

**2015-2016**  
Parent Resource Guide  
*for*  
Gifted Education Services

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## PHILOSOPHY FOR GIFTED SERVICES

Authorities, parents, and educators have long recognized that gifted students require specialized educational experiences that promote the development and expression of their potential. If gifted individuals—as children, youths, and adults—are to experience fulfilling lives and if society is to derive optimal benefits from gifted individuals' uncommon potentials, an educational program must be structured to develop more fully their exceptional and varied abilities, interests, and talents.

The Fulton County gifted program is a response to the need to address the unique learning characteristics, interests, personal needs, and capabilities of gifted children. The program emphasizes the gifted students' need for interaction with intellectual peers. Emphasis on the individual highlights the fact that there are differences among gifted students and a need for specialized educational experiences to meet these differences.

Basic to the philosophy of this program is the idea that no one teacher, resource, or instructional method can meet the needs of gifted students. Education for the gifted is viewed as a cooperative endeavor characterized, facilitated, and realized by the efforts of numerous individuals in the schools and community.

These goals are accomplished in Fulton County Schools by enriching and expanding upon the core curriculum for identified gifted students in the regular classroom, adjusting the rate and depth of their learning, providing opportunities to interact with other gifted students in such recognized programs as Odyssey of the Mind, and using a variety of appropriate teaching methods which address multiple intelligences. Further differentiation beyond that in the regular classroom is accomplished through challenging instructional activities, seminars, directed studies, internships, and other challenging experiences available to gifted students. These educational experiences for gifted students provide the additional variety and flexibility necessary to adjust and extend the Fulton County curriculum to meet these individuals' needs.

## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with this philosophy, the following program goals and objectives have been adopted in order to identify and serve the gifted students of Fulton County:

- A. To help teachers, administrators, and parents identify gifted students and understand their unique abilities, needs, and preferences. This goal will be accomplished by providing**
1. Staff development for school personnel and in-service for parents to increase recognition of the characteristics of gifted students and an understanding of these students' natures and needs.
  2. Routine review of scores from system-wide achievement tests at each school, with additional testing when indicated.
  3. Appropriate materials for assessment of students' abilities, interests, and needs.
  4. Regular communication among classroom teachers, parents, counselors, principals, TAG teachers, and students to facilitate evaluation of the students' needs.
- B. To design and implement differentiated instructional experiences in the school and the community. This goal will be accomplished by providing**
1. Opportunities for classroom teachers, students, parents, and others to plan and develop appropriate educational experiences.
  2. Appropriate materials and resources for individual students.
  3. A variety of teaching strategies to be used by classroom teachers and gifted teachers in order to encourage higher levels of thinking, creativity, and independent learning.
  4. Enrichment and/or academically accelerated materials that may include multi-media, multi-level, interdisciplinary approaches to learning.
  5. Access to wide variety of community resources.
  6. Activities that develop independent learning skills.
  7. Open-ended activities which encourage students to acquire and apply knowledge through purposeful investigation.
- C. To develop in gifted students an accurate and increasing awareness of themselves, their abilities, and their value to society. This goal will be accomplished by providing:**
1. Activities and guidance that encourage positive development of gifted students' self- concepts and an understanding of their needs.
  2. Activities and guidance that help students understand their abilities and their potential for contributions to society.
  3. Experiences in school that foster interaction and cooperation with students of both similar and different abilities.
  4. Opportunities for gifted students to discover and explore new interests and aptitudes.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The following information is provided annually to parents of students receiving gifted services.

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 diverse, high-quality opportunities for the student. All TAG teachers in Fulton County hold an endorsement in Gifted Education from the Professional Standards Commission. These 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.

Students identified as gifted and whose participation has received parental consent shall receive at least five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted education services, using one of the approved models described in the GaDOE *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

Identification and service of gifted students shall be nondiscriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, gender, disabilities or economic background.

