



EFFINGHAM COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Gifted Manual

GIFTED RULE 160-4-2-.38

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

2026-2027

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I. INTRODUCTION & POLICY STATEMENT

The Effingham County School District (ECSD) implements State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-2-.38. Local procedures and forms are developed based on State Rules and Regulations as interpreted by local Gifted Education leaders.

ECSD policies and procedures are designed to promote equity in the identification of gifted students from diverse populations. Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality, including students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and/or behavioral concerns. Identified students are admitted for gifted services through appropriate administrative procedures and served by teachers endorsed or certified in Gifted Education.

II. PUBLIC NOTICE & PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing of the following information about the gifted program:

1. Referral procedures and eligibility requirements, published annually in the ECSD Student Handbook and the *ECSD Gifted Implementation Plan and Administrative Procedures* on the district website.
2. Initial consideration for gifted education services through a *Consent to Evaluate and Testing Notice*.
3. The type of services provided, academic standards to be met, teaching methods employed, and the manner of annual evaluation.
4. Standards for maintaining eligibility, including the local continuation policy, probation criteria, and length.
5. Procedures for the discontinuation or termination of services.

Note: Whenever possible and requested, written notifications will be provided in the home language of the student.

III. NOMINATION FOR GIFTED SERVICES

- **Reported Referrals:** K-12 students may be referred for consideration for gifted services by a teacher, counselor, administrator, parent/guardian, peer, self, or other individual with knowledge of the student's abilities. A *Nomination for Evaluation Consideration* form may be submitted at any time during the school year.
- **Automatic Referrals:** Students are automatically nominated for consideration for further testing based on local criterion scores:

- **Grades 3-5:** Score *Distinguished* in ELA and/or Math on GMAS and maintain a >90 academic average over the last three grading periods.
 - **Grades 6-8:** Score *Distinguished* in ELA and/or Math on GMAS and maintain a >90 academic average over the last three grading periods.
 - **Grades K-8:** Score in the >95th percentile on the NWEA MAP Reading and/or Math Assessment.
 - **Grades 9-11:** Earn *AP Potential* for 15 or more courses based on PSAT data and maintain a >90 average over the previous two academic years.
 - **Additional Screeners:** Students demonstrating consistent achievement within the top 10% of district-wide scores on Common Interim Assessments, Universal Screeners, or End-of-Year Progress Checks.
 - **Eligibility Screening & Rationale Documentation:** The school's gifted Eligibility Team must review all pertinent data and student information to determine if it is appropriate to proceed with formal evaluation. The Eligibility Team chairperson or designated individual must formally document the meeting date, committee members present, the names of the students considered, the source of the nomination, and the committee's specific decisions and rationale for those decisions regarding whether each student considered should be referred for formal evaluation.
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IV. EVALUATION INFORMATION

Evaluations will be conducted by gifted certified teachers/facilitators trained in the assessment of gifted students, who are assigned to provide gifted services and are approved by the district's Gifted Education Department.

- **Consent Requirement:** Written parental consent is required before conducting any individual or group testing or engaging in the formal evaluation of student products or performances (*Consent to Evaluate* form).
 - **Approved Assessment Measures:** Assessments selected from the official GaDOE state-approved list are used to determine eligibility for gifted services per the requirements stated in Rule 160-4-2-.38.
 - **Validity of Data:** The most current evaluation information available will be used to determine eligibility. Only approved tests administered within two calendar years will be considered to establish eligibility.
 - **Evaluation Limits:** Students will not be evaluated for initial eligibility more than once every two calendar years. Testing to determine initial eligibility will be conducted during designated testing windows in the fall and spring.
 - **FTE and Universal Screening Data:** Students identified as automatic referrals within two calendar years may have current, system-wide generated data considered, such as grades and Georgia Milestones scores. Additional tests will not be administered in areas for which current, valid scores are already available.
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V. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SYSTEM DATA (EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS)

According to SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38, data gathered and analyzed by a source outside a school system shall be considered as part of the referral and evaluation process. However, external evaluation data shall not be substituted for or used as the sole source of data the school generates during the initial eligibility process.

