exceed standards and **earn the achievement level of *proficient or distinguished on the GMAS EOG to receive high school credit.***
- Students not meeting or exceeding standards, and earning ***proficient or distinguished*** on the EOG Milestones test, will be required to meet all four (4) science course requirements while attending a MCS D high school or Grades 9-12.

**High School Course Credit:**

High school course credit for courses taken in middle school will be awarded and communicated to high schools for those courses in which:

- Instruction is based on the *Georgia Standards of Excellence* for science for the corresponding high school level course,
- A student earns an achievement level of Proficient Learner or Distinguished Learner on the associated Georgia Milestones EOG test while enrolled in Grades K-8,
- A student successfully earns a passing grade of 70 or above for the course, and
- The teacher of record holds a GaPSC certification or credentials to teach the course at the high school level.

### 3. Spanish

MCS D offers Spanish I to approved 8th grade students. The chart below details the course sequence beginning with Spanish I:

**SPANISH SEQUENCE OPTIONS FOR GRADES 6-12**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
6	<b>Spanish Connections</b>				
7	<b>Spanish Connections</b>				

8	<b>Spanish Connections</b>	<b>Spanish 1</b> - Student earns an 80 average or higher	<b>Spanish 1</b> – Student earns a 70- 79 average	<b>Spanish 1</b> – Student earns a 70-79 average	<b>Spanish 1</b> – Student earns a failing grade 69 or below.
9	<b>Spanish 1</b>	<b>Spanish 2</b>	<b>Spanish 2</b> with parent permission	<b>Spanish 1</b>	<b>Spanish 1</b>
10	<b>Spanish 2</b>	<b>Spanish 3</b>	<b>Spanish 3 (optional)</b>	<b>Spanish 2</b>	<b>Spanish 2</b>
11	<b>Spanish 3 (optional)</b>	<b>Spanish 4</b>	<b>Spanish 4 (optional)</b>	<b>Spanish 3 (optional)</b>	<b>Spanish 3 (optional)</b>
12	<b>Spanish 4 (optional)</b>	<b>Advance Placement Spanish</b>	<b>Advance Placement Spanish</b>	<b>Spanish 4 (optional)</b>	<b>Spanish 4 (optional)</b>

Beginning in August 2024, for students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish I for high school credit (not Option 1), students are enrolled in the MCSD Spanish I MS and HS Credit Canvas Course. This course was created by middle and high school Spanish teachers from the school district and comprised of new, intermediate, and veteran educators. Middle School Spanish teachers are required to use this course for the MS Spanish I class that awards students a high school credit. By using this course, uniformity and accountability are practiced across all middle and high schools in support of students receiving credit for the high school Spanish I. At the conclusion of the course, students take a final exam.

**Option 1:** This option includes grade level standards and tasks for middle school students and grade level standards and task for high school students.

**Option 2:** This option includes grade level standards with enhanced and more complex tasks for middle school students. Students who earn an 80 average or higher in Level 1 Spanish in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade will be placed in Level 2 Spanish his/her 9<sup>th</sup> Grade year of high school.

**Option 3:** This option includes grade level standards with enhanced and more complex tasks for middle school students. Students who earn a 70-79 average in Level 1 Spanish in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade **will not be** placed in Level 2 Spanish in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade unless the parent gives specific permission for the student to take Level 2 Spanish as a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade student in high school.

**Option 4:** This option includes grade level standards with enhanced and more complex tasks for middle school students. Students who earn a 70-79 average in Level 1 Spanish in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade **will not be** placed in Level 2 Spanish in the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade. The student will take Level 1 Spanish in the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade.

**Option 5:** This option includes grade level standards with enhanced and more complex tasks for middle school students. Students who earn a 69 or below average in Level 1 Spanish in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade will not be placed in Level 2 Spanish in the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade. The student will take Level 1 Spanish in the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade.

High school course credit for courses taken in middle school will NOT be awarded nor communicated to high schools in which:

- A student does not successfully earn a passing grade of 70 or above for the course, or
- The teacher of record does not hold GaPSC certification or credentials to teach the course at the high school level.
- Students entering the district from a private setting have the option to validate high school credit from the previous instruction if the school/teacher or home study program is not accredited at the high school level, and their transcripts indicate that they have completed the HS coursework. The student must pass the final exam in the MCSD Spanish I MS and HS Credit Canvas Course with an 80 or higher to validate credit.

## C. Attendance Requirements

Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program shall be required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Such mandatory attendance shall not be required where the child has successfully completed all requirements for a high school diploma.

## D. Middle School Student Assessment Program

The purpose of the Georgia Student Assessment Program is to measure student achievement of the state-adopted content standards and inform efforts to improve teaching and learning. Results of the assessment program are utilized to identify students failing to achieve mastery of content, to provide teachers with feedback about instructional practice, and to assist school districts in identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to establish priorities in planning educational programs. The assessment program includes customized summative criterion-referenced tests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, Georgia participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Grades 4, 8 and 12 and administers an English language proficiency test in Grades K-12.

### 1. State and National Assessments

ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS 2.0) in Grades K-12 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in Grades 1-12 Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.

Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA2.0) is for students with a significant cognitive disability and is based on an IEP team decision. The areas assessed by GAA 2.0 include:

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science in Grades 5, 8, and 11
- Social Studies in Grades 8, and 11

**Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones)** Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, Grade 8 English/Language Arts and Mathematics, Grades 6 and 7.

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive summative assessment program and represents a single system of summative assessments that span all three levels of the state's educational system – elementary, middle, and high school. The system is designed to send consistent signals about students' preparedness for the next level, be it the next grade, course, or endeavor, such as entering college or beginning a career after leaving the K-12 educational system.

### 2. Required Georgia Milestones Assessment Grade 8

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) National assessments in reading, math and science in Grade 8 for selected schools as determined by the U.S. Department of Education.

### 3. “Testing Out” for Course Credit

As provided for in MCSD Board Policy JBC(4) and State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.15 (AWARDING UNITS OF CREDIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT AND/OR GRADES) adopted by the Board in October 2016, the opportunity exists for students to demonstrate subject area competency (“test-out”) for any course based on the state-

adopted curriculum for Grades 9-12 for which there is an associated End of Course (EOC) and earn credit for the course through that process. Students who reach the **Distinguished Learner** achievement level will have reached the required threshold for the awarding of course credit.

Under the provisions of the Rule and guidelines, the Muscogee County School District will award course credit to students who reach a designated performance level on an EOC taken prior to taking the course. For example, a student may attempt the Biology EOC prior to taking the course. If the student reaches the *Distinguished Learner Achievement* level, the student will be awarded the Biology course credit. A student may test-out of any course that has an associated EOC. As stated in this Rule, students may earn no more than three units of credit by demonstrating subject area competency in this fashion.

Students must meet the following eligibility requirements to exercise this option:

- Not currently or previously enrolled in the course;
- Have earned a grade of B or better in the most recent course that is the same content area of the course for which the student is attempting the EOC;
- Received a teacher recommendation from the teacher of the most recent course in the same content area (or, if not available, a teacher in the same content area with knowledge of the student's academic achievement) for which the student is attempting the EOC; and
- Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age.

Your student's school will carefully consider which students would benefit from such an opportunity and advise accordingly. As part of the advisement process, schools will consider the likelihood for success in future courses that may require knowledge and skills that are inherent within the course. In addition, the student's post-secondary plans and needs will be considered. The test-out option will not be exercised for students without deliberation and clear evidence of the likelihood of student success both on the test itself and in future coursework/endeavors. Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria above must not be assessed for this purpose.

When allowing students to attempt to earn course credit through testing out the Muscogee County School District will:

- Allow eligible students **only one opportunity per course** to demonstrate subject area competency.
- Require students who do not reach the designated achievement level of *Distinguished Learner* when attempting to test-out to enroll in and complete the associated course when applicable. The student would again take the EOC at the conclusion of that course experience regardless of their score during their attempt to test-out. The scores are not "banked" for use with the course later.
- As stipulated in the Guidelines previously issued for this rule, the district cannot allow students who are currently enrolled, or who have previously been enrolled, in a higher- level course to attempt to earn credit by testing out. For example, a student taking AP Physics may not earn credit for Physical Science through this process.
- Conduct testing for the test-out option during the summer testing window of the academic year prior to the expected enrollment for the course. See the district testing calendar for more details.
- **Charge \$50.00 per test in advance for each test.** Those students who meet the eligibility criteria and achieve at the *Distinguished Learner* achievement level will receive a refund. For those students not meeting the required achievement level to test-out will be charged the \$50.00 to cover the cost of testing charged to the district by the state.

For more information about testing-out please contact your school's Guidance Department.

#### **4. Students with Disabilities**

Students with Disabilities are required to participate in all state and federal assessment requirements. The type of assessment (standard, standard with accommodations, conditional, or Alternative) is determined through the Individual Education Program (IEP) process. Students also receive accommodations and supports through the IEP as guided by the Present levels of performance which outline specific student need. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

#### **5. Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is critical to the overall quality of the school district's assessment program and the data it provides. Students who are caught cheating, helping others cheat, or knowingly allowing another student to cheat on a state mandated assessment will be considered to have committed academic dishonesty. The tests of students who are confirmed to have participated in cheating will be invalidated as required by the Georgia Department of Education with no score reported. Students will be rescheduled to retake the exam in the next available re-test window. This may result in a delay of grades or promotion for students requiring the exam for course credit, a portion of the course grade or to meet state promotion requirements.

### **E. Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs**

\*\*For eligibility criteria for gifted identification, refer to section **XI. Other Programs and Requirements** in this manual.

#### **1. Gifted Services Middle School**

The primary gifted delivery model for gifted students in the middle school grades is the advanced content model in core content areas for Grades 6, 7 and 8 wherein students are served in their core content classrooms with differentiated coursework for acceleration, extension, and/or amplified depth of exploration. Students will attend their gifted classes five days a week in content areas designated as their gifted strength. Students will master the Georgia Standards of Excellence in language arts/literacy, science, social studies and Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards for mathematics at an accelerated/compacted pace, along with State Gifted Standards and Goals. Students will develop advanced research skills and problem-solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and develop more advanced skills in the content areas.

Gifted middle school students who qualify according to the placement criteria for available high school level courses (Physical Science, Enhanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections, and Spanish I) may opt to take these classes during their middle school years. Students who are enrolled in these courses must maintain the criteria listed below to continue to receive gifted services in these courses. Students in these courses must also follow the Advanced Frameworks guidelines as established by the school district in order to earn high school credit in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

##### **Middle School Continuation Criteria**

The Muscogee County School District Gifted Education Program requires that middle school students meet specific performance standards as specified by the following:

##### **1. Advanced Content, Honors, IB, Cluster, Collaboration models**

2. Acceptable progress is determined separately for each content area in which a student is served and is defined as:
  - a. Maintaining a semester grade average of 80 or higher in the advanced content class (excluding Honors and AP) for which gifted service is provided.
  - b. Maintaining a semester grade average of 75 or higher in Honors courses and 70 and higher in AP courses for which gifted service is provided.
  - c. Maintaining an End-of-Semester and End-of-Year Grade Point Average of 2.5 or higher.
  - d. Meeting standards on the state required competency test in the content area for which gifted service is provided
3. The student's attendance should remain in good standing while under review.

Please reference Section XI. Other Programs and Requirements in this manual for continuation procedures.

## **F. Promotion Placement and Retention**

### **1. General Requirements for Promotion and Retention**

The Muscogee County School District Promotion and Retention Policy IHE authorizes the district administrative staff to develop procedures or regulations that specify how the state-adopted assessments and what local promotion criteria will be used in making decisions concerning promotion, placement or retention of students in Grades K-8.

#### **a. Requirements for Grades K – 8**

- Each school principal shall distribute student data from the Georgia Milestones Assessment System End-of-Grade test, or comparable assessments, to teachers prior to the beginning of each school year. Each teacher shall use data to focus instruction on identified student academic performances in Grades K-8.
- Each school principal or designee shall establish a Placement Committee for each student who does not meet the standards established for academic achievement in the classroom and/or standardized test scores in grades other than 3, 5, or 8. The Placement Committee shall:
  - Determine whether each student shall be retained or promoted based on a review of the overall academic achievement of the student;
  - Develop an accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction plan for each student who does not achieve at grade level and;
  - Develop a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- Prior to the time that a student is retained, a parent conference must be scheduled for the purpose of informing the parent of the review team and principal's decision.
- A student who fails two or more yearly core courses in Grades 6, 7 or 8 will be retained. Students, based on the recommendation of their school's administration, shall be offered an opportunity to enroll in a course recovery program during the summer as a means of meeting promotion requirements.
- Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160- 3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.

#### **b. Additional Requirements for Grade 8**

**Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows:**

- Based on provision in Georgia State Law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283 and State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11, no eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the

student does not receive a grade level reading determination of “On/Above Grade Level” on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of “Developing Learner”, “Proficient Learner”, or “Distinguished Learner” on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.

- When a student does not perform at grade level in Grade 8 on the Georgia Milestones End-of- Grade Assessments the following shall occur:
  - Within ten calendar days of receipt of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments individual student scores, excluding weekends and holidays, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian.
  - The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and the student shall be retested with appropriate section(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of- Grade Assessments.
  - Those students who do not earn a passing score after taking the test again may be considered for retention.
  - Parents, teachers, or principals have the right to appeal on behalf of the student who is not promoted to the next grade level.
  - All schools across the district follow the same appeals process which requires a unanimous decision from the placement committee to place the student in the next grade.
- The placement committee shall provide a plan for continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- A Student Plan for Improvement for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed and be uploaded to the Student Information System for each student who does not achieve grade level performance.
- A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the retest administration day(s).
- Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as those who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
- A student’s failure to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in grade 8 in language arts and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) shall result in the student being retained.
- The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth above.

For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.

### **c. Students with Disabilities**

Retention of Students with Disabilities - Students with disabilities who are following the general education program, take the state assessment, and are pursuing a general education diploma are affected by the same guidelines for retention as are students in general education. These students will follow the same process outlined in the Retention and Promotion policy for MCSD. The IEP team will act as the placement team for decision making purposes and an IEP will be written to reflect the data,

supports, services and accommodations needed to support the student for the upcoming year.

Retention decisions for students with disabilities who are following a functional curriculum and are participating in alternate assessment are made based upon the recommendation of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

**d. English Learner (EL)**

English Learners (ELs) should receive the same consideration any other student receives when determining any type of program eligibility available to all students. The ELs in the mainstream classroom will need language development and other types of support that must be included in general classroom instruction. For ELs, that includes accommodations to the instructional activities, tasks and assessments. Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and placement in an ESOL class automatically is considered a Tier 3 intervention. In the mainstream classroom, ELs should receive Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to successfully access and comprehend instruction. As the student progresses in language and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support him or her should decrease accordingly.

Retention committees (including the ESOL teacher) should review all data for a particular EL student and determine whether the lack of content knowledge is an academic issue or a lack of language proficiency. According to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA, 1974), identified ELs cannot be penalized with retention for their lack of language proficiency.

**2. Summer Course Recovery**

The Middle School Summer Course Recovery Program will be provided each summer. Teachers will use the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and Georgia’s K-12 Mathematics Standards curriculum for instruction in each course. Instruction will be based upon the same grade level and course offerings as those identified in the regular school program. Course recovery is designed to extend the learning time for students who have not made sufficient progress in core academic subjects during the regular school year. Parents will need to contact their student’s assigned school for more information.

**G. Grading and Reporting Student Progress**

**1. Progress Reports**

Each student is provided a Progress Report through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal near the midpoint of each nine weeks grading period, with specific dates listed on the official MCSD School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/calendar>. The report includes data on the student’s current grade in each class as well as attendance and optional teacher comments.

Progress Reports should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals prior to the end of the grading period so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained.

Students with disabilities receive progress reports within the same guidelines for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report

each 9 weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2225.

## 2. Report Cards

Each student is provided a Report Card through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal at the end of each nine weeks grading period, with specific dates listed on the official MCS D School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/calendar>. The Report Card includes data on the student's final grade in each class for that nine-week grading period as well as attendance and optional teacher comments. Report Cards should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals for each course so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained.

Students with disabilities receive report cards on the same schedule as typical peers for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each nine weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

## 3. Grading System

Students are given a numerical grade, from 0 to 100, in each class. These grades appear on report cards and on permanent records.

### Grade Distribution

90 -- 100	A (excellent)
80 -- 89	B (above average)
70 -- 79	C (average)
69 and below	F (unsatisfactory/failure)

Students with disabilities are graded based on the required grading process by the school district and state as directed through the IEP. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each nine weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

## 4. Parent/Student Portal

The Muscogee County School District provides parents and students with a secure electronic interface to access student information. Information provided includes: student attendance, student schedule, assignments and grades earned, and reports. Information is accessible to parents in real-time. To create a Parent Portal account, you will need to visit your child's school to verify all data is accurate in the system and show a picture ID. You will then receive a letter with your unique Activation Key. There is also a mobile app with notifications that you can use with mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

More information can be found by clicking the Infinite Campus Parent Portal link found on the "Families & Students" section of the Muscogee County School District website at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/about-us-clone/families-students>.

Students with disabilities and their parents have the same access to the parent and student portal information. If you need assistance, please contact your local school to obtain the required portal information.

## H. Middle School BRIDGE Law Requirements

The following information is the BRIDGE Advisement Checklist for Grades 6-8.

Middle School Task	Grade Level and Task #	Career Advisement Processes
1	6-1	6 <sup>th</sup> graders will create an electronic career profile. *If logged in through Student Longitudinal Data System Student Backpack, the account is already created for all students.
2	6-2	6 <sup>th</sup> graders complete one career interest inventory and save the results in their electronic career profile.
3	7-1	7 <sup>th</sup> graders will complete at least one additional career interest inventory and save the results in their electronic career profile.
4	7-2	7 <sup>th</sup> graders will explore at least three (3) Career Clusters based on their career inventory results and save the results and career statements in their electronic career profile.
5	8-1	8 <sup>th</sup> graders will complete a career aptitude inventory.
6	8-2	8 <sup>th</sup> graders will use their career interest and career aptitude inventory results to complete an Individual Graduation Plan and to guide registration for 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade courses.
7	8-3	8 <sup>th</sup> graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by the time of their IGP development (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).

### **Implementation of the Bridge Law/CCRPI for Students on a Functional Curriculum (GAA 2.0)**

The College and Career Readiness Performance Accountability Team determined that based on the reporting process, special education case managers will **ensure verbally** that students with disabilities that require an alternative assessment (GAA 2.0) **have completed by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

- Two career interest inventories and
- Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)

Assessments for students unable to complete the GaFutures assessments/inventories with appropriate accommodations/modifications will use two of the bold print assessments listed in the Transition Chapter of the Program for Exceptional Students Manual to fulfill the interest inventories requirements. The case manager and school counselor will collaborate to assure that all BRIDGE Law requirements are met by student's taking the GAA 2.0.

The career assessments and the IGP will be kept by the case manager in the student's Special Education files as documentation for the principal to use when completing state reporting on these indicators.