**Fulton County's Implementation of Georgia's Eligibility Rule**  
**State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38**

- Data shall be gathered in each of the four assessment categories.
- 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 shall not be used to establish eligibility in another category.
- Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be **current within two years** at the date of the Eligibility Team meeting.
- The Talented and Gifted Program will only administer **each specific** standardized test once every two calendar years.
- Data gathered and analyzed by a private licensed psychologist 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 administered by a school.

<b>Data Category</b>	<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>
	Student must have a qualifying score in the mental ability <b>AND</b> achievement categories.	Student must qualify in <u>three</u> of the four categories.
<b>Mental Ability</b>	<p><b>K-2</b> 99<sup>th</sup> percentile <b>composite</b> score on a nationally normed mental ability test</p> <p><b>3-12</b> ≥ 96<sup>th</sup> percentile <b>composite</b> score on a nationally normed mental ability test</p>	<p><b>K-12</b> ≥ 96<sup>th</sup> percentile composite <u>OR</u> an appropriate component score on a nationally normed mental ability test</p>
<b>Achievement</b>	<p><b>K-12</b> ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test</p>	<p><b>K-12</b> ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test <u>OR</u> <b>6-8</b> cumulative average ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course <u>OR</u> <b>9-12</b> cumulative average ≥ 85 on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course</p>
<b>Creativity</b>	Data gathered	<p><b>K-12</b> ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile composite score on a nationally normed test of creative thinking <u>OR</u> Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, as indicated in: <b>K-5</b>, products from teacher directed lessons, or <b>K-12</b>, winner of district level academic competition</p>
<b>Motivation</b>	Data gathered	<p>Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, indicated in: <b>K-5</b>, products from teacher directed lessons, or <b>K-12</b>, winner of district level academic competition <u>OR</u> <b>K-5</b> ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale</p>

<b>Motivation (continued)</b>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p><b>6-8</b> cumulative average <math>\geq 90</math> on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p><b>9-12</b> cumulative average <math>\geq 85</math> on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p><b>8-12</b> cumulative average <math>\geq 85</math> on a scale of 1-100 over the last two years in core academic areas</p>
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## Screening and Referrals

The consideration for gifted education services may be reported or automatic as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*. Fulton County screens all students for gifted services twice a year and uses a systematic approach to identify highly capable students who may qualify for gifted service. The gifted teacher routinely reviews available data to refer students for further assessment. 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.

- I. **Automatic Screening**- identifies students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, for further assessment to determine eligibility for gifted services. At the beginning of the school year, gifted teachers review previous year test scores.
  - **Standardized Tests (New Students)**  
Students must have minimally a combination of scores that include an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and a 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in two of the three areas on a standardized, nationally norm-referenced achievement test: Total Reading, Total Math, and Complete Battery.
  - **STAR Assessments (Grade K)**  
Students must score 90% or greater on system's STAR assessment for Early Literacy. No supporting data needed. Assessment is given in the Fall of K year.
  - **STAR Assessments (Grade 1)**  
Students must score 90% or greater on system's STAR assessment for Math and Reading on the previous year's K assessment. No supporting data needed.
  - **STAR Assessments (Grades 2-8)**  
Grade 2- Students must score 90% or greater on system's STAR assessment for Math and Reading of previous year's assessment. Supporting data is needed.  
Grade 3-8 - Students must score 90% or greater on system's STAR assessment for Math or Reading of previous year's assessment. Supporting data is needed.
  - **Acceleration Assessments (Grades K-1)**  
Students must score 80% or greater on system's Acceleration Assessment for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. No additional supporting data is needed.
  - **Acceleration Assessments (Grades 2-3)**  
Students must score 80% or greater on system's Acceleration Assessment for English/Language Arts or Mathematics. Supporting data is needed.
  - **Grades (Grades 10-12)**  
Students must have an overall cumulative average of 95 or greater.

Students referred for testing through the Automatic Screening will be tested in September-October. All parents will be notified of eligibility decisions in November- December.

II. **Reported Referrals**- A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. **All referrals are first reviewed by the local Eligibility Team to consider if existing information warrants a formal testing for eligibility.** Reported referrals are conducted through the Classroom Screening process:

- **Classroom Screening** - Local schools select a two-week period in the winter to review all students in their school (K-11).