- **Timeline for Submission:** Any prior testing or evaluation data that a parent would like to have considered must be submitted at the same time as the *Consent to Evaluate* form. Any external data gathered and considered must comply with SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 for testing requirements and expectations.
 - **Bias Screening:** All external evaluations must be reviewed for bias with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.
 - **Accredited School Data Exception:** If the referral and evaluation data were completed by a fully accredited private or public school, ECSD may utilize the transferring school's data to directly determine gifted eligibility.
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VI. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for gifted services in ECSD, information must be obtained in all four areas (Mental Ability, Achievement, Creativity, and Motivation), and a student must meet the criteria under either the Psychometric or Multiple-Criteria approach. Any data used in one category cannot be used in another category. If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale cannot be used to evaluate motivation (and vice versa).

1. Psychometric Approach (Option A)

Students qualify by scoring at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile or higher (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full-scale score of an approved, nationally norm-referenced test of mental ability and meeting one of the following achievement criteria

- Score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total reading, or total math section of a standardized, norm-referenced achievement test.
- Earn a score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale on a superior student-generated product or performance evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.

2. Multiple-Criteria Approach (Option B)

Students qualify by meeting the criteria in three of the following four areas

- **Mental Ability:** A score at or above the 96th percentile on the composite or full-scale score of an approved, nationally norm-referenced mental ability test.
- **Achievement:** A score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total reading, or total math section of a norm-referenced achievement test or a score of 90 or higher on a 100-point scale on a superior student-generated product or performance evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.

- **Creativity:** A score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking, or a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or a score of 90 or higher on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.
 - **Motivation:**
 - **Grades K-8:** A score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, or a score of 90 or higher on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of motivational products and/or performances evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.
 - **Grades 6-12:** A core subject GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale (or an NGA of 90% on a 100-point scale) representing a two-year average in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and full-year World Languages, or a score of 90 or higher on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of motivational products and/or performances evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.
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VII. STATE RECIPROCITY

Any student who meets the State of Georgia eligibility criteria for gifted education services shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any school system within Georgia.

- **Immediate Placement:** Transfer students from Georgia public schools with documented eligibility shall be placed in services immediately upon verification of records.
 - **Continuation and Local Probation:** A transfer student who enters with grades not in compliance with the ECSD Continuation Policy will begin the local program on probation.
 - **Out-of-State Transfers:** There is no automatic reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of active-duty military personnel (pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2140). Other out-of-state transfer students must be evaluated in a timely manner according to Georgia's eligibility criteria.
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VIII. APPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

Effingham County School District implements the following state-approved delivery models to meet the advanced learning needs of gifted student:

1. **Resource Class (Grades K-3):** Differentiated interdisciplinary enrichment curriculum with homogeneous grouping. Gifted students receive up to 10 segments per week. Maximum class size: 17.
2. **Cluster Grouping (Grades K-12):** Identified gifted students are placed as a group (recommended 6-8 students) into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom. Gifted

teachers must provide daily intentional differentiated content instruction and complete individual or group contracts. Maximum class size: 17 (Elementary K-5) / 21 (Middle & High 6-12).

3. **Advanced Content (Grades K-12):** Homogeneous grouping based on achievement and interests in specific content areas. (Advanced Content is mandated in 4th and 5th grades in ECSD). Gifted students receive no more than two segments per day. Maximum class size: 17 (Elementary K-5) / 21 (Middle & High 6-12).
4. **Advanced Placement (AP) (Grades 9-12):** Homogeneous grouping based on College Board course frameworks. Maximum class size: 21.

Teacher Qualifications & Certification to Earn FTE Funding: All gifted teachers must hold a GaPSC gifted education endorsement or be actively enrolled/participating in an approved gifted endorsement program and hold an active N3T or I3T certificate to be considered "in-field". AP teachers must hold the appropriate content-area certification and either hold a gifted endorsement OR have completed College Board APSI training and a 10-hour gifted professional development course on the nature and needs of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation.

Note: The Collaborative Teaching model was officially discontinued at the end of the 2025-2026 school year and is no longer an approved delivery model in Georgia.

IX. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Each student who meets the eligibility criteria for gifted services and has submitted a signed Consent to Place form will be provided a minimum of five segments of gifted service per week or the yearly equivalent through one or more approved delivery model(s).