**These documents are to also be used when developing the IEP/Transition Plan.**

**It is not required that students taking the GAA 2.0 have an Individual Graduation Plan in Georgia Career Information Center to meet the requirements of the BRIDGE Law.**

## VIII. High School (Grades 9-12)

### A. Areas of Study: General Requirements for Grades 9-12

#### 1. English Language Arts

Below is the suggested progression of high school English Language Arts courses:

Freshmen	Ninth Grade Literature and Composition <b>or</b> Honors Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
Sophomores	Tenth Grade Literature and Composition <b>or</b> Honors Tenth Grade Literature and Composition <b>or</b> Honors American Literature <b>or</b> AP Seminar (English)
Juniors	American Literature and Composition <b>or</b> AP English Language and Composition <b>or</b> AP English Language and Composition/American Literature <b>or</b>
	Dual Enrollment Courses (see Dual Enrollment section)
Seniors	Multicultural Lit and Composition <b>or</b> AP English Literature and Composition <b>or</b> Dual Enrollment Courses

**9th Grade Literature and Composition:** (1 credit required) This course focuses on a study of literary genres and informational texts; the students develop initial understanding of both the structure and the meaning of a literary work. The students explore the effect of the literary form in regards to interpretation. The students will read across the curriculum to develop academic and personal interests in different subjects. The students will also demonstrate competency in a variety of writing genres: argumentative, expository, and narrative. The students will engage in research, timed writings, and the writing process. Instruction in language conventions will occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking, rather than in isolation. The students demonstrate an understanding of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes. THIS COURSE REFLECTS THE GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

**10th Grade Literature and Composition:** This course focuses on a study of literary genres and informational texts; the students develop understanding that theme is what relates literature to life and that themes are recurring in the literary world. The students explore the effect of themes in regard to interpretation. The students will read across the curriculum to develop academic and personal interests in different subjects. While the focus is writing argument in 10th grade literature, the student will also demonstrate competency in expository and narrative writing genres. The student will engage in research, timed writings, and the writing process. Instruction in language conventions will occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking, rather than in isolation. The students demonstrate an understanding of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes. THIS COURSE REFLECTS THE GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

**American Literature and Composition:** (1 credit required) This course focuses on the study of American literature and informational texts, writing modes and genres, and essential conventions for reading, writing, and speaking. The student develops an understanding of chronological context and the relevance of period structures in American literature. The students develop an understanding of the ways the period of literature affects its structure and how the chronology of a work affects its meaning. The students read a variety of informational and literary texts in all genres and modes of discourse. Reading across the curriculum develops students' academic and personal interests in different subjects. Students demonstrate competency in argumentative, narrative, and expository writing. The students will engage in research, timed writing, and the writing process. Instruction in language conventions will occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking. The students demonstrate an understanding of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes. THIS COURSE REFLECTS THE GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

**AP English Language and Composition/American Literature and Composition:** This course focuses on the study of American literature and informational texts, embracing its rhetorical nature and recognizing the literature as a platform for argument. It also emphasizes a variety of writing modes and genres and the essential conventions of reading, writing, and speaking. The students will develop an understanding of how historical context in American literature affect its structure, meaning, and rhetorical stance. The course will enable students to become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts. The students will encounter a variety of informational, literary, and non-print texts from across the curriculum and read texts in all genres and modes of discourse, as well as visual and graphic images.

Instruction in language conventions and essential vocabulary will occur within the context of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The students will demonstrate an understanding of listening and speaking for a variety of purposes. This course will focus on the consideration of subject, occasion, audience, purpose, speaker, and tone as the guide for effective writing, as well as the way generic conventions and resources of language contribute to writing effectiveness. The students will compose a variety of writing, including expository, analytical, and argumentative writings which support the academic and professional communication required by colleges; and personal and reflective writings which support the development of writing facility in any context. The students will produce responses to timed writing assignments, as well as writing that proceeds through several stages or drafts, which include opportunities for revision guided by feedback from teacher and peers. Students will analyze primary and secondary sources and develop the research skills needed to effectively synthesize these sources for their writing. An AP syllabus must be submitted and approved by the College Board. (This literature module must be taught in the 11th grade and is recommended as a designated substitute for American Literature.) THIS COURSE REFLECTS THE GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

**Multicultural Literature and Composition:** The course focuses on world literature and informational texts by and about people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Students explore themes of linguistic and cultural diversity by comparing, contrasting, analyzing, and critiquing writing styles and universal themes. The students write argumentative, expository, narrative, analytical, and response essays. A research component is critical. The students observe and listen critically and respond appropriately to written and oral communication. Conventions are essential for reading, writing, and speaking. Instruction in language conventions will, therefore, occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking rather than in isolation. The students understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly in reading, writing, and speaking. THIS COURSE REFLECTS THE GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

**AP Literature and Composition:** The course focuses on an intensive study of representative works from various literary genres and periods. The focus is on the complexity and thorough analysis of literary works. The students will explore the social and historical values that works reflect and embody. The textual detail and historical context provide the foundation for interpretation: the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, and the evaluation of literature. Writing to evaluate a literary work involves making and explaining judgments about its artistry and exploring its underlying social and cultural values through analysis, interpretation, and argument (e.g. expository, analytical, and argumentative essays). The writers will develop stylistic maturity: strong vocabulary, sentence variety, and effective use of rhetoric to maintain voice. An AP syllabus will be submitted and approved by College Board.

## 2. Mathematics

Based upon State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.48 requirements, students must earn four units of core credit in mathematics, including Coordinate Algebra or Algebra I or the equivalent; Analytic Geometry or Geometry or the equivalent; and Advanced Algebra or Algebra II or the equivalent.

Additional core courses needed to complete four credits in mathematics must be chosen from the list of GSE/AP/IB/dual enrollment designated courses.

Each mathematics course is aligned with Georgia’s K-12 Mathematics Standards. The mathematics graduation requirements associated with the graduation rule, along with state curriculum standards and assessments, will ensure that more students finish school ready to thrive in our knowledge- based, high-skills economy. The table below illustrates the various mathematics course sequence options that lead to meeting the mathematics course credit requirements for graduation.

Mathematics Sequence Options for Grades 9 - 12				
Grade	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
	<i>This sequence option requires specific criteria be met for enrollment into Foundations of Algebra and assumes student will need significant support for success in high school mathematics.</i>	<i>This sequence option requires student to have taken Grade 8 mathematics as a prerequisite.</i>	<i>This sequence option assumes student was enrolled in middle school advanced mathematics.</i>	<i>This sequence requires student has earned high school Algebra credit in middle school via Enhanced Algebra: Concepts &amp; Connections</i>
9	Foundations of Algebra	Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Honors Geometry: Concepts & Connections
10	Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Geometry: Concepts & Connections	Honors Geometry: Concepts & Connections	Enhanced Adv Algebra and AP Precalculus
11	Geometry: Concepts & Connections	Advanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Enhanced Adv Algebra and AP Precalculus	Fourth Mathematics Course Options, AP Courses, IB Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses
12	Advanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Fourth Mathematics Course Options, AP Courses, IB Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses	Fourth Mathematics Course Options, AP Courses, IB Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses	Fourth Mathematics Course Options, AP Courses, IB Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses

**Note: Corequisite support courses for Algebra: C&C, Geometry: C&C, and Advanced Algebra: C&C are available for those students that need additional support in those core mathematics courses.**

**a. Students with Disabilities Modified Math Rubric**

Students with Disabilities modified Math Rubric: All students with disabilities work towards obtaining a regular diploma. Students with Disabilities on a regular curriculum but with identified Math needs, services and supports can participate in a modified High School Math rubric based on an IEP driven decision. If you have questions, please contact your local school and speak with the case manager to discuss these considerations.

**Course Descriptions:**

**Foundations of Algebra:** This Course is a first-year high school mathematics course option for students who have completed mathematics in Grades 6–8 yet will need substantial support to bolster success in high school mathematics. The course is aimed at students who have reported low standardized test performance in prior grades and/or have demonstrated significant difficulties in previous mathematics classes.

**Algebra Concepts and Connections: (1 credit required)** is the first course in a sequence of three high school courses designed to ensure career and college readiness. Students will apply their algebraic and geometric reasoning skills to make sense of problems involving algebra, geometry, bivariate data, and statistics. This course focuses on algebraic, quantitative, geometric, graphical, and statistical reasoning. In this course, students will continue to enhance their algebraic reasoning skills when analyzing and applying a deep understanding of linear functions, sums and products of rational and irrational numbers, systems of linear inequalities, distance, midpoint, slope, area, perimeter, nonlinear equations and functions, quadratic expressions, equations and functions, exponential expressions, equations, and functions, and statistical reasoning. High school course content standards are listed by big ideas including Data and Statistical Reasoning, Probabilistic Reasoning, Functional and Graphical Reasoning, Patterning and Algebraic Reasoning, and Geometric and Spatial Reasoning.

**Geometry: Concepts and Connections (1 credit required)** is the second course in a sequence of three high school courses designed to ensure career and college readiness. This course is intended to enhance students' geometric, algebraic, graphical, and probabilistic reasoning skills. Students will apply their algebraic and geometric reasoning skills to make sense of problems involving geometry, trigonometry, algebra, probability, and statistics. Students will continue to enhance their analytical geometry and reasoning skills when analyzing and applying a deep understanding of polynomial expressions, proofs, constructions, rigid motions and transformations, similarity, congruence, circles, right triangle trigonometry, geometric measurement, and conditional probability. High school course content standards are listed by big ideas including Data and Statistical Reasoning, Probabilistic Reasoning, Functional and Graphical Reasoning, Patterning and Algebraic Reasoning, and Geometric and Spatial Reasoning.

**Algebra Concept and Connections: (1 credit required)** is the third course in a sequence of courses designed to ensure career and college readiness. It is intended to prepare students for fourth mathematics course options relevant to their postsecondary pursuits. High school course content standards are listed by big idea, including Data and Statistical Reasoning, Probabilistic Reasoning, Functional and Graphical Reasoning, Patterning and Algebraic Reasoning, and Geometric and Spatial Reasoning. In Advanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections, students will continue to enhance their data and statistical reasoning skills as they learn specific ways to collect, critique, analyze, and interpret data. Students will learn how to use matrices and linear programming to represent data and to solve contextually relevant problems. Students will strengthen

their geometric and spatial reasoning skills as they learn how to solve trigonometric equations using the unit circle. In previous courses, students studied how to use linear and quadratic functions to model real-life phenomena. In *Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections*, students will further develop their functional and graphical reasoning as they explore and analyze structures and patterns for exponential, logarithmic, radical, polynomial, and rational expressions, equations and functions to further understand the world around them.

**Enhanced Advanced Algebra and AP Precalculus: Concepts and Connections** is a thoughtful blend of the topics from *Advanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections* and *Precalculus*. This is a single credit course, intended to provide students the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts that are critical to the study of advanced fourth mathematics course options, including *Calculus*. Students will continue to enhance their understanding of data and statistical reasoning, functional and graphical reasoning, patterning and algebraic reasoning, and geometric and spatial reasoning. There should be an emphasis on notational fluency and the use of multiple representations as students engage with all topics. Some of those topics include, sequences and series with the incorporation of convergence and divergence; conic sections as implicitly defined curves; the six trigonometric functions and their inverses; applications of trigonometry such as modeling periodic phenomena, modeling with vectors and parametric equations, solving oblique triangles in contextual situations, graphing in the Polar Plane; solutions of trigonometric equations in a variety of contexts; and the manipulation and application of trigonometric identities. In previous courses, students studied how to use linear and quadratic functions to model real life phenomena. In the *Enhanced Advanced Algebra and AP Precalculus: Concepts and Connections* course, students will further develop their algebraic, functional, and graphical reasoning as they explore and analyze structures and patterns for exponential, logarithmic, radical, polynomial, piecewise and rational expressions, equations, and functions to further understand the world around them. Topics should be analyzed in multiple ways, including verbal and written, numerical, algebraic, and graphical presentations. Instruction and assessment should include the appropriate use of technology.

Concepts should be investigated and applied, where appropriate, within the context of realistic phenomena.

**Precalculus/AP Precalculus** is a fourth-year mathematics course option for students who have completed *Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections* (or the equivalent). The course is intended to provide students with opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Algebraic concepts that are critical to the study of *Calculus*. Students will also deepen their understanding of trigonometry and its applications. Throughout the *Precalculus* course there should be a focus on notational fluency and the use of multiple representations. The course includes the study and analysis of piecewise and rational functions; limits and continuity as related to piecewise and rational functions; sequences and series with the incorporation of convergence and divergence; conic sections as implicitly defined curves; the six trigonometric functions and their inverses; applications of trigonometry such as modeling periodic phenomena, modeling with vectors and parametric equations, solving oblique triangles in contextual situations, graphing in the Polar Plane; solutions of trigonometric equations in a variety of contexts; and the manipulation and application of trigonometric identities. Topics should be analyzed in multiple ways, including verbal and written, numerical, algebraic, and graphical presentations.

Instruction and assessment should include the appropriate use of technology. Concepts should be introduced and investigated, where appropriate, in the context of real-world applications.

**AP Calculus (AB/BC):** AP Calculus includes two courses, AP Calculus AB and AP Calculus BC, which were developed in collaboration with college faculty. The curriculum for AP Calculus AB is equivalent to that of a first-semester college calculus course devoted to topics in differential and integral calculus. AP Calculus BC is roughly equivalent to both first and second semester calculus courses; it extends the content learned in AB to different types of equations and introduces the topic of sequences and series.

**Statistical Reasoning:** offers students opportunities to strengthen their understanding of the statistical method of inquiry and statistical simulations. Students will formulate statistical investigative questions to be answered using data, will design and implement a plan to collect the appropriate data, will select appropriate graphical and numerical methods for data analysis, and will interpret their results to make connections with the initial question. The Mathematical Modeling and Statistical Reasoning Frameworks will provide the foundation for instruction and assessment. Topics should be introduced and assessed using simulations and appropriate supporting technology.

**AP Statistics:** The purpose of the AP course in statistics is to introduce students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students are exposed to four broad conceptual themes:

1. Exploring Data: Describing patterns and departures from patterns
2. Sampling and Experimentation: Planning and conducting a study
3. Anticipating Patterns: Exploring random phenomena using probability and simulation
4. Statistical inference: Estimating population parameters and testing hypotheses

**College Readiness Mathematics Capstone Course (CRM)** is a fourth mathematics course option for students who have completed Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections (or the equivalent). The course is designed to serve as a bridge for high school students into postsecondary opportunities.

The course has been approved by the University System of Georgia as a fourth mathematics course beyond Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections for majors outside of mathematics, science, and engineering. The focus of this course is on key content and practice standards to ensure that students will be ready for postsecondary academic courses and career opportunities. The course will revisit and expand the understanding of content standards introduced in earlier mathematics courses and will emphasize numeracy, algebra and functions, geometry, and statistics in a variety of contexts. Instruction and assessment should include the appropriate use of manipulatives and technology. Mathematics concepts should be represented in multiple ways, such as concrete/pictorial, verbal/written, numeric/data-based, graphical, and symbolic. Concepts should be introduced and used, where appropriate, in the context of realistic experiences. The Standards for Mathematical Practice will provide the foundation for instruction and assessment. The content standards selected are essential for a variety of postsecondary opportunities. Students will be expected to complete a capstone project where they select one of the areas listed in the standard to identify a problem and use mathematical modeling to address it.

**Multivariable Calculus:** This course is a mathematics option for students who have completed AP Calculus BC. It includes three-dimensional coordinate geometry; matrices and determinants; eigenvalues and eigenvectors of matrices; limits and continuity of functions with two independent variables; partial differentiation; multiple integration; the gradient; the divergence; the curl; Theorems of Green, Stokes, and Gauss; line integrals; integrals independent of path; and linear first- order differential equations.

### 3. Science

Four units of credit in science shall be required of all students, including one full unit of Biology; one unit of either Physical Science or Physics; one unit of either Chemistry, Earth Systems, Environmental Science or an AP/IB course; and one additional science unit. The fourth science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirements. Any AP/IB science course may be substituted for the appropriate courses listed above.

#### ***High School Science Courses Currently Offered:***

**Biology: (1 credit required)** The Biology curriculum is designed to continue student investigations of the life sciences that began in Grades K-8 and provide students the necessary skills to be proficient in biology. This curriculum includes more abstract concepts such as the interdependence of organisms, the relationship of matter, energy, and organization in living systems, the behavior of organisms, and biological evolution. Students will investigate biological concepts through experience in laboratories and field work using the processes of inquiry.

**AP Biology:** This course is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester college introductory biology course usually taken by biology majors during their first year. The AP Biology course is designed to be taken by students after the successful completion of a first course in high school biology and on in high school chemistry. It aims to provide students with the conceptual framework, factual knowledge, and analytical skills necessary to deal critically with the rapidly changing science of biology. The topics covered on the course are molecules and cells, heredity and evolution, and organisms and populations. (College Board Course Description, September 2007)

**Physical Science: (1 credit required Physical Science or Physics)** The Physical Science curriculum is designed to continue student investigations of the physical sciences that began in Grades K-8 and provide students the necessary skills to have a richer knowledge base in physical science. This course is designed as a survey course of chemistry and physics. This curriculum includes the more abstract concepts such as the conceptualization of the structure of atoms, motion and forces, and the conservation of energy and matter, the action/reaction principle, and wave behavior. Students investigate physical science concepts through experience in laboratories and field work using the processes of inquiry.

**Environmental Science: (1 credit required Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, or AP/IB course)** The Environmental Science curriculum is designed to extend student investigations that began in Grades K-8. This curriculum is extensively performance, lab and field based. It integrates the study of many components of our environment, including the human impact on our planet. Instruction should focus on student data collection and analysis. Some concepts are global; in those cases, interpretation of global data sets from scientific sources is strongly recommended. It would be appropriate to utilize resources on the Internet for global data sets and interactive models. Chemistry, physics, mathematical, and technological concepts should be integrated throughout the course. Whenever possible, careers related to environmental science should be emphasized.

**AP Environmental Science:** AP Environmental Science is designed to provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand the interrelationships of the natural world, to identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, to evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and to examine alternative solutions for resolving and/or preventing them. The following themes provide a foundation for the structure of the AP Environmental Science course: (1) Science is a process, (2) Energy conversions underlie all ecological processes,

(3) The Earth itself is one interconnected system, (4) Humans alter natural systems, (5) Environmental problems have a cultural and social context, and (6) Human survival depends on developing practices that will achieve sustainable systems. (Advanced Placement Course Description, May 1997, The College Board)

**Earth Systems: (1 credit required Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, or AP/IB course)** Earth Systems Science is designed to continue student investigations that began in K-8 Earth Science and Life Science curricula and investigate the connections among Earth's systems through Earth history. These systems – the atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, and biosphere – interact through time to produce the Earth's landscapes, ecology, and resources. This course develops the explanations of phenomena fundamental to the sciences of geology and physical geography, including the early history of the Earth, plate tectonics, landform evolution, the Earth's geologic record, weather and climate, and the history of life on Earth. Instruction should focus on inquiry and development of scientific explanations, rather than mere descriptions of phenomena. Case studies, laboratory exercises, maps, and data analysis should be integrated into units. Special attention should be paid to topics of current interest (e.g., recent earthquakes, tsunamis, global warming, price of resources) and to potential careers in the geosciences.