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, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, memory, inquiry, insight, reasoning, creativity, and humor. Parents may request to view their child’s screening results.

Students referred for testing through the Classroom Screening process will be tested within the time frame of January-March. All parents will be notified of eligibility decisions in May.

### **In-State Reciprocity**

Any student who meets the Georgia gifted eligibility criteria is considered eligible to receive gifted education service in Fulton County upon verification of records. The student’s previous eligibility records must be attached to the Fulton County Eligibility Report. Transfer students who qualify for gifted services in Fulton, but whose performance does not meet Fulton’s continuation criteria, may begin gifted services on probation. Contact the Advanced Studies office for guidance as needed.

**Note:** Students **may not** be scheduled into the gifted classes until eligibility has been verified and parent permission has been obtained.

### **Students New to the System**

The TAG teacher (or designee) will review all data and information in the Permanent Records of students who are new to Fulton County. If there is evidence the student previously received gifted services at a Georgia public school, the student is eligible immediately through in-state reciprocity. Evidence of such eligibility is a copy of an Eligibility Report from the previous school.

If a student transfers from a private school, the student record is examined for qualifying test data to include:

- Nationally-normed Achievement test scores current within 2 years (ITBS, Stanford, etc)
- Mental Ability test scores current within 2 years (OLSAT, WISC, CogAT, etc)

If there is evidence the student previously received gifted services at a school from another state, the student record is examined for data and information as follows:

- Nationally-normed Achievement test scores current within 2 years (ITBS, Stanford, etc)
- Mental Ability test scores current within 2 years (OLSAT, WISC, CogAT, etc)

If no qualifying scores can be verified, the student may be referred for additional testing in the areas of mental abilities, achievement, creativity and motivation. The local Eligibility team will consider all available data and make the determination if testing is warranted.

## Assessment

The Advanced Studies department provides a detailed Testing Manual located on the employee portal. The gifted teachers should read this manual and understand all testing protocols prior to the administration of any assessments.

### System-Wide Assessments

Fulton County systematically assesses elementary and middle school students in the area of achievement. Results from these assessments are used to screen students for further evaluation and to qualify students for gifted service.

### Gifted Eligibility Assessment

The gifted teacher must complete a Notification of Consideration of Gifted Services (parent consent to test) any time assessments are administered that are not part of a system-wide testing event. Parents must receive, sign, and return the form **before** a student can be assessed. Observation instruments used in the gifted eligibility process, such as rating scales do not require parental permission. Data must be collected in all four assessment categories (mental abilities, achievement, creativity, motivation) for any student assessed for gifted eligibility. The gifted teacher must follow the evaluation guidelines provided in the Testing Manual.

### Out-of-System and Private Assessment

Data generated from sources other than a Fulton County School must be considered but do not automatically supplant school-generated data to determine eligibility. Data gathered and analyzed by a source outside a 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 administered by a school.

**Security**

All teachers are expected to be thoroughly familiar with professional standards for assessment which are available for review in the district's Advanced Studies Testing Manual and on the state website. They are responsible for managing and controlling all assessment materials used for gifted eligibility. All assessment materials kept at the local school must be secured in a locked cabinet. Copyrighted assessment protocols or answer documents cannot be shown to parents/guardians and can only be shared with other educators based upon professional need.

**Confidentiality**

Student scores cannot be communicated with anyone except a parent, legal guardian, or an educator whose professional role requires access to the information.

**Note:** Copyrighted tests, rating scales, or answer documents cannot be duplicated, altered, or divided.

## Gifted Program Service Delivery Models

The following are the approved delivery models for gifted service in the Fulton County School District.

### Elementary School

**Resource Class** - students receive gifted services one day per week in a resource class at his or her home school. Class size is limited to the maximum specified by the State Board of Education. The teacher must have the gifted endorsement. The content and pacing must be differentiated to the degree that the activities are clearly instructionally appropriate for gifted students at that grade level. 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.