Differentiated instruction requires teachers to adjust content, process, product, and environment according to student readiness and learning profiles. Gifted education curriculum must intentionally incorporate deep learning and instructional strategies that foster high levels of student engagement. Deep learning moves students beyond surface-level facts to purposeful, meaningful learning that can be applied across disciplines and in real-world contexts.

X. CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS

Student progress is reviewed each grading period, and a formal determination of the continuation of gifted services is made annually for the next grade level. Satisfactory performance must be maintained in gifted education classes to continue receiving services.

- **Elementary School (K-5):** A grade below 85 in the subject area where gifted services are being offered is considered unsatisfactory.
- **Middle School (6-8):** A grade below 80 in the subject area where gifted services are being offered is considered unsatisfactory.

- **High School (9-12):** To maintain a recommendation for gifted-level instruction, a student must maintain a passing grade in their current advanced or gifted course to receive a recommendation for the subsequent course in that sequence. If a student does not successfully complete an advanced course, they will transition to a standard-level curriculum for that specific subject area the following school year.

Recommendations are formally documented in the student's file using the Annual Review of Gifted Services: Continuation/Probation form or noted on the student's report card.

XI. PROBATION POLICY

If a student does not meet the continuation policy, they will be placed on probation for up to one grading period with remediation criteria decided by the student's gifted education teacher and/or school gifted eligibility team.

1. **Written Notice:** Parents will receive written notice defining what constitutes satisfactory performance, the length of the probation period, and the support plan.
2. **Support & Collaboration:** Throughout the probation period, the gifted teacher and/or gifted facilitator will work collaboratively with the classroom teacher, student, and parent/guardian to support the student in the areas of concern.
3. **The Final Review:** At the conclusion of the probationary period, a formal Final Review team (consisting of the gifted facilitator, teachers, and school administrator) must meet to discuss the student's progress.
 - If the student has met the prescribed goals, placement continues in the gifted course.
 - If goals have not been met, gifted services will be discontinued in that course.
4. **Written Conditions for Resumption:** The parent/guardian will receive written notice of the Final Review team's determination. If services are discontinued, the written notice must explicitly state the specific criteria or conditions to be met for the student to resume gifted education services in that content area in the future.

The probation conditions will be documented in the Annual Review of Gifted Services: Continuation/Probation form.

XII. RE-ENTRY AND PLACEMENT PROTOCOL (RESUMPTION OF SERVICES)

For students seeking to resume gifted education services following a voluntary break in service or a discontinuation of services:

1. **Permanent State Eligibility:** Once a student has been determined eligible for gifted services in Georgia, there is no need for the student to be re-assessed to determine gifted

eligibility. Gifted eligibility is permanent and is not lost due to a break in service or a period of discontinued services.

2. **Voluntary Breaks in Service:** If a student takes a voluntary break in service (e.g., attending a private school, homeschooling, or moving out of state):
 - The student remains permanently eligible.
 - Re-entry and reinstatement are based on the student meeting the district's established academic criteria for resuming services.
 - If a student was on probation at the time the break in service began, they may still be placed on probation upon re-entry.
 3. **Placement-Only Assessments:** While the student may be administered assessments upon return, these assessments shall be used solely to determine the appropriate placement level of the gifted course (such as course difficulty or grade level), but never to re-verify eligibility.
 4. **Re-entry Process:** Parents must initiate the reinstatement process by completing a *Parent Re-Entry Request* form. For middle and high school students, applications for readmission should be submitted at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. Re-entry will follow the district's established administrative procedures for reinstatements.
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XIII. COMPLIANT ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTATION

To maintain audit-ready records, gifted facilitators and data clerks must execute the following procedures upon any status change

- **Status Updates:** Complete a *Change of Gifted Status Documentation* form immediately when a student begins probation, has services discontinued, or enters a break in service.
- **System Coding:** Notify the school's data clerk to code the active status or "break from GT services" in Infinite Campus to ensure accurate FTE funding counts.
- **File Maintenance:** Note the effective date of the break in service or discontinuation on the exterior of the student's permanent gifted folder. Per the Georgia Archives, all selection, eligibility, and placement records must be retained permanently.