**Chemistry I: (1 credit required Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, or AP/IB course)** The Chemistry curriculum is designed to continue student investigations of the physical sciences that began in Grades K-8 and provide students the necessary skills to be proficient in chemistry. This curriculum includes more abstract concepts such as the structure of atoms, structure and properties of matter, characterization of the properties that describe solutions and the nature of acids and bases, and the conservation and interaction of energy and matter. Students investigate chemistry concepts through experience in laboratories and field work using the processes of inquiry.

**AP Chemistry:** This course is designed to be the equivalent of the general chemistry course usually taken during the first college year. Students should attain a depth of understanding of fundamentals and a reasonable competence in dealing with chemical problems. AP chemistry students should study topics related to the structure and states of matter (atomic theory, atomic structure, chemical bonding, nuclear chemistry, gases laws, kinetic molecular theory, liquids and solids and solutions), chemical reactions (reaction types, stoichiometry, equilibrium, kinetics, and thermodynamics), and descriptive chemistry (chemical reactivity, products of chemical reactions, relationships in the periodic table, and organic chemistry). To develop the requisite intellectual and laboratory skills, AP Chemistry students need adequate classroom and laboratory time. It is expected that a minimum of 290 minutes per week will be allotted for an AP Chemistry course. Of that time, a minimum of 90 minutes per week, preferably in one session, should be spent in the lab. The AP Chemistry course is designed to be taken after the completion of a first course in high school chemistry. In addition, the recommended mathematics prerequisite for an AP Chemistry class is the successful completion of a second-year algebra course. It is highly desirable that a student have a course in secondary school physics and a four-year college preparatory program in mathematics. (College Board Course Description, September 2007)

**Physics I: (1 credit required Physical Science or Physics)** The Physics curriculum is designed to continue student investigations of the physical sciences that began in Grades K-8 and provide students the necessary skills to be proficient in physics. This curriculum includes more abstract concepts such as interactions of matter and energy, velocity, acceleration, force, energy, momentum, and charge. This course introduces the students to the study of the correction to Newtonian physics given by quantum mechanics and relativity. Students investigate physics concepts through experience in laboratories and field work using the processes of inquiry.

**AP Physics:** AP Physics 1 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course that explores topics such as Newtonian mechanics (including rotational motion); work, energy, and power; mechanical waves and sound; and introductory, simple circuits. Through inquiry-based learning, students will develop scientific critical thinking and reasoning skills.

**Zoology:** This is a laboratory-based course that will survey the nine major phyla of the Kingdom Animalia. Morphology, taxonomy, anatomy, and physiology of porifera, cnidaria, platyhelminthes, nematode, rotifer, annelid, bryozoa, mollusca, arthropods, echinodermata, hemichordate, chordata, agnatha, chondrichthyes, osteichthyes, amphibian, reptilian, aves, and mammalian will be investigated through comparative studies done during laboratory observations and dissections. Furthermore, students will compare and contrast methods used by organisms from different phyla to accomplish basic life processes.

**Human Anatomy/Physiology:** The human anatomy and physiology curriculum is designed to continue student investigations that began in Grades K-8 and high school biology. This curriculum is extensively performance and laboratory based. It integrates the study of the structures and functions of the human body, however rather than focusing on distinct anatomical and physiological systems (respiratory, nervous, etc.) instruction should focus on the essential requirements for life. Areas of study include organization of the body; protection, support and movement; providing internal coordination and regulation; processing and transporting; and reproduction, growth and development. Chemistry should be integrated throughout anatomy and not necessarily taught as a standalone unit. Whenever possible, careers related to medicine, research, health-care and modern medical technology should be emphasized throughout the curriculum. Case studies concerning diseases, disorders and ailments (i.e. real-life applications) should be emphasized.

**Forensic Science:** In this course students will learn the scientific protocols for analyzing a crime scene, how to use chemical and physical separation methods to isolate and identify materials, how to analyze biological evidence and the criminal use of tools, including impressions from firearms, tool marks, arson, and explosive evidence.

#### 4. CTAE Fourth Science Course Options

**CTAE Fourth Science Course Options:** There are several CTAE courses that count towards completing a CTAE pathway requirement, satisfying the fourth science requirement for high school graduation, and have been approved by the Board of Regents as a fourth science for university admission. The full list of courses can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website at <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/Science/Fourth%20Science%20Options%202023-2024%202.8.23.pdf>.

#### 5. Social Studies

Three and one-half (3.5) units of credit in social studies shall be required of all students. One-half unit of credit in American Government/Civics, one unit of credit in United States History, one unit of credit in World History, and one unit of credit of Personal Finance and Economics are required.

**American Government/Civics: (.5 credit required)** This course is an in-depth study of the American political system. This course focuses on the foundation, principles and structure of the American system of government, examines the role of political parties, social factors as they relate to the role of the citizen, and analyzes the decision-making

processes that are a part of the system of American political behavior. This course meets the state's Citizenship requirement for graduation.

**AP American Government/Civics:** This course conforms to College Board topics for the Advanced Placement Comparative Government and Politics Examination. Covers sources of public authority and political power, society and politics, citizen and state, political framework, political change and an introduction to comparative politics.

**United States History: (1 credit required)** This course examines the history of the United States beginning with the British settlement of North America. The course's main focus is the development of the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries. The course includes topics related to colonization through the constitution; new republic to Reconstruction; industrialization, reform, and imperialism; establishment as a world power; and the modern era.

**AP United States History:** This course conforms to College Board topics for the Advanced Placement United States History Examination. It covers discovery and settlement, colonial society, the American Revolution, constitution and the new republic, Age of Jefferson, nationalism, sectionalism, territorial expansion, Civil War, Reconstruction, industrialization, Progressive Era, World War I, Depression, New Deal, World War II, The Cold War, through modern times.

**World History: (1 credit required)** This course is a survey course beginning with the earliest civilizations and highlighting important developments throughout the world until the early 21st century. The course includes topics related to Early Civilizations and Classical Empires; growth, expansion, and the emergence of the modern world; global interaction and conflict; and the contemporary world.

**AP World History:** This course conforms to the College Board topics for Advanced Placement World History. It includes study of cultural, political, social and economic history and stresses research and writing skills.

**Personal Finance and Economics: (1 credit required)** This course is an introductory course into the principles of economics. The course includes topics related to fundamental economic concepts, microeconomics concepts, macroeconomics concepts, international economics, and personal finance economics.

**AP Macroeconomics:** This course conforms to College Board topics for the Advanced Placement Macroeconomics Examination. It covers basic economic concepts, measurement of economic performance, national income and price determination and international economics and growth.

**AP Microeconomics:** This course conforms to College Board topics for the Advanced Placement Microeconomics Examination. It covers basic economic concepts, the nature and functions of product markets, factor markets and efficiency, equity and the role of government.

## **6. Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE)**

Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE): The CTAE program is designed to integrate core academic knowledge with technical and occupational skills to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workforce. The curriculum includes national standards, CTAE standards, and Georgia Performance Standards, in addition to career development activities allowing students to make the connection between class activities and the workforce. CTAE courses are available to any student in Grades 9-12. Students are

encouraged to complete a Career Pathway, which is a sequential program of study that allows students the opportunity to gain industry-recognized career credentials. The Career Pathway programs provide students with skills and knowledge through a variety of curriculum choices and possible college credits.

**a. Work Based Learning**

Work Based Learning: Work-Based Learning provides students the opportunity to receive high school credit while working in an environment related to their career pathway. To qualify for a work-based learning placement, a student must be in Grades 11 or 12 and at least 16 years old. Students must also have a defined Career Pathway in order to participate. Their job placement should be directly related to the curriculum of the pathway classes they have completed or in which they are concurrently enrolled. There are several categories for students to participate in work-based learning. These include employability skill development, cooperative education, internship, youth apprenticeship, and clinical experiences.

The benefits of WBL include:

- Exposing students to professional adult role models
- Improving scholastic student motivation
- Applying classroom learning
- Exploring career options
- Helping students make better decisions and plans
- Improving post-secondary prospects
- Helping students understand workplace expectations
- Exposing students to state-of-the-art practices and technology

Students are encouraged to have a quality work-based learning experience directly related (to the extent possible) to the student's area of interest and/or elective courses. CTAE supports schools in providing these experiences through Work-Based Learning Coordinators at the six comprehensive high schools (Carver, Hardaway, Kendrick, Northside, Shaw, and Spencer) and the Jordan Vocational High School College and Career Academy. Columbus High School and Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts do not offer work-based learning.

**b. CTAE Fourth Science Course Options**

There are several CTAE courses that count towards completing a CTAE pathway requirement, satisfying the fourth science requirement for high school graduation, and have been approved by the Board of Regents as a fourth science for university admission.

The most current list of courses can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website at <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/Science/Fourth%20Science%20Options%202023-2024%202.8.23.pdf>

**7. World Languages/Latin**

Students have the opportunity to take a world language in middle school and then continue taking world language classes in high school. In middle school, students have the opportunity to take Spanish. Muscogee County Schools offer the following World Languages: Spanish, French, and Latin. (Course offerings may differ at each high school). While in high school, students have the opportunity to receive two seals on their diploma

for their achievements in the World Languages; they are:

**The Georgia Seal of Biliteracy** recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English.

The purposes of the Georgia Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

- To encourage pupils to study world languages;
- To certify attainment of biliteracy;
- To provide employers with a method to identify people with language and biliteracy skills;
- To provide universities with a method to recognize and give academic credit to applicants seeking admission; and
- To recognize and promote world language instruction in public schools.

In order to qualify for the Georgia Seal of Biliteracy, a high school graduate shall meet the following criteria:

- Completion of all English language arts requirements for graduation with an overall grade point average of 3.0 or above in those classes; and
- Proficiency in one or more languages other than English, demonstrated by passing a foreign language advanced placement examination with a score of 4 or higher or an international baccalaureate examination with a score of 5 or higher; provided, however, that for languages in which an advanced placement examination is not available, the Department of Education may provide a listing of equivalent summative examinations that local school systems may use in place of such an advanced placement examination.
- A local school system participating in the Georgia Seal of Biliteracy program shall maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a Georgia Seal of Biliteracy and shall affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each pupil who earns such seal.
- Local school system participation in the Georgia Seal of Biliteracy program shall be voluntary. No local school system shall be required to expend additional resources or hire additional personnel to implement the provisions of this Code section.

The Department of Education shall prepare and deliver to participating local school systems an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of the pupil indicating that such pupil has been awarded a Georgia Seal of Biliteracy.

**International Skills Diploma Seal:**

- At least three credits in the same world language and/or ESOL
  - At least four credits in courses determined to have an international focus, such as international economics, world/non-US history, world geography, etc.
  - At least four extracurricular activities and experiences with global themes and/or in global contexts (e.g., exchange programs, international and language clubs, travel abroad)
  - Twenty hours of community service involving a global/cross-cultural public service project
- Capstone presentation on the knowledge gained in the courses and activities listed above

For a further list of approved courses for the International Skills Diploma Seal – click here:

<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/World-Languages-and-International-Education.aspx>

**Description of Modern Language/Latin Courses:**

**Spanish I:** Introduces the Spanish language; emphasizes all skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Includes how to greet and take leave of someone, to ask and respond to basic questions, to speak and read within a range of carefully selected topics and to develop an understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures.

**Spanish II:** Enhances Level One skills in Spanish and provides opportunities to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Provides continued practice in how to greet and take leave of someone, to ask and respond to basic questions, to speak and read within a range of carefully selected topics and to increase understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures.

**Spanish III:** Enhances Level Two skills in Spanish and provides further opportunities to increase listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Provides continued practice in previous topics and introduces new topics; offers further opportunities to increase understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures.

**Spanish IV:** Enhances Level Three skills in Spanish and provides further opportunities to increase listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Provides continued language development through exploration of familiar and unfamiliar topics and provides opportunities for a broader and more extensive understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures.

**AP Spanish Language:** Conforms to College Board topics for the Advanced Placement Spanish Language Examination. Emphasizes the ability to comprehend formal and informal spoken Spanish, to acquire the vocabulary and grasp of structure to read newspapers, magazines and Hispanic literature, to compose expository passages and to speak accurately and fluently.

**French I:** Introduces the French language; emphasizes all skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in an integrated way. Includes how to greet and take leave of someone, to ask and respond to basic questions, to speak and read within a range of carefully selected topics and to develop an understanding of French-speaking cultures.

**French II:** Enhances Level One skills in French and provides opportunities to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Provides continued practice in how to greet and take leave of someone, to ask and respond to basic questions, and to speak and read within a range of carefully selected topics. Provides opportunities to increase understanding of French-speaking cultures.

**French III:** Enhances Level Two skills in French and provides further opportunities to increase listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated way. Provides continued practice in previous topics and introduces new topics; offers further opportunities to increase understanding of French-speaking cultures.

**French IV:** Enhances Level Five skills in French and provides opportunities to increase levels of proficiency in all skill areas and to deepen understanding of French-speaking cultures. Offers further opportunities to study French literature and advanced level topics.

**Latin I:** Introduces students to the Latin language and ancient Roman civilization. Emphasizes the ability to write simple Latin phrases and to understand simple Latin passages presented orally and in writing.

**Latin II:** Enhances Level One skills and provides opportunities to translate longer, more challenging passages. Emphasizes how ancient Roman language and civilization has influenced Western language and civilization.

**Latin III:** Enhances previously learned skills and introduces original works by Latin authors. The works of the authors may be selected in any order for courses designated at the third-, fourth-, and fifth- year levels. The authors whose works are studied are Catullus,

Cicero, Horace, Ovid, and Vergil. Selected works from authors such as Aulis Gellius, Juvenal, Livy, Martial, Cornelius, Nepos, Plautus, Sallust, Pliny, as well as authors from later Latin, can be included. Explores the political, economic, social characteristics represented in the works studied and examines the various writing styles of the authors.

## **8. Fine Arts**

The Georgia Standards of Excellence for Fine Arts are based on The National Standards for Arts Education as referenced in the National Standards for Arts Education, Copyright ©2014 by NafME: The National Association for Music Education. The National Standards outline what every K-12 student should know and be able to do in the arts. The National Standards were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Association, through a grant administered by The National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

As described in the National Standards for Arts Education, arts education benefits both student and society. The arts cultivate the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence support the arts in the “academic” standing in that mere participation is not the same as education. The standards affirm that discipline and rigor are critical to high academic achievement. Performance-based assessment has long been used in the arts that include the practice of portfolio review in the visual arts and the assessment of performance skills through auditions used in dance, music, and theatre. The content of the standards for the arts attends to creating, performing, and responding which is consistent with and informs the perspective of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) Arts and Humanities Department supports more than 120 visual art, music, band, orchestra, chorus, dance and drama teachers and 30,000 students within its 1-12 programs.

Fine arts instruction in MCSD is standards-driven, sequential, substantive and comprehensive. All Grades 1-5 elementary school students receive weekly art and music classes.

Middle school students have the opportunity to explore visual arts, band, chorus, orchestra and theatre. At the high school level there are several fine arts elective choices that fulfill the GA Career Pathway requirements and culminate in five AP courses.

## **9. Physical Education/Health**

As a part of the GaDOE graduation requirements, each student must have at least one semester of health education (.5 credit required). As a part of the health education course students will take a CPR Awareness class. They will also take the Georgia Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program through their health class. Each student is also required to have at least one semester of physical fitness (.5 credit required). GaDOE Policy 160-4-2-.12 states that alcohol, drug, and sex education will be taught at an appropriate level for Grades K - 12. At the high school level this is taught through the health classes. Parents have the option to opt out of the sex education classes. They may get an opt out form from the teacher or counselor. The policy also states that there will be an annual assessment measuring and reporting health related fitness in the areas of aerobic capacity, body composition, flexibility, muscular strength, and muscular endurance. Georgia uses the Fit Georgia to administer this assessment. Students in Grades 9-12, who are enrolled in a physical education class, are assessed annually using all 5 areas.

## 10. Graduation Unit Requirements

The MCSD graduation requirements are based on Local Rule IHF (6) and State Board Rule 160-4-2-.48. Special programs such as Magnet, Performance-Based, and Special Education may have different requirements as dictated by program criteria.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS		
Areas of Study	Traditional Seven Period Units Required	** Block Schedule Units Required
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	4	4
Science (4 <sup>th</sup> science requirement may be used to meet both the science and elective credits)	4	4
Social Studies	3.5	3.5
Health	.5	.5
Personal Fitness	.5	.5
CTAE <b>and/or</b> Modern Language/Latin <b>and/or</b> Fine	3	3
Electives	3.5	7.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>

A total of 23 Units of Credit are required by the Muscogee County School District for a traditional seven period schedule.

A total of 27 Units of Credit are required for ninth grade students entering during the 2019-2020 school year and beyond for block schedule schools (Jordan College and Career Academy and Rainey- McCullers School of the Arts).

- Core Courses include mathematics, English/language arts, science, social studies and modern language.
- CTAE designated courses may be used to meet the fourth science unit.
- Core Area Electives may include fine arts, CTAE, and/or modern language/Latin. Two units of one selected modern language/Latin are required of students with intentions to enter a University System of Georgia institution. A total of three (3) units are required from CTAE **and/or** modern language/Latin **and/or** fine arts for all students. Students are encouraged to choose electives that support their future academic and career goals. A wide range of courses are available.
- Students with Disabilities will be eligible to earn a regular diploma by meeting the general requirements for Grades 9-12 and in their Individualized Education Program.

### B. Attendance Requirements

Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program shall be required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Such mandatory attendance shall not be required where the child has successfully completed all requirements for a high school diploma.

Students are eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education program, if they have reached the age of five by September 1st and have not reached the age of 21 by September 1 or received a high school diploma or equivalent. Students with Individualized Education Programs may be eligible for enrollment until they reach the end of the semester of their twenty-second birthday.

## C. High School Assessment Program

The purpose of the Georgia Student Assessment Program is to measure student achievement of the state-adopted content standards and inform efforts to improve teaching and learning. Results of the assessment program are utilized to identify students failing to achieve mastery of content, to provide teachers with feedback about instructional practice, and to assist school districts in identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to establish priorities in planning educational programs. The assessment program includes customized summative criterion-referenced tests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, Georgia participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Grades 4, 8 and 12 and administers an English language proficiency test in Grades K-12.

### 1. State and National Assessments

ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS 2.0) in Grades K-12 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in Grades 1-12 Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking

**Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA2.0)** is for students with a significant cognitive disability and is based on an IEP team decision. The areas assessed by GAA 2.0 include:

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science in Grades 5, 8, and 11
- Social Studies in Grades 5, 8, and 11

Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) End of Course for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) National assessments in reading, math and science in Grade 8 for selected schools as determined by the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **GAA 2.0 in High School**

The instructional program for students with significant cognitive disabilities includes courses that align with the general education courses associated with the Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) measures. This ensures that content from each EOC-assessed course is included in the GAA 2.0. In this manner, the GAA 2.0 in high school serves as the alternate assessment for the high school assessment program.