**Cluster Grouping**- identified gifted students are grouped in an otherwise heterogeneous classroom. For this model to qualify for FTE funding (one or two segments maximum) the regular classroom teacher must have the gifted endorsement and document curriculum modifications for the gifted students using (a) separate lesson plans and (b) individual student contracts which identify all the following:

- Data supporting the student's need for an advanced curriculum in an identified content area (e.g., pretest grades);
- Learning objectives for the gifted students;
- Alternative activities in which the gifted students will be engaged;
- Dates and amount of time (in segments) the gifted students will be engaged in higher-level activities;
- Means by which the gifted students learning will be assessed (e.g., the expected outcomes or products).

**NOTE: The cluster model cannot replace the resource model for gifted service.**

### Middle School

**Advanced Content Class**- students receive gifted services in a specific academic content area. Placement is made when a student demonstrates exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area as determined by specific district criteria. Math and Language Arts placements are made in accordance with the Continuous Achievement placement guidelines. The student may also participate in individual projects in the area(s) of content placement. With supervision by a teacher of the gifted, the student conducts in-depth research as an extension of a topic in the Fulton County curriculum. Gifted services in the middle school extend the middle school Common Core Georgia Performance Standard curriculum, considering the academic, social, and emotional growth of the student. TAG classes are part of the student's daily schedule and grades (numerical averages) are earned in the content area(s). Gifted students are placed in advanced content courses on the basis of achievement scores, past academic performance, and teacher recommendations. The Q&A entitled "Q&A Middle School TAG Placements" will help parents understand the process for determining placement into specific content areas in middle school.

## High School

The high school student has a variety of options in receiving gifted services. The student attends advisement conferences with a teacher of the gifted several times during each year. Class sizes are limited to 23-26. 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.
- **Honors Courses (9th and 10th grades only).** These courses meet daily and include a differentiated curriculum focused on the development of advanced research and advanced communication skills within the discipline. 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.
- **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.** 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.
- **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. Pre-requisites must be met for this course.
- **International Baccalaureate.** The student receives an intense international studies program offered currently at Riverwood International Charter High School.

## Student Performance Standards

In accordance with the philosophy and program goals, the following standards have been adopted. Elements for each standard are on pages 24-26, 38-40, 54-56.

**Gifted students will develop advanced research methods and independent study skills, which allows for the in-depth learning of self-selected topics within the area of study.**

**Rationale:** Gifted learners possess an extensive knowledge base, learn at an accelerated pace and are capable of advanced level of comprehension. In addition, many gifted students are highly curious and intrinsically motivated, especially to pursue topics which interest them. As compared to their age-peers, gifted learners tend to have longer attention spans, exhibit a stronger need to know and can follow-through with assignments. If gifted students are to benefit from these abilities, the gifted program must emphasize the development of skills that enable them to become effective as independent learners.

Because of the advanced nature of their abilities and interests, gifted students need to learn how to access advanced-level reference materials, including a variety of print and non-print references and information retrieval systems. They need learning tasks that allow them to explore personal interests through guided research, independently study and community involvement. In order to conduct authentic research, students need instruction and guidance in learning to ask the right kinds of questions by looking at techniques used by experts in the specific field. They need instruction in the development of a written plan of research (with emphasis on how one gathers, categorizes, analyzes and evaluates information in particular fields); assistance in evaluating their own work; and in considering implications for future research.

**Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills with a variety of complex topics within the area of study in order to be generators of ideas and products original to the students.**

**Rationale:** Gifted learners have the ability to generate original ideas and solutions, and they characteristically see diverse and unusual relationships. Their instruction must allow opportunities to further develop and apply these differential patterns of thought processing (e.g., divergent thinking, sensing consequences, and making generalizations); a curricular need is to be able to explore alternatives and consequences of those choices, and to draw and test generalizations. The original thoughts and ideas often expressed by gifted students require an environment in which the student feels free and safe to stretch beyond the need for a right answer.

