

Talented and Gifted Programs

in the Fulton County School System



***A Guide
for Parents***

Overview

The Talented and Gifted (TAG) program in the Fulton County School System provides enriching learning experiences for the intellectually advanced and exceptionally creative student. Gifted services are available in all Fulton County schools for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The program meets all requirements of the Georgia Department of Education and provides a variety of high-quality opportunities for the student. Specially-trained educators guide the gifted student in ways that maximize the child's unique learning characteristics, interests, personal needs, and capabilities.

At all grade levels, the goals are to:

- Develop advanced research methods and independent learning
- Generate new ideas and products
- Develop higher order and critical thinking skills
- Develop advanced communication skills

For questions concerning TAG:

- Contact the TAG teacher at your school
- Call the gifted program office at 404-763-6811, or
- Go to www.fultonschools.org/DEPT/curriculum/TAG/index.htm

Screening/Referral

The Fulton County School System screens students for eligibility for gifted services twice a year.

I. Automatic Screening- At the beginning of the school year, TAG teachers review previous year's test scores.

- Standardized Tests

Students must have a minimum of an 85th percentile and a 90th percentile in two of the three areas: Total Reading, Total Math, and Complete Battery.

- Criterion-Referenced Competency Test

Students must score in the top 20 percent on the reading or mathematics section when compared to all other students in the system.

- Grades (high school only)

Students must have an overall cumulative average of 95 or greater.

II. Classroom Screening - Local schools select a two-week period in the fall to review all students in their school.

- Classroom teachers use the *Characteristics Instrument for Screening Students (CISS)* to identify students with superior abilities in five or more of the following areas: motivation, interests, communications skills, problem-solving abilities, memory, inquiry, insight, reasoning, creativity, and humor. Parents may request to view their child's screening results.

Students meeting either the automatic screening OR classroom screening criteria AND having supporting data gathered from test history, products, and/or advanced content levels are referred for gifted testing. Once referred to testing:

- Parent receives *Parent Notification for Testing Consent Form*
- Student tests for the gifted program
- Parent receives test results
- If state eligibility is determined (see pages 9-10), students are placed in the TAG program

Elementary School

Elementary students receive gifted services one day per week in a resource class. The student attends the gifted resource class at his or her home school.

- Elementary class size is limited to 17 students.
- The program includes challenging units linked to science and social studies.
- While the student participates in a gifted resource class, assignments in general education classes are modified or eliminated depending on the student's academic strengths.

Evaluation of Student Performance

- The *TAG Progress Checklist* is provided to parents at the end of each unit.
- A parent-teacher conference is held each year to discuss the student's progress.
- If a student has difficulty in the gifted or general education program, a conference is held with the parent to discuss continuation options, such as probation or dismissal.

Middle School

Gifted services in the middle school extend the middle school curriculum and take into consideration the academic, social, and emotional growth of the student.

- TAG classes are part of the student's daily schedule.
- Middle school class size is limited to 21 students.
- Grades are earned in content area(s).

Middle school students receive gifted services in one to four advanced core content classes (language arts, science, social studies, math). Students may also participate in individual projects in the area(s) of content placement. With supervision by a gifted-services teacher, students conduct in-depth research as an extension of a topic in the Fulton County curriculum.

Gifted students are placed in advanced content courses on the basis of achievement scores, past academic performance, and teacher recommendations. In addition to the eligibility requirements, middle school students must also meet the following placement criteria:

- Teacher recommendation in the content area(s).
- “B” average or better for the previous school year in the content area(s).
- Test scores within the past two years on a nationally-normed achievement test as follows:
 - Language Arts: at or above the 90th percentile in Total Reading
 - Social Studies: at or above the 90th percentile in Social Studies
 - Science: at or above the 90th percentile in Science
 - Math: placement is determined by the general education teacher, based upon system guidelines.

Note: Alternative criteria may be used for content placement under specific circumstances. Please contact your TAG teacher for further information. Students not identified for the TAG program MAY participate in classes based on space availability and placement criteria listed above.

Middle School, continued

Evaluation of Student Performance

- Evaluation is based upon test grades, assignments, and classroom performance.
- TAG uses the same reporting system as other classes. This includes a progress report every 4 1/2 weeks with a report card every nine weeks.
- A parent-teacher conference is held each year to discuss the student's progress.
- If a student has difficulty in the gifted classes, a conference is held with the parent to discuss continuation options, such as probation or dismissal.

High School

The high school student has a variety of options in receiving gifted services. The student attends advisement conferences with a gifted program teacher several times during each year. The ninth grade-gifted student attends a required gifted seminar the first semester in high school. Class sizes are limited to 21.

High school gifted services offer a challenging, unique program of study for the student as outlined below.