A student who is retained in/is repeating Grade 11 is NOT required to be assessed a second (or more) time using the GAA 2.0.

#### **End of Course Assessments in High School**

Students enrolled in any of the four core courses identified by the State Board of Education are required to participate in the Georgia Milestones EOC measure at the end of each course. The core courses include American Literature and Composition, Algebra I, Algebra: Concepts & Connections, Biology, Physical Science, and United States History. The Georgia Milestones EOC measures are administered multiple times annually to accommodate students completing courses, entering from other systems out of state and completing credit recovery courses at various stages during the school year. **The EOC also serves as 20% of a student's final grade and is required to receive course credit.**

### 2. Test Out Option

#### **"Testing Out" for Course Credit**

As provided for in MCSD Board Policy JBC (4) and State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.15 (AWARDING UNITS OF CREDIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT AND/OR

GRADES) adopted by the Board in October 2016, the opportunity exists for students to demonstrate subject area competency (“test-out”) for any course for which there is an associated End of Course (EOC) and earn credit for the course through that process. Students who reach the Distinguished Learner achievement level will have reached the required threshold for the awarding of course credit. Under the provisions of the Rule and guidelines, the Muscogee County School District will award course credit to students who reach a designated performance level on an EOC taken prior to taking the course. For example, a student may attempt the Biology EOC prior to taking the course. If the student reaches the Distinguished Learner achievement level, the student will be awarded the Biology course credit. A student may test-out of any course that has an associated EOC. As stated in this Rule, students may earn no more than three units of credit by demonstrating subject area competency in this fashion.

Students must meet the following eligibility requirements to exercise this option:

- Not currently or previously enrolled in the course;
- Have earned a grade of B or better in the most recent course that is the same content area of the course for which the student is attempting the EOC;
- Received a teacher recommendation from the teacher of the most recent course in the same content area (or, if not available, a teacher in the same content area with knowledge of the student’s academic achievement) for which the student is attempting the EOC; and
- Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age.

Your student’s school will carefully consider which students would benefit from such an opportunity and advise accordingly. As part of the advisement process, schools will consider the likelihood for success in future courses that may require knowledge and skills that are inherent within the course. In addition, the student’s post-secondary plans and needs will be considered. The test-out option will not be exercised for students without deliberation and clear evidence of the likelihood of student success both on the test itself and in future coursework/endeavors. Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria above must not be assessed for this purpose.

When allowing students to attempt to earn course credit through testing out the Muscogee County School District will:

- Allow eligible students only one opportunity per course to demonstrate subject area competency.
- Require students who do not reach the designated achievement level of Distinguished Learner when attempting to test-out to enroll in and complete the associated course when applicable. The student would again take the EOC at the conclusion of that course experience regardless of their score during their attempt to test-out. The scores are not “banked” for use with the course later.
- As stipulated in the Guidelines previously issued for this rule, the district cannot allow students who are currently enrolled, or who have previously been enrolled, in a higher- level course to attempt to earn credit by testing out. For example, a student taking AP Physics may not earn credit for Physical Science through this process.
- Conduct testing for the test-out option during the summer testing window of the academic year prior to the expected enrollment for the course. See the district testing calendar for more details.
- Charge **\$50.00 per test in advance for each test**. Those students who meet the eligibility criteria and achieve at the Distinguished Learner achievement level will receive a refund. For those students not meeting the required achievement level to test-out will be charged the \$50.00 to cover the cost of testing charged to the district by the state.

For more information about testing-out, please contact your school’s Guidance Department.

### **3. Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is critical to the overall quality of the district's assessment program and the data it provides. Students who are caught cheating, helping others cheat, or knowingly allowing another student to cheat on a state mandated assessment will be considered to have committed academic dishonesty. The tests of students who are confirmed to have participated in cheating will be invalidated as required by the Georgia Department of Education with no score reported. Students will be rescheduled to retake the exam in the next available retest window. This may result in a delay of grades or promotion for students requiring the exam for course credit, a portion of the course grade or to meet state promotion and graduation requirements.

#### **National Standardized Assessments**

SAT- The SAT is administered by College Board to meet the entrance requirements for many Colleges and Universities. Some Muscogee County School District schools may serve as testing sites but do not enroll or register students for the exam. For more information about registering to take the SAT see the College Board SAT site at: <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration>

ACT- The ACT exam is administered by ACT to meet the entrance requirements for many Colleges and Universities. Some Muscogee County School District schools may serve as testing sites but do not enroll or register students for the exam. For more information about registering to take the SAT see the College Board SAT site at: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.registration/html>

Students with Disabilities are required to participate in all state and federal assessment requirements. The type of assessment (standard, standard with accommodations, conditional, or Alternative) is determined through the Individual Education Program (IEP) process. Students also receive accommodations and supports through the IEP as guided by the present levels of performance which outline specific student need. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **D. Maximum Age for High School Students**

Students are eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education program, if they have reached the age of five by September 1st and have not reached the age of 21 by September 1 or received a high school diploma or equivalent.

#### **1. Students with Disabilities**

Students with Disabilities can attend school until they earn a regular education high school diploma or up to the end of the semester of their 22nd birthday, whichever comes first.

### **E. Class Rank and Weighted Courses**

Class rank is based on student's Numerical Grade Point Average (NGA) of all grades earned through the end of the second nine weeks (end of the first semester) of their senior year.

Weighted courses are based on the rigor and depth of content knowledge advanced level coursework. The following course titles are weighted:

- Honors and HHSPIB courses receive 0.5 quality points

- Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) receive 1.0 quality points.
- Dual Enrollment courses are weighted as 1.0 quality points for all core subject and program courses and 0.5 quality points for remedial or pre-program courses to include some elective courses.

## F. Valedictorian and Salutatorian Determination Criteria

The determinations for Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be made at the conclusion of the second nine weeks. The criteria bulleted below will determine Valedictorian and Salutatorian at all district high schools. All high schools are required to follow the selection criteria as listed below, which should be posted in each school’s handbook and on their school website. With questions, please contact your school counselor directly.

- A student must have been in attendance within the MCSD their full junior and senior year to be considered.
- The student with the highest calculated weighted numeric academic grade average is the valedictorian.
- If tied [weighted numeric academic grade average], the award goes to the student with the highest calculated weighted numeric HOPE grade average.
- If tied [weighted numeric academic and weighted numeric academic HOPE numbers are tied], the award goes to the student with the highest number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Enrollment courses.
- If tied, the award goes to the student with the highest number of Honors courses.
- If tied, the award goes to the student with highest Weighted Academic GPA (quality points).

\*Please Note: Per the GaDOE Rule 160-4-2-.34 on Dual Enrollment, students enrolled in Dual Enrollment, whether full- or part-time, must be considered for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, with the exception that dual enrollment students who move into the MCSD after their sophomore year and who have not taken any courses on site at their home school will not be considered for Valedictorian or Salutatorian.

## G. Individual Graduation Plan

### 1. High School BRIDGE Law Requirements

#### **BRIDGE-Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia’s Economy**

The purpose of the BRIDGE Law is to provide Grade 6-12 students with career guidance and awareness, along with information to assist students in evaluating their academic skills and career interests to include career exploration, career interest inventories and Individualized Graduation Plans to prepare for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment.

The chart below outlines the BRIDGE Advisement Checklist for Grades 9-12.

Grade & Task #	Career Advisement Processes
9-1	9 <sup>th</sup> graders will explore at least three (3) Careers / Occupations and save the results in their electronic career profile.
9-2	9 <sup>th</sup> graders will annually review and revise, <b>if necessary</b> , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.
9-3	9 <sup>th</sup> graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).

10-1	10 <sup>th</sup> graders will complete a career interest and aptitude inventory.
10-2	10 <sup>th</sup> graders will annually review and revise, <b>if necessary</b> , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.
10-3	10 <sup>th</sup> graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).
11-1	11 <sup>th</sup> graders will save three possible choices of postsecondary options in their career profile.
11-2	11 <sup>th</sup> graders will annually review and revise, <b>if necessary</b> , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.
11-3	11 <sup>th</sup> graders will research at least one additional <b>state or local workforce development initiative</b> , such as “High Demand Careers Initiative,” “HOPE Career Grant,” “Trade 5 Skills Initiative” or any other local or state workforce needs for your county / region of Georgia.
11-4	11 <sup>th</sup> graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).
12-1	12 <sup>th</sup> graders will complete “Next Step” information as saved to their electronic career portfolio: 4-year institution, 2-year institution, apprenticeship, military, technical college, special purpose (vocational) school or workforce.

## 2. Senior Exit Interviews

A required meeting to provide senior parents and students support and guidance to finalize individual graduation plans and postsecondary options.

### Scheduling and Notification of Meeting(s)

Scheduling and notification of Senior Meetings may be scheduled after final grades for the current school year have posted to the transcript. Parents of all rising seniors must be notified of their scheduled time to attend the mandatory Senior Meeting. Notification of the meeting(s) may be done in several ways to include, mailed letter, Remind.com, email, letter sent home with student, etc. Each school must schedule and conduct meetings with senior/parent guardians in either individual conferences or in small groups not to exceed fifteen parents/guardians. If meetings are conducted in small group, parent/guardians must be given the opportunity to conference individually at a later date if requested. Students that have not reached 12th grade status by the end of the current year that may potentially meet graduation requirements by May of the next school year may be scheduled only for an individual parent meeting given their “at risk” status. Senior meetings must be held by October of each year.

### Meeting Agenda

The following information must be covered in every Senior Exit Interview Meeting:

- Review graduation requirements
- Review Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) for each student
- Explain HOPE GPA Calculation
- Provide overview of Gafutures.org to include transcript requests, HOPE Scholarship, Hope Grant, and Zell Miller Scholarship requirements. It may be necessary to give an overview of other programs that students may have access to at your school in the college application process (Ex: Common Application, Naviance)
- Provide parents with Financial Aid/Scholarship resources
- Provide overview of the college application process to include types of admissions deadlines (Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, and Rolling Admission), requests for letters of recommendation, transcript requests, and standardized test score requests

- Explain Georgia Bridge Law Requirement
- Verify that each senior's name is spelled correctly and will appear on the diploma as desired
- Explain what it means to be a first-generation college student. Establish a method in which parent/guardians may self-identify as parents of a first-generation college student
- Establish methods of communication with parents/students in regards to activities and opportunities available to seniors (Ex: Scholarship opportunities will be sent through our Guidance Remind.com account)

### **HELPFUL COLLEGE AND CAREER WEBSITES**

#### **College and Career Interest Inventories**

[www.Gafutures.org](http://www.Gafutures.org)

<https://gcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html>

[www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)

#### **General College Admissions Information**

[www.GAfutures.org](http://www.GAfutures.org)

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

[www.collegexpress.com](http://www.collegexpress.com)

#### **ACT/SAT Information and Prep Sites**

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

[www.GAfutures.org](http://www.GAfutures.org)

<https://www.actstudent.org>

[www.number2.com](http://www.number2.com)

[www.kaplan.com](http://www.kaplan.com)

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

#### **Financial Aid**

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/>

<http://www.scholarships.com/resources/parents-practical-guide-to-college/parents-guide-to-college-financial-aid/loans-vs-grants-vs-scholarships/>

<http://collegecost.ed.gov/catc/>

<http://www.gsfc.org/gsfnew/index.cfm>

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html>

<http://www.debt.org/students/>

<http://www.debt.org/students/college-budgeting-101/>

<http://www.debt.org/students/loan-forgiveness/>

<https://fafsa.ed.gov>

<http://www.uaspire.org>

<http://www.ticas.org>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>

<http://www.finaid.org>

<http://www2.ed.gov/finaid>

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0082-scholarship-and-financial-aid-scams>

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

[www.GAfutures.org](http://www.GAfutures.org)

#### **Scholarship Search Engines**

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

## Summer Resources

<http://getgeorgiareading.org/georgia-summer/>

### 3. Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Students with significant cognitive disabilities served on a functional curriculum and assessed on the Georgia Alternative Assessment per the IEP may graduate and receive a regular high school diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- Completed an integrated curriculum based on the CCGPS that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction, and
- Participated in the GAA 2.0 during middle school and high school and scored on the high school GAA 2.0 in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies, and
- Reached the end of the semester of their 22nd birthday OR has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system, whichever comes first.

## H. Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs

\*\*For eligibility criteria for gifted identification, refer to section **XI. Other Programs and Requirements** in this manual.

### 1. Gifted Services High School

Gifted students in the high school grades will be served for gifted through the Advanced Content model in Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors classes. Students will attend their classes on the seven-period schedule and will be served a minimum of 5 segments per week. Each local school has a specific set of criteria for students for entry into such courses. Please check with the school's Guidance Department regarding their criteria for admittance.

Students will master the Georgia Standards of Excellence (ELA), Georgia's K-12 Mathematics Standards (mathematics), State Gifted Standards and Goals for Gifted Education in the subject areas of their gifted classes. Students will develop advanced research skills and problem-solving skills. They will also enhance their creativity and become more proficient with their communication skills.

**Advanced Content Class** (Grades 9-12) -- Students are homogeneously grouped on the basis of achievement and interest in a specific academic content area. The district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area.

#### High School Continuation Criteria

The Muscogee County School District Gifted Education Program requires that high school students meet specific performance standards as specified by the following:

- Advanced Content, Honors, Advanced Placement IB, Cluster, Collaboration models
- Acceptable progress is determined separately for each content area in which a student is served and is defined as:
  - Maintaining a semester grade average of 80 or higher in the advanced content class (excluding Honors and AP) for which gifted service is provided.

- Maintaining a semester grade average of 75 or higher in Honors courses and 70 and higher in AP courses for which gifted service is provided.
- Maintaining an End-of-Semester and End-of-Year Grade Point Average of 2.5 or higher.
- Meeting standards on the state required competency test in the content area for which gifted service is provided.
- The student’s attendance should remain in good standing while under review

Please reference **XI. Other Programs and Requirements** for continuation procedures.

## 2. Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

More than 90 percent of four-year US colleges give students credits and/or advanced placement on the basis of AP Exam scores. AP courses can help students acquire the skills and habits needed to be successful in college. Students have the opportunity to improve writing skills, sharpen problem-solving abilities, and develop time management skills, discipline, and study habits. Research shows that students who take AP are much more likely than their peers to complete a college degree on time.

### Greater Course Depth

Students have the opportunity to dig deeper into subjects that interest them, develop advanced research and communication skills, and learn to tap their creative, problem-solving, and analytical potential.

### Preparation for College-Level Work

AP courses give students access to rigorous college-level work. AP students build confidence and learn the essential time management and study skills needed for college and career success.

### Competitive Advantage in College Admissions

Eighty-five percent of selective colleges and universities report that a student’s AP experience favorably impacts admission decisions.

### Take the Next Steps Together

Talk to peers, counselors, and teachers to learn more about the benefits of AP courses and the specific process for enrolling in their school’s AP program.

**\*\*Each high school in MCSD has its own slate of AP courses. Check with the Guidance Department of each individual school for their specific course offerings.**

## 3. Georgia’s Dual Enrollment Program

In 2015, the Georgia General Assembly passed a law that streamlined the existing dual-enrollment programs. As a result, Accel, Dual HOPE Grant, and the original Move On When Ready were combined into one program entitled Move On When Ready (MOWR). The name was changed back to Dual Enrollment in August of 2017. This is a state program in which high school students may earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. Students may attend college classes on the college campus (full-time) or pursue those courses while still on a high school campus (part time). **Georgia’s dual-credit program** is available to any Georgia student in Grades 9-12 enrolled in a public school, private school, or home-study program operated pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-690 in Georgia.

### Dual Enrollment Facts

- Eligible students may participate part-time or full-time at multiple post-secondary institutions, but applications for Dual Enrollment must be completed every term (semester or quarter).

- College courses must be selected from the approved Dual Enrollment/Georgia Futures directory.
- Once all high school graduation or home-study requirements are met, students are no longer eligible to participate in the dual-credit program.

### **Quick Points to Remember**

Below are a few points to help students and parents understand the Dual Enrollment program.

- The eligible student and parent/guardian should schedule the **required, mandatory** Dual Enrollment advisement session with the school counselor to discuss the dual-credit program options.
- Completion of the Dual Enrollment Georgia Student Finance Commission application is required each semester or quarter.
- The student must apply and be accepted to a participating eligible post-secondary institution (University System of Georgia, Technical College System of Georgia or private institutions).
- The student and parent/guardian must sign required paperwork during a follow-up advisement session with the high school counselor as well as the **District Dual Enrollment Agreement Form**.
- College courses taken must count toward local and/or state high school graduation requirements.
- The Georgia Student Finance Commission will manage funding and payments to the post- secondary institutions provided by annual state appropriations.
- The dual-credit program is not available for coursework exempted or given credit by examination, testing, training, or prior experience.
- Dropping a course or not following program rules and regulations may result in students being removed from the program; thus, affecting their high school graduation requirements as well as their permanent college transcript.
- Students must make annual progress towards graduation and completion of their Individual Graduation Plan to participate in the dual-credit program.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment are considered college students in those courses and have officially begun their college transcript which is a permanent academic record.

More details about Georgia’s Dual Enrollment program may be found at [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org).

## **I. Promotion Placement and Retention**

### **1. General Requirements for Promotion and Retention**

#### **a. Grades 9-12 Promotion and Retention Policies**

Graduation requirements are determined by the year the student enters Grade 9 for the first time. The graduation Policy IHF (6) outlines the required courses and/or core courses to be taken and the number of units required to receive a diploma from the Muscogee County School District.

#### **1) Traditional Seven Period Schedule Schools**

Grade level classification is determined by the number of units of credit earned. The Muscogee County School District graduation is based on 23 units. Students will be promoted from grade to grade as follows:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade: promotion from 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: one year in high school and 5 units
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: two years in high school and 11 units
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade: three years in high school and 16 units

## **2) Block Schedule Schools (Jordan College and Career Academy and Rainey McCullers School of the Arts)**

Grade level classification is determined by the number of units of credit earned. The Muscogee County School District graduation for block schedule schools is based on 27 units of credit. Students will be promoted from grade to grade as follows:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade: promotion from 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: one year in high school and 6 units
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: two years in high school and 13 units
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade: three years in high school and 20 units

Adjustments may be made by the administration with regard to students who enter from a school not under “block scheduling” but never below the state requirements of 23 units.

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, units of credit required for graduation at block schedule schools will be as follows:

## **3) Course Units of Credits and Unexcused Absences**

The school year is the equivalent of 180 days. A student in any Muscogee County school who misses more than fifteen (15) days in any class may not receive sufficient credit. High school students may only be absent seven (7) times from a particular class per semester or seven (7) times from a particular class per year if the school is on alternating block schedule.