**Gifted students will develop and practice higher order and critical thinking skills in an area of study.**

**Rationale:** Gifted learners need less time to learn new material and master new skills. One strategy for differentiating instruction for gifted students is to structure lessons and units in such a way that gifted students spend a larger proportion of their time on higher order thinking. They should use content they have mastered to further develop their understanding of the concepts and practice the skill of critical thinking.

**Gifted students will develop advanced communication skills that incorporate new techniques, materials, and formats in the development of products and ideas that will be shared with real audiences.**

**Rationale:** Gifted students need the ability to effectively communicate their products and ideas to others. It is important to remember that throughout history we have recognized “giftedness” in individuals because of the impact of their products and ideas. Feedback from real audiences provides gifted learners with a chance to utilize their advanced communication skills. Internal motivation develops when students pursue ever-increasing levels of excellence in their final products and receive confirmation from real audiences that others value their intellectual and academic talents.

## **GIVENS**

**The content of all gifted education curricula should be advanced for that grade level. Even when the Resource Model is used and the emphasis is on enrichment, as opposed to the delivery of core content, the subject matter should be advanced. In all delivery models that advanced content should be related to broad-based issues, themes, and problems.**

**Rationale:** Two of the most distinguishing characteristics of gifted students are how quickly they learn and how easily they are bored if not challenged. As compared to their age-peers, gifted children tend to learn more rapidly; they tend to remember more, and they tend to think more deeply about what they learn. The gifted child often grasps complex and abstract concepts and relationships that normally are learned at an older age. Therefore, one of the basic tenets of gifted education is that the pace and complexity of the curriculum must be adjusted to match the gifted child’s learning ability. Consequently, the content differentiation for gifted learners should include the modification of the rate of learning. Opportunities to move through core curriculum material at an appropriate rate and to then be engaged novel, advanced materials, are essential if we are to sustain the motivation and eagerness with which gifted students approach learning in the early years.

**The curriculum activities and delivery models used in gifted programming should (a) be sensitive to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students and (b) encourage the development of self-understanding, i.e., appreciating likeness and differences between oneself and others, and recognizing and using one’s abilities.**

**Rationale:** Many gifted children experience difficulty in accepting some aspect of their giftedness. Their heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different, can result in low self-esteem and inhibited growth emotionally and socially. Gifted learners need time for interaction with other gifted students, reflection, and discussion, for the purpose of self-understanding. A strong aptitude for solving problems allows gifted students to deal effectively with these concerns when given the opportunity and guidance. This type of involvement can also help provide students with a foundation for leadership development.



**Student achievement should be evaluated by using appropriate and specific criteria based on the higher expectations we have for most capable students. Evaluation methods should include teacher, self, and collaborative evaluation.**

**Rationale:** Research with gifted students consistently shows that traditional grading practices do not motivate them to learn and, in fact, may hinder performance. Gifted children take into consideration the fact that standards for success or failure are set up by someone other than themselves; the result is often lowered commitment to the required task. When the focus is on grades (the outcomes) rather than on learning (the process), many gifted students learn short cuts to receiving awards for their work. An evaluation system that focuses primarily on student/teacher conferencing, verbal feedback from teachers and peers, and self-critiques allows gifted learners to make use of their analytical abilities and their desire to take risks, moving beyond the minimal effort required for good grades.

## Management of Gifted Services

Each elementary, middle, and high school in Fulton County has gifted certified teachers (TAG teachers), who are trained to provide educational services to gifted identified students. The administration of each school selects a TAG Contact teacher who serves as the contact between the local school and the Advanced Studies office of the district. This teacher, with the assistance of their TAG team, manages the functions associated with gifted education services in their school.

### ELIGIBILITY TEAM

The membership of the eligibility team is critical to the success of the multiple criteria screening and identification processes at the local school. The success is dependent on general education staff being in charge of the screening and identification. The process is successful and students are best served when all teachers are screening and referring students for gifted services rather than one teacher reviewing test scores. The following groups should be represented on the eligibility team.