- **Seminars.** Teacher-designed courses are offered based on student interest and meet weekly on a rotating schedule. The objectives and activities of each seminar are clearly defined in a contract that the student signs at the beginning of the seminar. The transcript reflects credit/non-credit.
- **Individual Projects.** With the supervision of a teacher of the gifted, the student conducts in-depth research as an extension of a curriculum topic in a class. The student and the teacher develop a contract that will guide the student's work. The student meets with the gifted program teacher at least four times during the semester. The transcript reflects credit/non-credit.
- **Advanced Placement Courses.** These college level courses meet daily and prepare the student for the College Board Advanced Placement exam. Students who have not been identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability based on system criteria may participate. The transcript reflects a numeric grade.
- **Directed Studies (11th and 12th grades only).** The student conducts extensive research in a particular academic area **or** completes a course from the Fulton County curriculum that is not offered that semester. It is a daily class and the transcript reflects a numeric grade.

High School, continued

- **Career Internships (11th and 12th grades only).** Businesses provide the student with the opportunity to work with professionals in a field he or she is considering as a career. The student leaves school for one or two periods a day. The transcript reflects a numeric grade.
- **Joint Enrollment.** The student may enroll in college, university, or technical school courses and receive both high school and college credits. The transcript reflects a numeric grade.
- **International Baccalaureate.** The student receives an intense international studies program offered only at Riverwood High School. Any Fulton County student who meets eligibility requirements may apply for a transfer to Riverwood High School.

Evaluation of Student Performance

- Gifted participation credit is given for seminars and individual projects, if the student meets the requirements on the contract.
- If TAG credit is not earned for a term, parents are notified of the continuation options such as probation or dismissal from the program.
- A parent-teacher conference on the student's progress is provided to parents.
- Transcripts sent to colleges explain that the student completed additional work through gifted services.

Georgia Eligibility Criteria

State Board Rule 160-4-2-.38 states:

“The Georgia State Board of Education defines a gifted student as one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.”

- Information shall be gathered in each of the four categories (mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation).
- At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a **nationally normed** test.
- Any data used to establish eligibility in one category should not be used to establish eligibility in another category.
- Any piece of information used to establish eligibility shall be **current within two years**.
- The Talented and Gifted Program will only administer standardized mental ability and creativity tests once every two years.
- Data gathered and analyzed by a source outside the school system shall be used **only in the mental ability category**. It shall be supported by two of the three remaining categories. One of the three remaining categories must be a nationally normed test.

Fulton County's Implementation of Georgia's Eligibility Rule

Once students are recommended for consideration in the TAG program, the following eligibility criteria must be met.

Data Category	Procedure One	Procedure Two
	Student must qualify in three of the four categories.	Student must have a qualifying score in the mental ability AND achievement categories.
Mental Ability <i>(Intelligence)</i>	K-12 \geq 96th percentile composite OR appropriate component score on a nationally normed mental ability test	K-2 \geq 99th percentile composite score on a nationally normed mental ability test 3-12 \geq 96th percentile composite score on a nationally normed mental ability test
Achievement <i>(Excels in a specific academic field)</i>	K-12 \geq 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test <i>OR</i> 6-8 cumulative average \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course <i>OR</i> 9-12 cumulative average \geq 85 on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course	K-12 \geq 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test
Creativity <i>(Original production)</i>	K-12 \geq 90th percentile composite score on a standardized test of creative thinking <i>OR</i> Superior product/performance with a score \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, indicated in: K-5 products from teacher directed lessons 6-12 winner of district, state, or national academic competition	
Motivation <i>(Student products and performance)</i>	Superior product/performance with a score \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, indicated in: K-5 products from teacher directed lessons, or 6-12 winner of district, state, or national academic competition <i>OR</i> K-5 \geq 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics ratings scale <i>OR</i> 6-8 cumulative average \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course <i>OR</i> 9-12 cumulative average \geq 85 on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course <i>OR</i> 8-12 cumulative average \geq 85 on a scale of 1-100 over the last two years in core areas	

Fulton County Board of Education

Julia C. Bernath, *President*

Linda P. Bryant, *Vice President*

Gail Dean • Catherine Maddox • Katie Reeves

Linda Schultz • Ashley Widener

James Wilson, *Superintendent*



786 Cleveland Avenue, SW • Atlanta, Georgia 30315-7299

404-768-3600

www.fultonschools.org

It is the policy of the Fulton County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service. If you wish to make a complaint or request accommodation or modification due to discrimination in any program, activity, or service, contact Compliance Coordinator Ron Wade, 786 Cleveland Avenue, SW, Atlanta, GA 30315, or phone 404-763-4585. TTY 1-800-255-0135.

Fall 2007