If a student’s unexcused and excused absences exceed the numbers listed above in a particular class, then the student may lose credit for that class.

The parent or guardian may appeal a decision to withhold credit for an individual student based on excessive absences. Appeals must be made to the principal in writing within two (2) weeks of such decision on the basis of hardship, extenuating circumstances or other extreme emergencies. If the appeal is denied by the principal, a request in writing may be sent to the Superintendent or his/her designated assistant within five (5) school days for an informal review and hearing.

Students whose absences are caused by a disability or medical condition may and should seek assistance in dealing with absences from the Principal or Case Manager as early as possible and are encouraged to discuss absences with personnel at the school level.

## **4) Retention and Promotion of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who are following the general education program, take the state assessment, and are pursuing a regular diploma are affected by the same guidelines for retention as are students in general education. These students will follow the same process outlined in the Retention and Promotion policy for MCSD. The IEP team will act as the placement team for decision making purposes and an IEP will be written to reflect the data, supports, services and accommodations needed to support the student for the upcoming year.

Retention decisions for students with disabilities who are following a functional curriculum and are participating in alternate assessment are made based upon the recommendation of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team. If you need

assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **Community Based Vocational Instruction:**

Community Based Instruction's main purpose is to train our high school students with disabilities who are following a functional curriculum, in a natural community environment to work, assisting students in the area of job readiness skills training, social skills, and independent living skills.

## **5) English Learner (EL)**

English Learners (ELs) should receive the same consideration any other student receives when determining any type of program eligibility available to all students. The ELs in the mainstream classroom will need language development and other types of support that must be included in general classroom instruction. For ELs, that includes accommodations to the instructional activities, tasks and assessments. Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and placement in an ESOL class automatically is considered a Tier 3 intervention. In the mainstream classroom, ELs should receive Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to successfully access and comprehend instruction. As the student progresses in language and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support him or her should decrease accordingly.

Retention committees (including the ESOL teacher) should review all data for a particular EL student and determine whether the lack of content knowledge is an academic issue or a lack of language proficiency. According to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA, 1974), identified ELs cannot be penalized with retention for their lack of language proficiency.

## **J. Grading and Reporting Student Progress**

### **1. Progress Reports**

Each student is provided a Progress Report near the midpoint of each nine weeks grading period through Infinite Campus Parent Portal, with specific dates listed on the official MCS D School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Calendar/Full>. The report includes data on the student's current grade in each class as well as attendance and optional teacher comments. Progress Reports should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals prior to the end of the grading period so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained.

Students with disabilities receive progress reports within the same guidelines for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each 9 weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **2. Report Cards**

Each student is provided a Report Card at the end of each nine weeks grading period through Infinite Campus Parent Portal, with specific dates listed on the official MCS D School Calendar available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/calendar>. The Report Card includes data on the student's final grade in each class for that nine-week grading period as well as attendance

and optional teacher comments. Report Cards should be reviewed closely by parents and students for information on how well the student is meeting academic goals for each course so that additional instructional assistance, if necessary, can be obtained.

Students with disabilities receive report cards on the same schedule as typical peers for educational performance. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each 9 weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **3. Grading System**

Students are given a numerical grade, from 0 to 100, in each class. These grades appear on report cards and on permanent records.

Grade Distribution	
90 -- 100	A (excellent)
80 -- 89	B (above average)
70 -- 79	C (average)
69 and below	F (unsatisfactory/failure)

Students with disabilities are graded based on the required grading process by the district and state as directed through the IEP. IEP goal performance is provided through a progress report each 9 weeks of the annual IEP. If you need assistance, please email [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.

### **4. Parent/Student Portal**

The Muscogee County School District provides parents and students with a secure electronic interface to access student information. Information provided includes: student attendance, student schedule, assignments and grades earned, and reports. Information is accessible to parents in real-time. To create a Parent Portal account, you will need to visit your child's school to verify all data is accurate in the system and show a picture ID. You will then receive a letter with your unique Activation Key. There is also a mobile app with notifications that you can use with mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

More information can be found by clicking the Infinite Campus Parent Portal link found on the "Families & Students" section of the Muscogee County School District website at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Families>. Students with disabilities and their parents have the same access to the parent and student portal information. If you need assistance, please contact your local school to obtain the required portal information.

## **IX. Special Provisions for English Learners (ELs)**

### **A. Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages Services (ESOL)**

#### **1. Placement for Services**

Under Federal law, schools must identify and screen all students in Grades K-12 who have a primary or home language other than English within 30 days of enrollment. When a student enrolls in an MCSD school, the Home Language Survey (HLS), required by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), is administered as part of the enrollment process (embedded HLS questions in the MCSD online registration form). Once identified, the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or the WIDA Screener are administered to the student for ESOL program eligibility purposes.

Any composite score below 5.0 qualifies students in Grades K-12 for ESOL services. Once students have been evaluated, the law requires parental notification of program eligibility within two weeks.

## 2. ESOL Service Locations

Allen Elementary School  
Brewer Early Innovation Academy  
Eagle Ridge Academy  
Key Elementary School  
Midland Academy  
MLK, Jr. Elementary School  
North Columbus Elementary School  
Reese Road Leadership Academy  
River Road Elementary School  
South Columbus Elementary School  
Arnold Magnet Academy  
Baker Middle School  
Veterans Memorial  
Eddy Middle School  
Veterans Memorial Middle School  
Jordan High School  
Shaw High School  
Spencer High School

## 3. Class Scheduling

K-Grade 3 = 45 minutes daily  
Grades 4-8 = 50 minutes daily  
Grades 9-12 = 55 minutes daily (sheltered English core classes, ESOL language support classes)

## 4. Delivery of Instruction

School districts provide English language support to all ELs. Such assistance is provided through the state-funded ESOL program approved by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

Approved instructional delivery models for MCS D:

1. **Push-In/Collaborative:** EL students remain in their core academic class (all content areas are possible) where they receive content instruction from the content teacher along with targeted language instruction from an ESOL teacher. (Used at the elementary and middle school level)
2. **Sheltered Content:** EL students receive language assistance and content instruction in a class composed of only EL students. The teacher must have the appropriate content area certification and the ESOL endorsement or ESOL certification. (Used at the middle and high school levels)
3. **Scheduled Class Period:** In a class composed of only ELs, EL students receive instruction in foundational social and instructional English as well as in the academic languages of content. (Used at the middle school and high school levels)
4. **Innovative Delivery:** Various titles and uses

**ESOL Supported Content:** Collaborative ESOL delivery model that pairs a content and ESOL teacher in a traditional educational setting. ESOL students receive content instruction from their content area teacher along with targeted language instruction from an ESOL teacher. (Used at the high school level)

**ESOL Endorsed Teacher Support:** Supported ESOL instruction that uses an ESOL certified/endorsed content teacher to deliver ESOL supported content instruction to ESOL students. Like sheltered content but removes the requirement of the classroom consisting of ESOL students only. (Used at the high school level)

**ESOL Strategies:** Elevation Strategies supported lessons for content teachers to use when the ESOL students are not receiving services during their instructional day from an ESOL teacher. This delivery model is an additional support for students in Grades 4-12 to support content teachers scaffolding lessons to ESOL students ACCESS levels. This delivery model is used with support of the ESOL teacher and the ESOL Academic Coach.

**Pull-Out:** EL students are taken out of a general education class for the purpose of receiving small group language instruction from the ESOL teacher. (Used at the elementary level)

## **B. Accommodations for English Learners (ELs) on the Administration of Statewide Assessments**

Accommodations are permissible in the administration of an assessment when they are clearly documented in an EL's Testing Participation Plan. Accommodations provide equal access to the assessment and must be consistent with current instructional and assessment accommodations made in the classroom.

## **C. ACCESS for English Learners (ELs) Testing**

The World-Class Instructional Design Assessment Consortium (WIDA) is a consortium of 43 states, territories, Department of Defense Schools, and Indian Bureaus dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for ELs. Georgia joined the consortium in 2005. The WIDA Consortium developed English language development standards and an English language proficiency assessment, the ACCESS FOR ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State) which aligned with those standards. A second assessment, the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, is an assessment for English language proficiency for ELs in Grades 1-12 with significant cognitive disabilities that prevent meaningful participation in the ACCESS FOR ELLs. Those students must be identified by Special Education as participating in the GAA 2.0 assessment.

ACCESS for ELs is administered annually to all identified ELs in Georgia. It is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure ELs' social and academic proficiency and progress in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies within the school context across the four language domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

## **D. Promotion and Retention of English Learners (ELs)**

English Learners (ELs) should receive the same consideration any other student receives when determining any type of program eligibility available to all students. The ELs in the mainstream classroom will need language development and other types of support that must be included in

the general classroom instruction. For ELs, that includes accommodations to the instructional activities, tasks and assessments. Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and placement in an ESOL class automatically is considered a Tier 3 intervention. In the mainstream classroom, ELs should receive Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to successfully access and comprehend instruction. As the student progresses in language and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support him or her should decrease accordingly.

Retention committees (including the ESOL teacher) should review all data for a particular EL student and determine whether the lack of content knowledge is an academic issue or due to the lack of language proficiency. According to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA, 1974), identified ELs cannot be penalized with retention for their lack of language proficiency.

## E. Grading Policy

Kindergarten-Grade 5 - There are no grades assigned for ESOL classwork  
 Grades 6-12 - Follows the MCSD grading policy for all students

## F. Student Progression Monitoring

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), school districts receiving Title III funds are required to annually report ELs' progress and proficiency in the English language, while the state is required to monitor school districts' implementation of Title III program requirements as well as expenditures of Title III funds. Title III AMAOs are reported to the US Department of Education (US ED) at the district and state levels.

To comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements and protect the privacy of our students, the minimum reporting size for the EL sub-group is set at ten (10). Ten has been the established minimum reporting size based on FERPA for all public data. School districts with fewer than ten (10) ELs enrolled may opt to be members of the Georgia statewide Title III Consortium.

### 1) ESOL College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)

Progress refers to the percentage of students that demonstrate annual growth and will be defined as EL students who move in a positive direction from one cohort performance band to another annually as measured by *ACCESS for ELLs*, Georgia's test for English Language Proficiency. Georgia has established performance bands as follows:

Performance Bands for PROGRESS		
Performance Band	ACCESS Composite Score	Performance Point Range
I	1.0-2.1	1.1
II	2.2-2.8	.6
III	2.9-3.1	0.2
IV	3.2-3.4	0.2
V	3.5-3.7	0.2
VI	3.8-4.0	0.2

VII	4.1-4.2	0.1
VIII	4.3+	N/A
IX	N/A	N/A

The redesigned CCRPI, as approved in Georgia’s ESSA Plan by U.S. ED of January 19, 2018, reduced the number of indicators to Content Mastery, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness, and Graduation Rates

Progress toward English language proficiency under the **Progress** indicator counts as 10% of the weight:

PROGRESS for All ELs in the CCRPI	
Performance Band Movement (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0)	Point Value
No positive movement	0
Less than one performance band	.5
One performance band	1
More than one performance band	1.5

**2) Attainment of Proficiency**

Attainment of Proficiency refers to the percentage of ELs that attain proficiency in English. Georgia has defined Proficiency as obtaining an ACCESS composite score of 5.0 or higher on the Tier B or C version of the test in Grades 1-12. Students achieving CPL scores between 4.3-4.9 and a literacy sub-score of 4.3 and higher may, be deemed English proficient and exited from English language support services based on the English Learner Reclassification Review Committee (ELRRC) decision as documented on the English Learner Reclassification Review Form. Kindergarten students who score an ACCESS composite score of 5.0 and scores of 5.0 or higher in all language domains (speaking, listening, and reading) except writing (minimum score of 4.5 for this domain) are deemed English proficient.

**G. ESOL Program Exit Procedures**

In order to exit language assistance services, a Kindergarten student must score an Accountability Overall/Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) of 5.0 or higher with no individual language domain score less than 5.0, except writing. The writing domain score must be 4.5 and higher. In this case he/she is no longer eligible for ESOL services.

Students in Grades 1-12 with a CPL of 5.0 will be deemed English proficient and are no longer eligible for ESOL services. Students with a CPL of 4.3-4.9 and a literacy sub-score of 4.3 and higher may be exited from English language support services based on the English Learner Reclassification Review Committee decision as documented on the English Learner Reclassification Review form.

English Learners (ELs) who meet the criteria for proficiency are no longer eligible for language assistance services through ESOL and must be exited. Title III law under ESSA requires that

school districts monitor ELs for four (4) calendar years following exit from language assistance services. The district must maintain documented evidence that the student is being monitored during the four (4) year monitoring phase.

ELs who are in the four (4) year monitoring phase following their exit from language assistance services will be coded as EL-Monitored (EL-M) in Infinite Campus, the school district's student information system. They will also be coded as EL-M (SRC 19) on state assessments and continue to be eligible for appropriate standard accommodations as outlined on their EL/TPC plans. After the monitoring phase, EL-M students are no longer eligible for any testing accommodations. At this time, the student's coding for data collection and student record purposes will change from EL-M to EL-F (former EL) and remain as such for as long as he/she is enrolled.

## X. Special Provisions for Students with Disabilities

### A. Parent Rights and Contact Information

The Muscogee County School District Program for Exceptional Students is committed to making all of our information fully accessible for users with disabilities. Please contact us at [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230 if there is an issue with accessibility of resources so that we may assist you with finding the appropriate accommodation.

#### COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS RELATED TO SPECIAL SERVICES

AAC = Alternative Augmentative Communication	LRE = Least Restrictive Environment
ADA = American with Disabilities Act	MCSD = Muscogee County School District
ADHD = Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder	MID = Mild Intellectual Disability
ALJ = Administrative Law Judge	MOID = Moderate Intellectual Disability
ASD = Autism Spectrum Disorder	MTSS- Multi-Tiered System of Support
ASL = American Sign Language	OCD = Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
AT = Assistive Technology	ODD = Oppositional Defiant Disorder
BCW = Babies Can't Wait	OHI = Other Health Impaired
BIP = Behavior Intervention Plan	OI = Orthopedic Impairment
CA = Chronological Age	O&M = Orientation and Mobility
CBA = Curriculum Based Assessment	OSS = Out of School Suspension
CP = Cerebral Palsy	OT = Occupational Therapy or Therapist
D/HH = Deaf/Hard of Hearing	PBIS = Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support
DOB = Date of Birth	PEI = Plan Educativo Individualizado (IEP)
DX = Diagnosis	PES = Program for Exceptional Students
EBD = Emotional Behavior Disorder	PID = Profound Intellectual Disability
ELA = English Language Arts	PT = Physical Therapy or Therapist
ESY = Extended School Year	PWN = Prior Written Notice

FAPE = Free Appropriate Public Education	SDD = Significant Developmental Delay
FBA = Functional Behavior Assessment	SI = Speech/Language Impairment
FERPA= Family Educational Rights Privacy Act	SID = Severe Intellectual Disability
GAA 2.0 = Georgia Alternate Assessment	SLD = Specific Learning Disability
GaDOE = Georgia Department of Education	SLP = Speech Language Pathologist
HI = Hearing Impaired	SPED = Special Education
ID = Intellectual Disability	SST = Student Support Team
IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities	ST = Speech Therapy
IEE = Independent Educational Evaluation	STEPS = Specialized Training Exceptional Preschool Students
IEP = Individualized Education Program	SOP = Summary of Performance
IFSP = Individualized Family Service Plan	TBI = Traumatic Brain Injury
IQ = Intelligence Quotient	VI = Visual Impairment
ISS = In School Suspension	VR = Vocational Rehabilitation
LEA = Local Education Agency	

The Muscogee County School District Program for Exceptional Students recognizes and values parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of a student with a disability as they are necessary participants in the development of the full students with disabilities process. It is important that the parents provide information about their views of the student's progress or lack thereof, as well as express any concerns or accolades about the overall educational development of the child. Parents provide important knowledge about how the student behaves and performs outside the school setting.

For more information about the Program for Exceptional Students and the Muscogee County School District, please review the information on the MCSD website:

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us>

**MCSD website: Program for Exceptional Students:**

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/c/Divisions/StudentServices/StudentsWithDisabilities>

Below is a list of possible contacts to ensure that you have access to individuals to assist with your specific questions, comments or concerns. We ask that you begin by speaking with individuals at the school level as they are the most familiar with the situation and your child. If assistance is needed beyond that, we will gladly work with the family and the school to address any concerns or questions.

- Each student with a disability is assigned a Case Manager. Please ensure that you know who your child's case manager is and that you and your child know how to contact them. These individuals work directly with all IEP team members to ensure all members have input and a program is written to address the student specific needs.
- Each school has an LEA Facilitator. Most of these are located at the LEA school but a few serve multiple schools so it is vital to ensure that you know who serves your child's school and how to contact them as they serve multiple schools. These individuals work to assist parents and students directly at the school level. They work to address concerns or questions as soon as possible to ensure that the collaboration and implementation is successful. They are part of the district level team but are located within the local schools for easier access and accountability.
- The school administration is a valuable resource for parents. Please ensure that you speak with them about concerns and questions as they may be able to assist you in finding a resolution. They are the instructional leaders in each school and come to the table with a wealth of knowledge and supports. Please visit the Muscogee County website to find a list of

- school and administrator information at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us>.
- Parent Mentors: The Program for Exceptional Children employs two part-time Parent Mentors who are available to work with individual parents or to provide training to groups of parents, administrators and/or teachers on topics of interest and concern. Parents may request contact information or schools may refer parents to the Parent Mentors by informing them to contact the Program for Exceptional Students at (706) 748-2214 or by emailing [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us).
- At the district level, there are Program Managers and Lead LES LEA Facilitators who work in various disability areas or instructional areas and provide support to schools and parents. These individuals are experts in their fields and are here to support teams, students, staff and families. For more information about who to contact, please email the [connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:connection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230 to schedule an appointment.
- The Program Specialist Program Manager works within the district office to complete assignments, request transportation, assist families and schools with questions and concerns and provide follow up and guidance in a variety of areas. Please call (706) 748-2230 to schedule an appointment or visit us at the Program for Exceptional Students, Muscogee County Public Education Center, 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA.
- The Executive Director and Director of Operations and Supports for the Program for Exceptional Students work with families, schools and district staff to ensure that areas of concern are addressed, create a global growth plan for the department to meet student and district needs, provide support and guidance if relationships have broken down between teams and provide guidance on possible solutions to address specific situations. If you find that you are not able to get answers or your concerns have not been addressed, please contact (706) 748-2225 to schedule a phone conference or email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us).
- Muscogee County School District Department of Education Website: <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/>
- Email addresses to obtain assistance for a child needing a possible educational evaluation: [Childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:Childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us)
- Email to notify the district that you have questions or concerns: [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) Georgia Department of Education Website: <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>

For additional parent information in terms of rights, appeals, processes and resources, please review your rights as parents regarding special education under IDEA. If you do not have a copy, they are available at each school, the Program for Exceptional Students Office at the Muscogee County Public Education Center or on the Muscogee County website. You may also request a copy by [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us).