- One general education teacher as the chair of the team
- Principal or designee
- One special area teacher (e.g., art, music, physical education, career technology, special education)
- One representative from each grade level or core content department (preferably the grade level or department chair since these are supplemented positions)
- One TAG teacher

In order to assist eligibility team chairs in understanding the multiple criteria identification process and the work of the eligibility team, training for new and returning chairs is offered at a variety of locations at the beginning of each school year.

### STAFF TRAINING

Each year new faculty members are added to the Fulton County school system. New faculty members must be trained in Fulton County Schools' multiple criteria screening and identification procedures. It is recommended that the eligibility team chair and/or TAG teacher at the local school conduct the training for new faculty members. Training on the purpose of TAG should be completed by the end of September. Training on the CISS process should be completed by mid-January. In addition to being trained on the CISS process, new teachers at the Elementary School level must be trained on the administration of the GRS-M Motivation Checklist and the Creativity Product by the end of September. Training materials are available through the Advanced Studies office.

## Gifted Service Protocols

Students identified as gifted shall receive at least five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted education services. For a student to continue in the gifted program after initial placement, he/she must meet the program's Continuation Criteria. According to Fulton County Board of Education Policy, continuation criteria are satisfactory performance in the gifted classes as noted by evaluations of student work and progress in the gifted education classes. At the end of each school year, elementary school and middle school parents receive an Annual Review of a student's progress in TAG and placement for the following year.

### Continued Participation

#### Elementary School

##### ***Gifted Resource Classroom –***

Acceptable progress is defined as:

- Maintaining a majority of S's across the Student Performance Standards AND
- Maintaining a majority of S's within the Learning Skills and Behaviors.

Elementary gifted resource students will receive a Progress Skills Checklist for each unit. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period, student performance for the entire year will be reviewed. If the student is determined to be meeting all continuation of service requirements, the Annual Review at the bottom of the progress report should indicate continued placement.

#### Middle School

##### ***Advanced Content***

Acceptable progress is determined separately for each advanced content area in which a student is served and is defined as:

- Maintaining a grade average of 80% or higher in the advanced content class for which gifted service is provided.
- Meeting standards on the state required competency test (Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment) in the content area for which gifted service is provided.

#### High School

##### ***Advanced Content***

Acceptable progress is determined separately for each advanced content area in which student is served and is defined as:

- Maintaining a semester grade average of 70% or higher in the advanced content class for which gifted service is provided.

No credit will be placed on the report card when a student does not participate in the gifted program for one semester, does not satisfactorily complete a seminar or individual project contract, or earns a grade < 70% in a directed study, internship, AP class, or IB class.

## Probation

When the student's performance does not meet the Fulton County district criteria for continued participation, a student may be placed on probation. Probation allows for students to receive interventions when their performance in any gifted service class falls below the continuation criteria. Continuation of services is determined separately for each advanced course in which a student is served. Discontinuation of service in the TAG **program** occurs when a student no longer demonstrates a need for any gifted service.

The student's probationary status remains in effect for the remainder of the current year for elementary and middle school students. For high school, probation remains in effect until the end of the course.

At all levels, transfer students who qualify for gifted services in Fulton, but whose performance does not meet continuation criteria, may begin services on probation. Contact the Advanced Studies office for guidance as needed.

The gifted teacher should follow these procedures:

1. Notify the parent and student in writing of probation using the Notification of Probationary Status form.
2. Prepare a written plan and communicate with parent(s) and student to review student performance and expectations.
3. Monitor student progress and adjust interventions if needed during the grading period.
4. Maintain and document adequate communication with parents throughout the intervention process.

At the end of each grading period in which the student is on probation, determine if:

1. Interventions were successful and student is showing satisfactory improvement. Probation continues with updated interventions  
**or**
2. Service in specific content area are to be discontinued. The parent will be notified in writing prior to dismissal.
  - a. **Elementary** – Student no longer receives service in resource class.
  - b. **Middle & High**–
    - Student no longer receives service in the advanced content class in which probation occurred **OR**
    - Student is no longer enrolled in any advanced content classes; therefore, the student no longer receives any gifted service and is discontinued from the TAG program.