## B. Tips For Parents

In our efforts to create “We” between the district and the community, we strive to build a relationship between all families, schools and the district. We may not always agree but please know that we encourage parent, family and student input, to ensure success.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Be involved in every possible meeting for your child. You are a vital part of the team and can provide information that is crucial to your child’s educational planning.
- If you cannot participate in person, please consider participating by phone or video conferencing.
- If you have obstacles that prevent you from attending meetings, please let us know by contacting the case manager, emailing [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or calling (706) 748-2230 so we can try and work with you to overcome any issues. Participation in this process is invaluable to your student’s success.

- Know your rights as a parent of a student with a disability. The State of Georgia provides videos explaining your rights in simple terms. Those videos can be accessed at: <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Parent-Rights.aspx>
- Encourage your child to know their IEP and be part of the team.
- Get to know the individuals at your school and district staff assigned early in the year.
- Communicate concerns and questions promptly so they can be addressed.
- Share praises with the staff and encourage your child to work to build a relationship with the staff.
- Create a file to keep up with important special education paperwork. If you need assistance with this, please do not hesitate to contact the Program for Exceptional Students.
- Watch for copies of report cards, IEP's, Progress Reports, etc. If you do not receive them, please contact the Case Manager and request the information. If you need assistance, please email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or call (706) 748-2230.
- Students with Disabilities can attend school until they earn a regular education high school diploma or up to the end of the semester of turns 22 years of age and birthday, whichever comes first.

### C. Requesting Records

Parents, guardians and adult students at age 18 or above can request to inspect and review any educational recordings related to their child or themselves that are collected, maintained, or used by the district. We will gladly comply with any request without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, due process hearing or resolution session, and in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made.

AMENDMENT OF RECORDS AT PARENT'S REQUEST - Parents who believe that information contained in the education records collected, maintained, or used is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the student may request MCSD amend the information. The district will review the request and make a determination which will be provided to the parent in writing. Please visit the Program for Exceptional Students in the Muscogee County Public Education Center at 2960 Macon Road Columbus GA or email [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us) for additional information.

FERPA for Students – <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html>

### D. The Special Education Process

Each special education area of disability has specific eligibility requirements. To qualify for special education placement, each student must meet eligibility requirements for at least one area. As the parent or guardian, you are a member of the eligibility team, which will review assessment data and other information to determine the student's program eligibility and complete or update and eligibility report. Please check the Georgia Department of Education Website for specific eligibility information: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/default.aspx>

A student is typically referred for an evaluation by a Student Support Team (SST)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team when there is belief that a disability may be the primary cause of the student's learning or behavior needs. Various interventions and supports are used to address identified concerns and, if appropriate, develop a Personal Learning Plan via the SST/MTSS process.

An evaluation may also be requested by a parent if a disability is suspected. The SST/MTSS Team, including parents, should meet to review information and create a Personal Learning

Plan to implement during the 60-day testing window after the request. The school will complete the referral packet and submit to the Program for Exceptional Students Department (PES) in the Muscogee County Public Education Center (MCPEC). As the parent, you will receive a copy of the parental rights before testing.

They are also available on the Muscogee County website and the Georgia Department of Education website:

<https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/p/Divisions/StudentServices/StudentsWithDisabilities/Information>

## **Independent Educational Evaluations (IEE)**

If the parent, or guardian, or the adult student at age 18, disagrees with the results of a completed evaluation provided by the district, you may request an outside independent educational evaluation (IEE) paid for by the district.

The district will either agree to pay for the IEE or begin the due process procedure to support that the district's evaluation is adequate. If you are requesting an IEE, please submit your request in writing to the school or the Program for Exceptional Students by:

**Emailing:** [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us)

**Mailing:** Program for Exceptional Students  
Muscogee County Public Education Center  
2960 Macon Road  
Columbus, GA 31906

**Calling:** (706) 748-2225 to schedule an appointment

### **1. Placement for Services**

Once the student is evaluated, an eligibility meeting will be held to review all current student information, any current evaluation information and student data to determine if the student meets Georgia eligibility requirements for a disability. If the eligibility team determines that the student is eligible, the team, including the parent, if possible, will write an IEP for initial services and placements within 30 days of completing the eligibility. At that time, the parent can refuse services, sign consent for the student to receive the IEP placement or file for Due Process as outlined in the Parental Rights.

Private and Home School Students with Disabilities that attend school in Muscogee County may request proportionate share services through contacting the Program for Exceptional Students through the child find process by emailing [childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:childfind@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or calling 706-748-2230.

Selection of these services are determined through an annual meeting with Private and Home School parents and the district. The decision of services will be determined by the district after initial consultation.

Through the child find process, an evaluation will be provided, if appropriate, accommodations and/or special education services may be provided through a service plan.

### **2. Specialized Service Locations**

Muscogee County offers a variety of services and supports across the district which are driven by an IEP or Service Plan for Private or Home School students. Many students receive services at their home schools but specific programming may require an assignment to a school with a specialized program. The district strives to ensure that all

students receive services in their least restrictive environment based on individualized strengths and needs. Participation with typical peers is vital to the success of all students with disabilities and is addressed through the IEP team. If you have questions about services, LRE or want a specific assignment, please contact your local school or come to the Program for Exceptional Students located inside the Muscogee County Public Education Center at 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA or email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) for assistance.

### **3. Revocation of Services**

As the Parents, guardians and adult students at age 18 or older, you have the right to revoke special education consent for services at any time. Please contact the Program for Exceptional Students by emailing [parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parenthelp@muscogee.k12.ga.us) or by calling (706) 748-2225 to set up an appointment to discuss the revocation process and receive assistance. You may also provide your request in writing and we will work with you to ensure that all processes are completed.

### **4. Class Scheduling**

Classes and instruction for students with disabilities are based on the requirements of the IEP driven services and any regular services which were not addressed in the IEP. Schools schedule students in appropriate courses to meet the state guidelines and course expectations and review to ensure that they meet the IEP requirements.

Based on student need and difficulty making progress in the regular curriculum with services, accommodations and supports, IEP's may specify the need for specialized instruction. In this case, the school will work with the PES department to ensure that the materials and supports are provided. If you have questions about specialized instruction, please contact the Case Manager or LEA Facilitator at your school and request an amendment meeting. If you need additional assistance or have questions, please come to the Program for Exceptional Students located inside the Muscogee County Public Education Center at 2960 Macon Road, Columbus, GA or email [parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:parentconnection@muscogee.k12.ga.us) for assistance.

### **5. Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities include school district sponsored athletics, academic competitions, before and after-school clubs, as well as various fine arts programs. Muscogee County believes that these are an important part of all educational programs and ensures that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in available extracurricular activities. Please ensure that you request information from the school concerning what activities are available and all requirements for participation or try out criteria annually as they may change. It is vital that the IEP team has this criteria information in order to discuss which extracurricular activities are available and appropriate for the student. While the IEP team can address supports and services needed by the student to participate, they cannot change the requirements or criteria for the activity as long as the selection or competition criteria are not discriminatory. For more information, please contact your local school.

## **XI. Other Programs and Requirements**

### **A. Alternative Education Programs**

#### **1. Marshall Success Center**

The Marshall Success Center was designed for students in Grades 3-12 who have violated school district rules and have been temporarily removed from their home school. The goal of the program is to ensure the students continue their education, complete their assigned days at the alternative school and learn how to make better choices by attending a structured/supported learning environment.

#### **2. Catapult Academy**

Catapult Academy is owned and operated by Catapult Learning Academy, Inc., serves students ages 16-20 who have dropped out of the district's high schools and are in need of an alternative solution to a regular high diploma. The program provides a combination of small-group, teacher-led instruction, virtual learning, flexible scheduling, college admission guidance and career coaching.

Educators and district leaders at the Catapult Academy of Muscogee County School District (MCSD) work closely to market and enroll students. You must be a former student from one of Muscogee County High Schools, be between the ages of 16 and 20 years old, have a minimum of 12 credits and complete an application for enrollment.

### **B. Credit Recovery Programs**

The Muscogee County School District's (MCSD) provides credit or course recovery opportunities for students to retake a course in which they were previously unsuccessful in earning credit or passing course. This allows students who have already completed seat time to potentially earn credit or meet course requirements. The following programs are designed to allow students to complete coursework using the following credit or course recovery options:

- Georgia Virtual Credit Recovery
- Georgia Virtual School
- Extended Semester or Year
- Apex Learning Online
- Summer Credit Recovery

### **C. Dual Enrollment**

In 2015, the Georgia General Assembly passed a law that streamlined the existing dual-enrollment programs. As a result, Accel, Dual HOPE Grant, and the original Dual Enrollment were combined into one program entitled Move On When Ready. The name was changed back to Dual Enrollment in August of 2017. This is a state program in which high school students may earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. Students may attend college classes on the college campus (full-time) or pursue those courses while still on a high school campus (part time). Georgia's dual-credit program is available to any Georgia student in Grades 9-12 enrolled in a public school, private school, or home-study program operated pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-690 in Georgia.

#### **Dual Enrollment Facts**

- Eligible students may participate part-time or full-time at multiple post-secondary

institutions, but applications for Dual Enrollment must be completed every term (semester or quarter).

- College courses must be selected from the approved Dual Enrollment/Georgia Futures directory.
- Once all high school graduation or home-study requirements are met, students are no longer eligible to participate in the dual-credit program.

### **Quick Points to Remember**

Below are a few points of interest to help students and parents understand the Dual Enrollment program.

- The eligible student and parent/guardian should schedule the **required, mandatory** Dual Enrollment advisement session with the school counselor to discuss the dual-credit program options.
- Completion of the Dual Enrollment Georgia Student Finance Commission application is required each semester or quarter.
- The student must apply and be accepted to a participating eligible post-secondary institution (University System of Georgia, Technical College System of Georgia or private institutions).
- The student and parent/guardian must sign required paperwork during a follow-up advisement session with the high school counselor as well as the **District Dual Enrollment Agreement Form**.
- College courses taken must count toward local and/or state high school graduation requirements.
- The Georgia Student Finance Commission will manage funding and payments to the post-secondary institutions provided by annual state appropriations.
- The dual-credit program is not available for coursework exempted or given credit by examination, testing, training, or prior experience.
- Dropping a course or not following program rules and regulations may result in students being removed from the program; thus, affecting their high school graduation requirements as well as their permanent college transcript.
- Students must make annual progress towards graduation and completion of their Individual Graduation Plan to participate in the dual-credit program.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment are considered college students in those courses and have officially begun their college transcript which is a permanent academic record.

More details about Georgia's Dual Enrollment program may be found at [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org).

## **D. Gifted Eligibility and Acceleration: Single-Subject and Whole Grade**

Assessment and eligibility for the gifted program for students (K-12 Grade) is based on multiple criteria as determined by the state of Georgia. Data for each child will be gathered in four domains: **Mental ability, creativity, achievement and motivation**. When the information has been gathered, all data is reviewed by the local education agency (LEA) Eligibility Committee to determine eligibility. The Eligibility Committee may be comprised of Regional Gifted Facilitators, gifted certified teachers, and/or the Director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs.

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students allows local education agencies (LEA) to use two methods for determining students' eligibility for gifted education services. MCSD uses both methods in the Determination of Eligibility:

- **Option A:** The student must meet eligibility requirements in both Mental Abilities and Achievement:
  - Mental Ability: 99th percentile (K-2) or 96th percentile (3-12) on a standardized test of mental ability - Composite Score only
  - Achievement: 90th percentile in total battery, total reading, or total math section of a standardized achievement battery

- **Option B:** The student must meet eligibility requirements in three of the four following areas:
  - Mental Ability: 96th percentile on a standardized test of mental ability –approved component or composite score
  - Achievement: 90th percentile in total battery, total reading, or total math section of a standardized achievement battery
  - Creativity: 90th percentile / 90 percent on a creativity assessment or rating scale\*\*
  - Motivation: 90th percentile / 90 percent on a motivation evaluation or rating scale\*\*  
OR for Grades 6-12 only, a GPA equivalent to a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

\*\*A rating scale can only be used to establish eligibility in one area

The eligibility process includes four steps:

- Nomination of students for formal evaluation or automatic referral from existing assessment scores
- Review of nominations to determine if referral for formal evaluation is warranted
- Formal evaluation to identify students who qualify for placement for gifted services utilizing the SBOE Criteria
- Analysis of data collected during the identification process by the Eligibility Team to determine students' advanced learning needs and areas of gifted strengths

**Students being served through an IEP, 504 Plan, in the SST, RTI or MTSS process or who are being evaluated can be eligible and will be considered for eligibility to participate in the Gifted Program.**

### **Referral Process**

- All referrals will be made online at: <https://apps.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Gifted/>  
**Anyone may refer students for gifted assessment during these Referral Windows:**  
FALL: August 15—September 30  
SPRING: January 15—February 28/29
- Nomination for consideration may be made by teacher referrals (including classroom teachers, special area teachers, counselors and administrators), parent referrals, peer referrals, and/or others with knowledge of student ability or through a self-referral. No matter the origin of the referral, a parent must give permission to test; therefore, nominated students will not be assessed until the parent signature is processed through the online app.

**Automatic Referrals:** Automatic consideration is determined by an eligible score on a district- wide norm-referenced test of mental ability or achievement. The list of possible testing instruments may change annually based on MCSD availability. Currently used automatic referral instruments include: CogAT Testing District-Wide at the Grades 1, 8, and 9 (October testing) PSAT. Students who score a 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher are considered automatic referrals. Screening tests such as GMAS (Distinguished Learner in math and/or reading) can be used to filter students who may need to be referred for testing; however, this testing instrument cannot be used as one of the qualifying scores.

The determination of ineligibility does not preclude reconsideration at a future date. Assessment data is considered current for a period of two years. Re-evaluation usually does not occur within the two-year span; however, exceptions can be made upon the recommendation of the Gifted Eligibility Committee and the Director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs, but must be at least one full calendar year from the date of the student's last assessment cycle.

Appeals by parents regarding the Eligibility Team decision can be made in writing to the Director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Programs in accordance with Rule 160-1-3-.04 (Code BCAEA).

### **Gifted Reciprocity**

The Eligibility Committee is responsible for making determination whether each transferring student meets Georgia eligibility requirements and makes recommendations for gifted service.

Transfer Students:

- In-State Transfers: Any student who meets the SBOE eligibility criteria for gifted education services in any school system in Georgia is considered reciprocally eligible to receive gifted education services in Muscogee County upon verification of records. If the student is reported gifted in another school system, but records do not support original placement by SBOE criteria from previous school system, then the student will become a new referral and follow MCSD new referral procedures.
- Out-of-State Transfers: There is no mandated reciprocity between states for gifted eligibility. Outside data must be considered when determining eligibility but does not automatically supplant school-generated data.
- Military Transfers: Based on the Military Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children, students who have been identified as gifted receive the same level of services as they received in the sending school district after the student has been processed through Muscogee County School District's Eligibility Team.

### **Testing and Evaluating Kindergarten Students**

Teachers or parents may refer a kindergarten student for the Gifted Education Program beginning in January of the student's kindergarten year. These students will undergo further assessment by the Eligibility Team beginning in January of that school year.

The referral packets for both teachers and parents can be found on the St. Elmo Center for the Gifted website at <http://sites.muscogee.k12.ga.us/stelmo/forms/>.

### **Review of Gifted Eligibility**

Elementary: When the student's performance does not meet the Muscogee County criteria for continued participation, a student may be placed under review. The student's review status remains in effect for a minimum of 9 weeks for elementary. Continuation past 9 weeks requires a parent/guardian and Gifted Resource teacher consultation with the Regional Gifted Facilitator. A gifted review may carry over from one grade to the next with the exception of school level changes (elementary resource class to middle school AC course).

Secondary: For secondary school, a student's review status remains in effect for a minimum of one semester; continuation past one semester or into the next school year requires Regional Gifted Facilitator consultation.

The Regional Gifted Facilitator should follow these procedures as part of the Eligibility Committee:

- Notify the Principal, the student's teachers of record for applicable courses, and gather information.
- Observe the student in the classroom.
- Notify parent/guardian and student in writing of the review status.
- Monitor student progress, adjust interventions, and update the intervention plan as needed during the grading period.
- Maintain and document communication with parents and teachers throughout the intervention process.

At the end of each grading period in which the student is under review, the Eligibility Team will determine if:

- Interventions were successful for one grading period. Review is discontinued;
- Review continues with updated interventions, if necessary, or

- Services are to be discontinued.
  - Elementary – Student no longer receives service in resource class.
  - Middle & High
    - Student no longer receives service in the gifted class in which review occurred OR
    - Student is no longer enrolled in any gifted classes; therefore, the student no longer receives any gifted service.

\*\*Note for elementary resource model: The Gifted Resource teacher may place a student on review for the following year if the student did not meet standards on a state competency test and the lack of performance can be linked to missed regular education instructional hours while in the gifted resource class. A record of intervention should be completed for any child receiving gifted services who does not meet standards on any portion of the Georgia Milestones.

### **Discontinuation of Gifted Services**

Services may be discontinued due to student performance or by parent request.

#### Due to performance:

All levels: A student's progress and performance during review will determine if gifted service is discontinued. There must be documented evidence of an implemented intervention plan.

- Elementary School: Gifted service must be discontinued for a minimum of 18 weeks before any reconsideration of service can occur.
- Middle School: Discontinuation of service occurs only when a student no longer demonstrates a need for any gifted course or gifted services within an advanced content course based on performance criteria as previously established.
- High School: Discontinuation of service occurs only when a student no longer demonstrates a need for any gifted course or gifted services within an advanced content course based on performance criteria as previously established. Gifted students not receiving gifted service through AP, Honors, gifted resource class, IB, or dual enrollment for more than two consecutive semesters must be discontinued from service.

#### Parent Request/Voluntary Discontinuation

A parent may request a student be removed from gifted services at any time by providing written notification. Gifted service in elementary resource must be discontinued for a minimum of 18 weeks before any reconsideration of service can occur, barring extenuating circumstances.

#### Re-Entry

Once identified eligible for gifted service in the state of Georgia, students will always be considered gifted yet their services for re-entry into the program must be assessed by the Eligibility Team. A re- entry request requires a parent Change in Gifted Status Form to be completed by the parent in order to initiate the review of the student.

Breaks in service occur when:

- A student has been removed from gifted service due to academic performance.
- A student has been removed from gifted service due to parent request.
- A student has a change in enrollment status (i.e. residence, private school, etc.).
- Academic performance during the break in service will be considered in the re-entry decision.
  - Students whose enrollment changes from one school to another within the district will be provided continuous service.
  - Any student that has been identified and continuously served for gifted services in another district within Georgia will have reciprocity provided supporting

documentation from the prior school district and parent consent to serve are received and the student has been processed through the MCS D Eligibility Team.