**Note for elementary resource model:** *At the end of the year, the student may be placed on probation for the following year if the student did not meet standards on a state competency test if the lack of performance can be linked to missed regular education instructional hours while in the gifted resource room.*

## **Intervention and Support**

### **RTI**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process used to provide students with additional academic and/or behavioral support. Gifted students are on Tier 4 of RTI based on their need for specialized instruction.

### **Intervention Guidelines**

Gifted students who experience difficulty meeting program standards may require interventions and support to ensure success. The gifted teacher must identify appropriate intervention strategies appropriate for gifted students and complete a written plan, documenting required parent contact. This form must be completed for each grading period during which a student is on probation and intervention strategies are needed.

A quality intervention plan should contain two elements central to producing improved student performance:

1. Individualization of strategies based on needs of a student.
2. Instructional strategies/interventions focused on mastery of standards.

The purpose of the intervention process is to improve a student's performance. Although work study habits and/or behavior may impact a student's performance, these factors should not be the primary cause for placing a student on probation nor the primary focus of the intervention plan. Assessments, and therefore grades, should reflect a student's mastery of standards.

## Discontinuation from Gifted Program

### Discontinuation due to performance

**All levels:** A student's progress and performance during probation 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. A request for reentry may be submitted by the parent after the 18 week period. The local eligibility team will examine current data for student's performance in the general education classroom as well as any new test data available in order to make a determination if reentry into the TAG course is warranted.

**Middle School:** Discontinuation of service in the gifted program occurs only when a student no longer demonstrates a need for **any** advanced content class. Students may be discontinued from individual advanced content classes while remaining in others.

**High School:** Discontinuation of service occurs only when a student no longer demonstrates a need for **any** advanced content class.

### Voluntary discontinuation

A parent may request a student be removed from the gifted service program at any time by providing written notification. Gifted service in elementary resource and middle school advanced content courses 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 are not required to re-establish gifted eligibility, regardless of the length of break in service. All re-entry decisions are made on an individual basis by the Eligibility Team. Factors to be considered in the reentry decision should include evidence of the student's advanced learning needs and the recency and performance levels of any previous gifted program referrals or placements.

### 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.).

Students served in a gifted classroom whose break in service was due to academic performance or parent request may be reconsidered after 18 weeks. Students whose break in service was due to an enrollment change may be considered for re-entry immediately. Continuation criteria must be met in all circumstances.

## Twice-Exceptional Students

Students that have been identified as both Special Education and Gifted are classified as twice- exceptional. A gifted student who has a 504 plan may also be classified as twice-exceptional.

### **Guidelines for Test Administration for Students with an IEP or 504 Plan.**

Although evaluators must adhere to standardized Directions for Administration (DFA), accommodations created in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan must be honored during testing.

Students using accommodations considered as “**standard**” can receive norm-referenced scores that are considered to be valid and can be aggregated with those of other students. Only accommodations that are clearly documented in the student’s IEP or 504 Plan prior to testing will be allowed. The scores from “**nonstandard**” administrations of tests may not be used to establish gifted program eligibility. Many students’ IEPs or Section 504 require accommodations that call for extended time for completion of classroom and/or standardized tests. However, extended time may not be given on timed, norm-referenced tests (such as the CogAT, ITBS, or TTCT) when those test results will be used for determining gifted program eligibility. Whenever the administration of a timed, standardized test is modified with extended time, the results are no longer comparable to those obtained by the norm group.

Georgia’s multiple criteria eligibility rule (160-4-2-.38) provides a variety of ways to fairly assess students who have uneven patterns of test scores.