- If a student is previously identified in Georgia and there is a break in gifted service (less than two years), the Eligibility Committee will examine student data to determine the next steps in establishing re-entry into gifted services.
  - If the Eligibility Committee finds the student in good standing, then the parent will be notified and must submit parent consent to serve.
  - The student's progress will be monitored at the end of the semester after re-entry.
  - If the Eligibility Committee determines the student is not in good standing (i.e. not making satisfactory academic progress, GPA is less than 2.5, and/or is scoring less than Proficient on end-of-year assessments), then steps may be taken in order to serve the student under review and monitor progress at the end of the semester after re-entry.
- If the break in service is longer than two years, a new parent referral must be submitted and current test scores (less than two years old) can be utilized. If test scores are not current, the student will be reassessed.

All re-entry decisions are made on an individual basis by the Eligibility Committee. Local schools may not schedule a student for gifted services until written confirmation is received from Department for Gifted Education.

#### **Acceleration: Single Subject and Whole Grade**

- The parent will complete a **Referral for Acceleration** with the Department of Advanced Learning, and a Gifted Facilitator will arrange an **Acceleration Committee** comprised of key personnel to include (but not limited to) the student's teacher(s), the Academic Dean, the Academic Coach, and school leadership (AP or Principal as needed).
- The committee will utilize the ***Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition***, the **Summary and Planning Record**, and the **Assessment Form** to process student data (quantitative and qualitative) for developing an acceleration plan.
- **Whole-grade acceleration** must be a unanimous decision by the Acceleration Committee and the parent. A plan must be developed and reviewed twice a year in the **Summary and Planning Record**.
- Students in Grades K-1 will not be considered for whole-grade acceleration until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade year.
- **Subject Acceleration** must be agreed upon by the classroom teacher of that subject, the school principal, the parent, and the Gifted Facilitator. A plan must be developed and reviewed annually in the **Summary and Planning Record**.
- A parent signature will be required on the **Summary and Planning Record** once the model of service is designed by the Acceleration Committee.
- If the student has not been assessed for gifted identification, this will be an automatic part of the process for acceleration. Scores from gifted identification assessments will be used as evidence in the data-driven decision process for acceleration.
- All requests for whole grade acceleration must be received by March 1 during the school year to be considered for the next school year.

## **E. Foreign Exchange**

### **1. Sponsors**

Muscogee County does accept foreign exchange students for a limited period of time. It is usually from a 45 to 180 day placement. The foreign exchange students must have gone through Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET).

## **2. Eligible Students**

Any student who lives abroad and meets the standards of CSIET Exchange Company.

## **3. Procedures for Admissions**

CSIET sets the standards for admission into the program.

## **4. Required Registration Documents**

CSIET registration process will collect all required documentation needed to attend our schools.

## **5. Athletic Eligibility**

Students may be eligible for to play sports, however final decision rest with GHSA. Guidelines for the Athletic Eligibility of Foreign Exchange Students. The student must be involved in a foreign exchange program that is approved and published on the “Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs” published by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). This list is found on the GHSA web site.

- The student shall be considered eligible for a maximum period of one calendar year.
- The student shall not be a graduate of a secondary school in his home country.
- The student must maintain eligibility requirements at the member school.
- The foreign exchange program must randomly assign students to schools by a method that ensures that no student, school, or another interested party may influence the assignment for athletic purposes. “Direct Placement” foreign exchange students must go through the hardship appeal process to become eligible.
- All eligibility forms (Form B) for foreign exchange students must be accompanied by documentation from the CSIET-approved foreign exchange program showing that the student has been placed according to the normal procedures for that agency.

## **6. Student Transfers**

Once accepted into our school system a host family can apply for a student transfer. The request must follow all normal guidelines and meet the MCSD criteria for transferring students.

## **7. Financial Support**

Host families are responsible for the student in every way.

## **8. Compliance with Policies and Supervision**

Once accepted into our school system. The student will be expected to follow all required policies guidelines as outlined in the MCSD student handbook.

## **F. Magnet/Charter School Program Description**

Muscogee County School District offers magnet and charter programs within schools that offer a wide variety of concentrated studies.

### **Elementary School**

Each of the elementary school magnets within the district has a unique instructional emphasis. Students must meet eligibility requirements to enroll in any of the magnet academies. The magnets are designed to provide an enriched learning experience for students in addition to the

traditional elementary school curriculum. To remain in the magnet programs, students must meet expectations of good behavior and academic progress.

### **Middle School**

There are a variety of Middle School Magnet programs within the Muscogee County School District. In order to enter a middle school magnet, the student will be required to meet minimum academic and behavioral standards. If a student participates in a program of excellence, the student will be expected to maintain sound academic performance and exhibit outstanding behavior. The school of choice may require the student to sign a contract. Individual schools will publish standards for remaining in their program.

### **High School**

Each of the High School Magnet and Academy Programs is designed to provide an enriched learning experience for students in addition to the traditional high school curriculum. For more information on entrance requirements and space availability please contact the magnet schools directly.

## **1. Admission Criteria and Program Requirements**

Open House sessions for Middle School and High School academy/magnet programs are scheduled throughout the fall. Parents and students have the opportunity to learn about the different magnet programs, the application process, and requirements. All prospective students are required to apply and complete entrance criteria.

Out-of-county and out-of-state students are only eligible to attend **full magnet schools** (Britt David Magnet Academy, Downtown Elementary Magnet Academy, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts, and Columbus High School) **after** all MCSD students have completed the application process and been given consideration for available seats. These students may pay out-of-county tuition at the current rate. An **MCSD Magnet Enrollment Form** (see above) must be sent to the Executive Director of Pre-K-12 Curriculum and Instruction with a letter indicating principal approval and parent understanding of tuition guidelines complete with signatures. These may not be submitted until after the close of the MCSD Annual Timeline when all internal MCSD students have been considered for magnet seats. There is an exception for children of Muscogee County School District employees who may follow the guidelines as established in the MCSD Magnet Timeline and apply through the online application process.

Contact the Magnet program at the school for information regarding the application process and program requirements.

## **2. Course of Study in the Magnet Schools**

For a list of all magnet schools and their offerings, please visit the school district website at <https://public.muscogee.k12.ga.us/p/Divisions/TeachingandLearning/MagnetAndCharterSchools/Information>

## **3. Magnet Dismissal**

Procedures for withdrawing students from magnet programs:

- Parent must be notified in writing of the potential withdrawal from program with concerns identified.
- Conference must be held with parent and student concerning actions/behaviors needing improvement.
- A contract will be developed outlining actions/behaviors needed to remain in program. Contract will include timeline for improvement and will be signed by student, parent and administrator.
- If the contract is violated by student, school administration will contact parent to

- inform them of the withdrawal from the program at the end of the semester.
- A letter stating the reason(s) for the withdrawal will be sent to the parent. A copy of this letter, along with documentation of all meetings with parent and/or student held to discuss actions/behaviors and the contract will be sent to Director of Student Services.
- At the end of the semester, the student will be withdrawn and returned to their home school.

## **G. Student Attendance**

### **1. Compulsory Attendance Law**

The Compulsory Attendance Law O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.1 continues to be in effect for the current academic year, which pertains to every school district in Georgia. The compulsory attendance law states “children between their sixth and sixteenth birthday shall enroll and attend a public school, a private school, or a home study program”. If a child is under 7 years of age and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is then subject to this law. The law also provides “penalties for parent(s), guardian(s), or other person residing in Georgia who are in violation of O.C.G.A §20-2- 690.1; which are imposed at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction”. Each day's violation of this law, after the school district has notified the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of a child having five unexcused absences from school, shall constitute a separate offense subjecting the person notified to the following measures:

- Fine of not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100
- Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days
- Community service
- Any combination of the above penalties

The school district is charged with responsibility for enforcing the Compulsory Attendance Law. The school social worker (listed as visiting teacher in the law) must investigate, monitor, and follow-up with student attendance problems. While the school social worker may be required to file charges in State Court or Juvenile Court for chronic attendance problems, we are primarily dedicated to working with the family to improve student attendance. Children may be temporarily excused:

- when personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others
- when in their immediate family there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school
- on special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith and necessitating absence from school
- when mandated by order of governmental agencies (examples: armed forces physical exam or court order)
- when prevented from attendance due to conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety
- if they are 12 or older and serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly to register to vote or to vote in a public election.
- a student whose parent/guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent/guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be
- granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his/her parent/guardian prior to such parent/ guardian’s deployment or during such parent/guardian’s leave.
- as otherwise required by Georgia law and/or the State Board of Education.

The parent/guardian must write a note to the school explaining the reason for the absence within 3 days of the student’s return to school, or the absence will be marked as unexcused.

The district wants to work with you in partnership concerning your child's school attendance and education because poor attendance is associated with low and/or failing grades, deficits in understanding important learning concepts, discipline problems, low self-esteem, and school dropout. State law allows drivers licenses or permits to be issued only to students who are enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school.

You hold an important key to your child's education by valuing learning and making this apparent to your child. Daily school attendance, unless your child has a legitimate excuse, is a good habit to start. If you need additional information or assistance, feel free to contact the social worker at your child's school.

### **Compulsory Attendance at Alternative Schools**

The provisions of the State's mandatory attendance law shall apply to a child between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays who has been assigned an alternative public school program established by the Board. This provision shall apply regardless of whether such child has been suspended or expelled from another public school by that local board of education or its delegate, and to the parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of such child.

### **Truant**

A truant student is any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.

Truancy is a serious offense that requires stern corrective action on the part of the school and the parents. All unexcused absences will be reported to parents/guardians.

## **2. Excused Absences and Make-up Work**

MCSO recognizes the following as valid reasons for an excused absence, where appropriate documentation is provided. [MCSO Board Policy JB.] Additional reasons may be recognized; for further information, please contact the principal.

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others, note that students may be asked to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school;
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school;
- In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, note that documentation regarding the family member upon return to school;
- An Order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school;
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school;
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety;
- A student whose parent is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per school year to visit with his/her parent prior to parent's deployment or during parent's leave;
- Students serving as pages with the Georgia Legislature;
- Students in foster care attending foster care-related Court proceedings, and
- Voting, for a period not to exceed one day.

Final course grades of students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met: absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons and (2) make up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

Makeup work is allowed when an absence is excused in keeping with MCSD Board Policies JB and JBA. Schools are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

### **3. Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences to include from failure to attend school for reasons other than those specifically excused by the administration. Unexcused absences shall include but not be limited to the following:

(1) oversleeping; (2) missing the bus; (3) baby-sitting; (4) family vacation; (5) skipping school and cutting classes.

### **4. Students Who are Late to School: Tardiness**

Students who arrive on school property after the school start time designated by the Board of Education are tardy. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time will be considered tardy.

#### **Tardiness Protocol**

- Three unexcused tardy days, school contacts parent/guardian.
- Five unexcused tardy days, referral to School Administrator (Principal) or designee and a mandatory parent conference and counselor referral.
- Ten unexcused tardy days, referral to School Social Worker and to support agencies outside of the district, as Principal deems appropriate (DFCS, Juvenile, et al).

### **5. Attendance Protocol for Students Under the Age of 16**

#### **Tier One:**

- Parent receives notification of the Compulsory School Attendance Law at the beginning of school. Signatures of parents and students are kept at the school for one year.
- Student's attendance is recorded daily.

#### **Tier Two:**

- After three (3) unexcused absences, the school sends a letter to the parent notifying them of the unexcused absences. Students with 3 unexcused absences shall be referred to the school counselor or attendance designee for remediation. This process may include a conference with the student and/or their parent, legal guardian, or other person having charge. The student's attendance is monitored by the school-based Attendance Team.
- A referral to the School Social Worker is initiated after five (5) unexcused absences. The School Social Worker sends a letter to the parent. In some cases, a "Request for Services" form may be required to address non-attendance related issues. At five (5) unexcused absences, the student is considered truant under Georgia law.

#### **Tier Three:**

- After seven (7) unexcused absences, the School Social Worker may send a letter and/or initiate phone contact with the parent. Conferences may occur with students to discuss absences.
- At nine (9) unexcused absences, The School Social Worker schedules a conference with the parent or legal guardian to complete an Attendance Agreement.
- If the attendance concerns are not resolved, the School Social Worker sends a certified letter of intent to pursue legal actions or referral to Muscogee County Attendance Panel to the parent and/or student.

- The School Social Worker shall monitor the daily attendance of students declared “habitually truant.” When the student’s unexcused absences increase by at least two (2) or exceed fifteen (15) days, a truancy petition may be filed in the Court having jurisdiction or referred to Muscogee County Attendance Panel.

## **6. Attendance Protocol for Students Over the Age of 16**

### **Tier One:**

- Parent receives notification of attendance law at the beginning of school. Signatures of parents and students are kept on file at the school for one year.
- Student’s attendance is recorded daily.

### **Tier Two:**

- After three (3) unexcused or excused absences, the school sends a letter to the parent notifying them of the absences.

### **Tier Three:**

- A referral to the School Social Worker is initiated after five (5) unexcused, excused, and/or OSS absences. The School Social Worker sends a letter to the parent and may request a parent conference. Attendance concerns are discussed and an Attendance Agreement may be initiated at that time. At five (5) unexcused absences, the student is considered truant under Georgia law.
- At seven (7) absences, the student/parent will confer with the Principal or Assistant Principal regarding potential consequences.

### **Potential consequences for excessive unexcused, excused, and/or OSS absences for students 16 years or older:**

- **The Muscogee County School District Board of Education is not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.**
- **Students may be administratively withdrawn from school for ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences.**

## **7. Muscogee County Attendance Panel**

MCAP aims to connect students and families to school and community resources to decrease the incidence of truancy in Muscogee County School District and enhance school attendance. MCAP hears truancy and excessive tardiness cases and extends recommendations once a month beginning in September of each school year.

### **a. 984 – Absences Related to Military Parents**

Excused absences for students to visit with parents preparing for, on leave from, or returning from overseas deployment in a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted. A maximum of five (5) excused days per school year are permitted, provided such absences do not exceed the maximum number of allowed absences per school year.

### **b. Participating in Extracurricular Activities**

To participate in an extracurricular activity the student should be present for one half of the school day. School approved trips are not viewed as an absence, in terms of extracurricular activities.

## H. McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; and are abandoned in hospitals are identified as McKinney-Vento students.

- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings are supported by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and Migratory children who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

**Homeless Liaison** – Local Educational Agency (LEA) staff responsible for ensuring the identification, school enrollment, attendance, and opportunities for academic success of students in homeless situations. Some of these activities may be performed by the local liaison himself or herself, while others are accomplished by coordinating the efforts of other staff. Homeless Liaisons are an important factor contributing to the success of a school district's homeless education program; therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act now requires every LEA to appoint a local homeless education liaison and specifies his or her legal responsibilities. By linking students and their families to school and community services, local liaisons play a critical role in stabilizing students and promoting academic achievement at the individual, school, and district level.

Unaccompanied Youth (UY) - McKinney-Vento students who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Student Residency Questionnaires – Tool used to assist in the identification of students experiencing homelessness.

Immediate Enrollment – Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, parent/guardians or UY have the right to immediate enrollment with standard documentation. Students may remain in his or her school of origin regardless of temporary residence.

School of Origin - The school of origin is the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled.

Formal Dispute Resolution – A formal dispute resolution ensures that each party's views are represented, enables the facts of the case to be considered objectively, and allows students to attend school while bringing the disagreement to closure.

### **MCKINNEY-VENTO DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

When a dispute arises under the McKinney-Vento Act, the law requires the following minimum procedures:

- The child or youth “shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute” [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(i)]. In disputes involving unaccompanied homeless youth, the local liaison must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth are immediately enrolled in school [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(E)(iv)].
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) emphasizes the importance of the requirement for enrollment during the dispute process in the 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance: When enrollment disputes arise, it is critical that students not be kept out of school.
- Students are permitted to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of disputes.

- While disputes are pending, students have the right to participate fully in school and receive all services which they would normally receive. This includes transportation services, as indicated by the Non-Regulatory Guidance: The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved [2004, H-5].
- The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth must be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the right of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision any time the student is denied enrollment in a requested school [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. In the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, the notice explaining the decision and the right to appeal are provided directly to the youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(iii)].
- The child, youth, parent, or guardian must be referred to the local liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as quickly as possible [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(iii)]. The local liaison must be familiar with the state's McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process and follow all procedures outlined therein.

McKinney-Vento students shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

- Transportation to and from school
- Title I Services
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs
- Before and after school programs
- School Uniforms
- School Supplies
- Senior Cap and Gown
- Link to Community Resources
- Summer Enrichment Programs
- Tutoring
- Parent Training/Informational Workshops
- Student Training/Informational Workshops

## **I. Migrant Students**

Services for Migrant students are determined/managed through Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) with assistance from the Muscogee County School District Title I Program Specialist for Migrant Students. At the time of any student's initial enrollment/ registration, parents/ guardians of ALL enrolling students will complete an Occupational Survey. This survey is forwarded to the Title I Program Specialist for Migrant Students. Based on the results, the information is forwarded to the Migrant Consortium Specialist located at ABAC. The Migrant Consortium Specialist and a Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Migrant Education Program Recruiter will conduct an interview with any qualifying family(ies) to determine program eligibility.

## **J. Neglected and Delinquent Students**

Each year, the Title I Program Specialist for Neglected and Delinquent (N&D) students verifies N&D facility eligibility for services under Title I guidelines. Title I tutoring services are provided for qualifying N&D facilities and are determined by student needs. Once a facility is determined to be eligible for services, there will be ongoing consultation between the Title I Program Specialist and qualifying N&D facilities to review student records, determine student needs and appropriate tutoring services.

## **K. Foster Care Students**

With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Foster Care students are afforded McKinney-Vento like rights. These rights include immediate enrollment even without all documentation and the right to remain at the school of origin.

Foster Care students shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school, including:

- Transportation to and from school
- Transportation to remain at the school of origin
- Title I Services
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs
- Before and after school programs
- School Supplies
- Link to Community Resources
- Summer Enrichment Programs

## **XII. Interscholastic Extracurricular Student Activities – Middle School Guidelines**

There are currently 12 middle schools in the Muscogee County School District that field athletic teams. At the middle school level, there are 5 sports for boys and 7 sports for girls. There are also two district clubs available for boys and girls – Swimming and Wrestling.

- **Fall Middle School Athletic Activities**  
Football Volleyball (Girls)  
Soccer (Boys and Girls)  
Spirit Cheerleading  
Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
- **Winter Middle School Athletic Activities**  
Basketball (Boys and Girls)  
Spirit Cheerleading  
Club Wrestling (District Team)  
Club Swimming (District Team)
- **Spring Middle School Athletic Activities**  
Flag Football (Girls)  
Track (Boys and Girls)

\*Information regarding Club Sports can be obtained from each individual school

### **A. Middle School Student Athletic Eligibility**

A student is eligible to represent his/her school in interscholastic competition who meets the requirements listed below, unless otherwise noted:

The student must be an assigned student in his/her member school and have the following information on file:

- Current pre-participation physical exam.
- Parental Permission Form which includes insurance information.

The student has not attained his/her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to August 1 of the current school year. The official transcript is the only means of determining academic eligibility.