**Certain accommodations will invalidate use of the assessment for gifted eligibility. Contact the Advanced Studies office for guidance.**

### **Transition between Levels (elementary to middle, middle to high)**

When planning for a twice-exceptional student’s transition to middle school or high school, it is recommended that the gifted teacher communicate with the special education case manager to request discuss attendance at the end-of-year IEP meeting. At this meeting the gifted teacher can describe the student’s current academic performance in the gifted program which could impact the student’s placement in advanced content classes.

## **Gifted Records and Reports**

The TAG Contact teacher at the local school generates and manages the gifted education records. Gifted education folders contain records of students' gifted eligibility and service. Each student must have a gifted folder. In addition, the teacher maintains electronic records of all referrals and eligibility. All records containing confidential information, such as student folders and computer files, must be kept secured at all times. Access to these materials is restricted to the gifted teachers and other certified personnel as professional need requires.

### **Electronic Data Collection**

All students assessed for gifted eligibility must have their assessment data entered in the data management system (*eSchool Plus*). The Gifted Eligibility Report must be generated from this system. All data collected regarding the screening, referral, testing and eligibility of students considered for gifted services must be entered into *eSchool Plus*.

## **State Funding (FTE)**

FTE reporting refers to the state funding mechanism based on the student enrollment and the educational services local school systems provide for the students. The base amount of money received for each FTE student is determined by the Georgia General Assembly. Gifted Education is one of 19 categories of instruction funded through the state's Full-Time Equivalent Funding Formulas. A Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTE) is defined as six (6) segments of instruction. Funding for gifted services is generated through the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Report that is conducted by the state. The FTE report is generated the first Tuesday in October and the first Thursday in March. The gifted lead teacher will monitor this process. The following data elements are submitted in the report: Classification, Gifted Delivery Model, and Gifted Content Area. For accurate reporting, all students receiving gifted service must be coded for each segment or class period of the day. The gifted lead teacher should carefully review student data in eShool Plus for accuracy.



## HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Differentiated Curriculum** - courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students.

**Gifted students need the opportunity to work through the curriculum at a faster pace and need less time on basics and revision. The curriculum is differentiated in complexity and acceleration which offers a variety of options for students who differ in abilities, knowledge, and skills. In a differentiated curriculum, teachers offer different approaches to *what students learn* (content), *how students learn* (process), *how students demonstrate what they have learned* (product) and how they are evaluated (assessment) (Tomlinson, 2000).**

- (b) **Georgia Department of Education** – (GaDOE) the agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education including the implementation of federal and state mandates.

- (c) **Gifted Student** - a student who meets the eligibility criteria as identified in this rule and as defined in the *GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

**The GaDOE describes 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 need special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. The abilities manifest in a collection of traits, aptitudes and behaviors that, when taken together, are indicative of gifted potential.**

- (d) **Local Board of Education (LBOE)** – agency charged with adopting policies to govern educational entities within the local educational agency.

- (e) **Local Educational Agency (LEA)** – local school system pursuant to LBOE control and management.

- (f) **Panel of Qualified Evaluators** - experts in relevant fields appointed by the LEA who evaluate student products/performances to determine gifted program eligibility.

**Local school systems are responsible for training qualified evaluators in the application of adopted observation/evaluation instruments in a culturally sensitive manner. A list of qualified evaluators, the evaluation guidelines, and documentation of training procedures must be maintained by the LEA.**

(g) **Qualified Psychological Examiner** - a psychologist licensed by a state licensing board in the United States and having training and experience in school psychology or child psychology.

**LEA's are required to have licensed psychologists administer assessments that are designed to be given individually. Examples of assessment designed for individual administration include the WISC IV and Stanford Binet – 5. In Georgia, school psychologists and psychometrists are licensed by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and can give individually designed assessment.**

(h) **State Board of Education (SBOE)** – the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K-12 education agencies in Georgia.

## **ORGANIZATIONS FOR GIFTED EDUCATION**

**Fulton County Supporters of the Gifted**

<http://www.fultongifted.org/>

**Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

[http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Gifts\\_and\\_Talents&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=37&ContentID=5628](http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Gifts_and_Talents&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=37&ContentID=5628)

**Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC)**

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

**National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)**

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

**Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)**

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