- Promotion into Grade 6 makes student eligible for the first semester of Grade 6.
- Student must pass 5 out of 6 classes at the end of first semester to be eligible for second semester. Eligibility for the first semester for students in Grades 7 and 8 is based on passing 5 out of 6 classes for the year during the previous school year.

Students that participate in the Muscogee County School District Middle School Sports League are restricted to middle school athletic participation only.

## **1. Transfer Students**

If a student transfers from one Muscogee County Middle School to another during the school year they are eligible to participate in athletics as soon as the next sport season begins. For example, if a student at School A tryouts out and/or plays soccer at that school, then transfers to School B, they are eligible for other sports at School B as soon as the soccer season is over.

A student has three (3) years of eligibility beginning the day he/she is enrolled in the Grade 6 for the first time and terminates at the end of the third year. A student must attend at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the school day in order to practice or compete that day. School attendance will not affect Saturday eligibility.

A student who enters a regular middle school from Alternative School with appropriate previous semester grade averages has no waiting period for eligibility. The student is considered eligible provided:

- The student has passing semester averages (at Alternative School) in three (3) out of four (4) subjects when language arts, math, science, and social studies, but PE was not taught.
- The student has passing semester averages (at Alternative School) in four (4) out of five (5) subjects when language arts, math, science social studies, and PE were taught.

## **B. Student Insurance**

MCSD does not carry accident insurance coverage on students who are injured at school and, in most cases, is not liable. MCSD Board Policy: Descriptor Code JGA.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians of middle school student-athletes to make sure their children are covered by some form of medical insurance. In addition, it is School Board Policy that all participants must subscribe to some form of insurance plan in order for the student-athlete to participate in tryouts and/or contests.

## **C. Annual Physical Examinations/Permission to Participate/Permission to Treat/Hold Harmless Agreement Forms**

Each year, every student that participates in an extracurricular activity must fill out certain paperwork before they can begin participation. To participate students/parents must complete and turn in the following paperwork:

- Pre-participation Physical (good for up to one calendar year)
- GHSA Concussion Awareness Form
- GHSA Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form
- MCSD Assumption of Risk Form

There may also be some forms that individual schools will require.

## **XIII. Interscholastic Extracurricular Student Activities – High School Guidelines**

### **A. Eligibility Overview**

Students gain eligibility to practice or compete for the school in which they are enrolled after they have been certified by the principal of that school, after the eligibility forms have been processed by the GHSA office, and after the students have met the standards of:

- Academic requirements
- Age
- Semesters in high school
- Residence in school's service area
- Transfer rules note: Students establishing eligibility as entering 9th graders are automatically eligible for the first semester.

The certification of eligibility shall be submitted initially in each sport or activity no later than the date set by the GHSA for the first practice in that sport or activity.

- This due date does not consider the date of the first contest scheduled.
- EXCEPTION: Literary, One-Act Play and Riflery certification is due twenty (20) calendar days prior to the first scheduled contest.

### **B. Student Eligibility Guidelines**

To be eligible to participate and/or try-out for a sport or activity, a student must be enrolled full time in Grades 9-12 inclusive at the school seeking eligibility for that student.

Enrollment is defined as follows:

- Fall Semester: when the student participates in a practice or contest before classes begin, or the student attends classes.
- Spring Semester: when the student attends classes.
- A student may be enrolled in only one high school at a time.
- The student must be in regular attendance.
- The student must be taking courses that total at least 2.5 Units that count toward graduation.

NOTE: If an eligible student transfers from a school on a block-schedule format to a school using a traditional format (or vice versa) and cannot get a full schedule of classes with equivalent credit, the school may petition the Executive Director for a waiver of this rule for the semester the transfer occurs. All or part of the course load of a student may be taken online through a virtual school as long as the student's grades are being kept at the school in which the student is enrolled. Grades from virtual school courses must be on file at the school by the first day of the new semester in order for the student to be eligible.

### **C. Limits of Participation**

Students must have a certificate of an annual physical examination on file at the school prior to participating in any athletic try-outs, practices, voluntary workouts or games that indicate the students are physically approved for participation.

- Physical examinations will be good for twelve (12) months from the date of the exam.  
EXCEPTION: Any physical examination taken on or after April 1 in the preceding year will be accepted for the entire next GHSA school year.
- The physical exam must be conducted by a licensed medical physician, doctor of

- Osteopathic medicine, nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant.
- The exam must be signed by an M.D., D.O., or by a Physician's Assistant, or an Advance Practice Nurse who has been delegated that task by an M.D., or D.O.
- The GHSA requires that member schools use the latest edition of the pre-participation physical evaluation form approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics, et. al., found on the GHSA web site. This form can also be found on the MCSD website under Athletics.

A student has eight (8) consecutive semesters or four (4) consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into Grade 9 to be eligible for interscholastic competition.

- A student is not considered to have entered Grade 9 when high school level courses are taken if the student is regularly enrolled in a school in a grade below the ninth grade.
- Credits earned toward high school graduation which are taken below the ninth grade may be used when considering high school eligibility.
- The provisions of the eight (8)-semester rule can only be waived in the case of an individual student by the State Executive Committee upon timely application by a member school for placement on the Spring or Fall agenda.

Sub-varsity competitors must meet all eligibility requirements with the exception of the migratory rule.

Students in Grade 9 and higher may participate on both the varsity and one (1) sub-varsity team in the same sport with the following limitations:

- Football – a player may not participate in interscholastic competitions more than six (6) quarters per week, beginning with the varsity game.
- Basketball – a player may not participate in interscholastic competition more than five (5) quarters per calendar day.
- Soccer – a player may not participate in interscholastic competition more than three (3) halves per calendar day.
- All other sports – the combination of games or play days (varsity and sub-varsity) in which the student participates may not be greater than the limit allotted to the varsity in that sport.

## **D. Age Restriction**

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities, a student must not have reached his or her 19th birthday prior to May 1st, preceding his or her year of participation.

## **E. Scholastic Standing/Scholarship**

To be eligible to participate, practice, and/or try out in interscholastic activities, a student must be academically eligible. A student is required to pass classes that carry at least 2.5 Units counting toward graduation the semester immediately preceding participation.

Exception 1: First semester ninth grade students.

Exception 2: A cheerleader who is academically ineligible for the spring semester may try out if she is passing ALL classes at the time of the tryout. The window of opportunity to try out under these conditions is available only during the ten (10) consecutive school days set aside for tryouts that the school chooses.

- Passing in all GHSA member schools is a grade of seventy (70).
- Students participating in junior varsity/"B" team competition must meet all scholastic requirements.
- If an eligible student transfers from a school that uses a block-schedule format to a school using a traditional format (or vice versa) and that student cannot get a full schedule of classes with equivalent credit in the semester of the transfer, the school may petition the Executive

- Director for a waiver of this rule for the first semester after the transfer occurs.
- For schools offering courses with yearlong grading, eligibility must be computed for each semester.
- At the end of the first semester, the school must determine that the student has a grade of 70% or higher in classes carrying at least 2.5 Units.
- The second semester grade will be the grade given for the entire course and shall include the end-of-course test grade.
- Remediation programs designed to bring the student's first semester grade up to 70% or higher may be used (in accordance with GHSA guidelines) if the school allows such programs for all students.

Students gain or lose eligibility on the first day of the subsequent semester. The first day of the Fall semester shall be interpreted as the first date of practice for the first sport.

- Exception: Students who successfully complete summer school to maintain eligibility become eligible the last day of summer school.
- Summer school is an extension of the previous semester and courses may be:
  - Remedial in nature where a previously-taken course is repeated in its entirety with a new grade being given.
  - Enrichment in nature where a new course is taken that results in new credit being earned.
- A maximum of two (2) unit credits earned in summer school may be counted for eligibility purposes.

NOTE: Additional credits may be earned in credit recovery programs or make-up programs after the start of the new semester.

- Summer school credits earned in non-accredited home study programs or non-accredited private schools may not be used to gain eligibility. Accreditation recognized under the rule shall be from the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) or a regional accreditation agency (such as SACS) or the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council (GAPSAC).
- An independent study course taken in summer school must be regionally accredited and accepted by the school system for graduation credit.
  - Courses completed after the beginning of a new semester may not be used to gain eligibility for that semester. Example: night school classes, correspondence courses, etc.
  - Independent study courses taken during the school year must meet the criteria.

Students must accumulate units towards graduation according to the following criteria:

- First-year students (entering 9th grade) are eligible academically. Second semester first-year students must have passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units the previous semester in order to participate.
- Second-year students must have accumulated five (5) total units in the first year, AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units in the previous semester.
- Third-year students must have accumulated eleven (11) units in the first and second years, AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units in the previous semester.
- Fourth-year students must have accumulated seventeen (17) units in the first three years, AND passed courses carrying at least 2.5 units in the previous semester.
- Students may accumulate the required units for participation during the school year and eligibility will be reinstated at the beginning of the next semester.

## **F. School Service Areas/Transfers/Migrant Students/Migratory Waiver**

School service areas for member public schools are those attendance boundaries established by local boards of education from which a school normally draws its students. The school

service area for a member private school is the county in which the private school is located. The school service area for a startup or converted charter school will be the same as the school from which the charter school draws its students.

A transfer student who has established eligibility at a former school in Grades 9-12 shall be immediately eligible at the new school if:

- The student moved simultaneously with the entire parental unit or persons he/she resided with at the former school, and the student and parent(s) or persons residing with the student live in the service area of the new school. This is known as a “bona fide move.”
  - The student may choose the public or private school serving that area.
  - It must be apparent that the parent(s) or the persons residing with the student and the student have relinquished the residence in the former service area and have occupied a residence in the new service area.
  - The following factors, although not conclusive, may be evidence of relinquishment of the former residence: Selling the residence and vacating it; OR vacating the residence and listing it for sale at a fair market value; OR vacating the residence and leasing it to another (other than a relative) at fair market value; OR abandoning the residence and shutting off the unnecessary utilities. NOTE: When a family claims multiple residences, the residence for which they apply for a homestead exemption will be declared the primary residence provided the family spends the majority of their time at this residence.
  - The bona fide move is validated when the student’s family maintains the new residence for at least one calendar year. A return to the previous service area within that year renders the student to be a migrant student. All hardship appeal processes are available.
- The student was enrolled in a private school or a magnet school and has a bona fide move from one public school service area to another public school service area. A student in this situation may attend either the public school or a private school serving his area of residence. NOTE: Students who have a bona fide move within a service area that has multiple private schools must file a hardship to seek eligibility if they wish to enroll in a different private school.
- The student was enrolled in a non-member private school in Georgia and, without a bona fide move, transferred to a GHSA member school that serves his area of residence as long as:
  - It is the initial move of the student from a non-member school to a member school serving his area of residence, AND
  - The student was enrolled at the high school serving his area of residence in Grades 9-12 before attending the non-member school, OR
  - The student has not yet established eligibility at Grades 9-12 at a member school serving his area of residence.
  - A student who transfers from a GHSA member school to an independent school entering the GHSA in the next school year must be enrolled at the entering independent school by January 31 of the year preceding their becoming a GHSA member school in order to be eligible. NOTE: Rules about joint custody transfers have control over the one-time transfer restriction in this by-law.
- The student transfers from a non-member home school and the receiving school grants credit so that the student has accumulated sufficient units. At the time such credit is given, the student must also have passed a minimum of at least 2.5 units the previous semester. The student becomes eligible when credit is awarded officially.
- The student is involved in a foreign exchange program that is approved and published on the “Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs” published by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). This list is found on the GHSA web site.
  - The student shall be considered eligible for a maximum period of one calendar year.

- The student shall not be a graduate of a secondary school in his home country.
  - The student must maintain eligibility requirements at the member school.
  - The foreign exchange program must randomly assign students to schools by a method that ensures that no student, school, or other interested party may influence the assignment for athletic purposes. "Direct Placement" foreign exchange students must go through the hardship appeal process to become eligible.
  - All eligibility forms (Form B) for foreign exchange students must be accompanied by documentation from the CSIET-approved foreign exchange program showing that the student has been placed according to the normal procedures for that agency.
- If one of his/her parents or the custodial parent is a certified teacher or administrator teaching at the receiving school. This opportunity is available one time only at any given school. (NOTE: Rules about joint custody transfers overrule the one-time transfer restriction in this by-law.)
  - The student has one of the following family related circumstances which shall constitute a waiver of the "bona fide move" rule:
    - There is a Superior Court Final Order changing permanent physical custody of the student from one parent to the other parent and the student moves to the residence of the parent receiving custody in a new service area and attends the member school serving that service area.
    - There is a Superior Court Final Order awarding permanent joint physical custody to the parents and the student elects to move from the residence of one parent to the residence of the other parent in a new service area and attends the member school serving that area of residence. Provided, however, that such an election can be made only once during a 12-month period beginning the date of the transfer and the Final Order must have specifically awarded the parents "joint physical custody" of the student. An award of "joint legal custody" shall not suffice for purposes of this paragraph.
    - There is a death of the custodial parent with whom the student resided and the student moves to live with the other parent in a new service area and attends the member school serving that area of residence.
    - There is a military transfer of one or both custodial parents that requires a change of residence of the student to a new service area and the student attends the member school serving that area of residence.
  - Students who are U.S. citizens and who have been enrolled and attended a high school in a foreign country, upon return to the U.S., shall be eligible to participate at a GHSA member school provided the student lives in the new school's service area and is otherwise eligible under GHSA age, eight-semester, academic and other eligibility rules.
  - Students who are transferred from one school attendance area to another school attendance area by a mandate of the local board of education maintain their eligibility.
  - Married students setting up a household (domicile) shall be eligible in the school of their residence provided they meet all other requirements of eligibility.
  - Students entering a school as an "unaccompanied youth" under the conditions of the McKinney-Vento Act must go through the hardship appeal process to become eligible.
  - Students enrolled in a magnet school can only compete in activities at the magnet school they are enrolled. They cannot participate in activities at their home school.

A "migrant student" is a student who transfers into a GHSA school without a bona fide move or without one of the exceptions listed. The student may practice or compete at the sub-varsity level, but may not compete at the varsity level for one calendar year from the date of his entry into the new school.

A student who is not eligible because of GHSA rules at the former school, and then transfers to a new school, cannot regain eligibility by the transfer. Ineligible students cannot gain eligibility by being adjudicated to YDC and subsequently returning to their resident school with earned credit.

Students whose transfers from member school to member school have been approved by the GHSA office after the end of regular season play or during postseason play are not eligible for participation in GHSA sponsored tournaments and/or playoffs in that particular sport for the school year of transfer.

A student who is not eligible at one school because of suspension or expulsion and then transfers to a member school cannot regain eligibility by such a transfer, for the length of the suspension or one calendar year, whichever is less.

A permissive transfer is defined as an allowance by a local board of education for students and/or their parents to choose a school to attend without regard to the location of residence.

- A student transferring from member school to member school on a permissive transfer is considered a migrant student.
- A student transferring to or from a school housing a system-wide, singular academic or vocational program or a magnet program on a permissive transfer is considered a migrant student.
  - The offering of an individual course or series of courses by one school in a system does not provide inherent justification to grant GHSA eligibility.
  - Special options offered by a school system that allow students to attend a school outside their area of residence do not provide inherent justification to grant GHSA eligibility.
  - Any such permissive transfer issue may be brought before the GHSA Hardship Committee.
- Students transferring under the provisions of Federal or State academic accountability regulations must be processed through the normal hardship appeals process.
- When a military base is located in two school districts, a student moving onto the base for the first time may choose to attend either school district, and that district will place the student appropriately. Any transfer after the initial move will be subject to standard eligibility regulations.

Hardship Applications may be filed by an administrator at a member school when a student does not meet the standards of eligibility outlined in bylaws (academic issues) and (transfer issues).

- The GHSA Constitution (Art. IV; Sec. 5; Subsection B4) specifies that the hardship issues must be beyond the reasonable control of the persons involved.
- The process of appealing a decision of the Hardship Committee is outlined in the GHSA Constitution (Art. IV, Sec. 9, Subsection C & D).

## **G. Students with Disabilities**

Extracurricular activities include school district sponsored athletics, academic competitions, before and after-school clubs, as well as various fine arts programs at all education levels. Muscogee County believes that these are an important part of all educational programs and ensures that students with disabilities have opportunities to participate in available extracurricular athletics equal to those of other students.

Please ensure that you request information from the school concerning what activities are available and all requirements for participation or try out criteria annually as they may change. It is vital that the IEP team has this information in order to discuss which extra-curricular activities are available and appropriate for the student. While the IEP team can address supports and services needed by the student to participate, they cannot change the requirements or criteria for the activity as long as the selection or competition criteria are not discriminatory. For more information, please contact your local school.

- A student with disabilities who is enrolled in a special education program which is not physically located at the home school (example: Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Services [GNETS], regional occupation center, community-based instruction

program, etc.) shall be eligible to participate, practice, and/or try out in interscholastic activities at the home school if IEP (Individual Education Program) requirements are met.

- Schools with students having to meet only IEP requirements for course credit must establish an accounting process for the number of courses passed each semester, and for the awarding of units. Requirements for the date of entry into the ninth grade and for age apply to students with IEPs without variation.
- Competitive interscholastic activities administered through local special education programs shall follow Georgia Department of Education guidelines and procedures for special education, and are exempt from GHSA requirements.

## **H. Pre-Enrollment Requirement for 8<sup>th</sup> Graders**

Before participating in any activity with any high school, a student must have a letter of verification from the MCSD office stating where a student is enrolled for high school. The student may only participate in activities at that high school. Students may attend spring tryouts (during their 8th grade year) at the school where they are assigned in Cheerleading, Flag Football, Softball, and Volleyball. In all other sports, the student may start participation beginning the first day of the summer. Again, the student may only participate at the school which they are assigned.

## **I. Annual Physical Examinations/Permission to Participate/Permission to Treat/Hold Harmless Agreement Forms**

### **Forms**

Each year, every student that participates in an extracurricular activity must fill out certain paperwork before they can begin participation. To participate students/parents must complete and turn in the following paperwork:

- Pre-Participation Physical (good for up to one calendar year)
- GHSA Concussion Awareness Form
- GHSA Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form
- MCSD Permission to Participate Form
- There may also be some forms that individual schools will require.

## **J. Home School Participation in Extracurricular Activities**

The Muscogee County School District recognizes the need for home study students to be offered support services and afforded the opportunity to participate in designated school activities as a vehicle to develop and enhance their educational experience, as well as for social and community relations. In accordance with Senate Bill 42: "The Dexter Mosley Act", a home school student may enroll in a qualifying course at his/her designated school within the attendance area of the student's custodial parent's primary residence and participate in extracurricular or interscholastic activities. There are guidelines outlined in the Dexter Mosley Act Information Form.

## **K. Student Insurance**

MCSD does not carry accident insurance coverage on students who are injured at school and, in most cases, is not liable. MCSD Board Policy: Descriptor Code JGA.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians of high school student-athletes to make sure their children are covered by some form of medical insurance. In addition, it is School Board Policy that all participants must subscribe to some form of insurance plan in order for the student-athlete to participate in tryouts and/or contests.