

FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted Education Program Policies and Procedures

Revised July 18, 2017

FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, as amended in 1993, mandates that each public school district within the state provide gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6. All local public school districts may have gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 7-12, artistically gifted students in grades 2-12, creatively gifted students in grades 2-12, and/or academically gifted students in 9-12.

The Franklin County School District offers enrichment resource programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 2 – 6. The classes are called FLAME and serve these students at the elementary campus. Students spend one day per week (5 hours) in the gifted “pull-out” enrichment program and the rest of the week in the general education classes.

As required by the Mississippi Department of Education gifted regulations, these intellectually gifted students are provided services by teachers with a gifted endorsement.

The purpose of gifted education is to identify those students who demonstrate unusually high achievement and/or potential for unusually high achievement. Because of their unusual capabilities, they require uniquely qualitatively differentiated educational programs not usually available in the regular classroom. These uniquely different programs are required to enable the gifted students to realize their potential contributions to self and society.

MISSION

The Franklin County School District believes that intellectually gifted students need a differentiated curriculum that takes into consideration individual learning needs and abilities. The mission of the FLAME program is to help students discover and develop their potential with appropriate education experiences. The gifted education program is dedicated to utilizing teaching strategies that broaden the students’ scope of knowledge while providing independent study skills that will enable them to become life-long learners.

STATE DEFINITION

“Intellectually gifted children” shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process. The needs of these students should be addressed based on the program options provided in the Outcomes for Intellectually Gifted Education Programs Grades 2-8 in Mississippi.

“Gifted Education Programs (GEP)” shall mean special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2-12, academically gifted children in grades 9-12, artistically gifted children in grades 2-12, and/or creatively gifted children in grades 2-12 in the public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of the gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.

IDENTIFICATION OF INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED

The student identification processes are separated into six stages which are: referral, LSC review of referral data, parental permission for testing, assessment, assessment report, and the LSC eligibility determination stage.

The identification process shall consist of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted programs. This process shall provide an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students with emerging potential for gifted—students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, ADD/ADHD, as well as students who exhibit classroom behavior such as extreme shyness, short attention spans, disruptiveness, continual questioning, and anxiety. Throughout the identification process, close attention and careful consideration shall be paid to all information available and collected on each individual student and how that information dictates the kinds of instruments and measures that should be used to correctly assess that student.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures the rights of students and parents. All data collected as part of this identification process shall be placed in an individual eligibility file for each student. These files should be locked in a separate storage file cabinet and should not be included in the cumulative file. Access to this information is restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or that have a documented need to know. Parents will be informed of the information/data collected and may gain access to their children's records by written request to the school's gifted education personnel at any time. Upon completion of the identification process, results of the Assessment Team Report will be explained to the parents, and a copy of the assessment report provided.

STAGE 1: REFERRAL

There are a number of things considered within referral of a student to the gifted program such as: performance in the regular classroom, potential ability, test performance, intellectual characteristics, and leadership potential. However, according to MDE Regulations, none of these things may be used to eliminate a student from the identification process.

Franklin County School District follows the gifted referral process state minimal scale/percentile score criteria on referral measures. There are two types of gifted referral processes.

- Type One – The Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
- Type Two – The Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility.

Type One: Mass Screening Referral Process

A normed group measure of intelligence will be administered each year to all first and third grade students in the mass screening referral process to aid in the identification of students in underrepresented populations. All students who obtain a full scale/composite score at or above the 90th percentile shall move forward in the process.

In addition to the normed group measure obtained during mass screening, a student must satisfy two of the following criteria before moving to Stage 2 of the identification process, LSC Review of Referral Data:

1. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership
4. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
7. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students

Type Two: Individual Referral Process

This process should be used when students are individually referred for gifted eligibility. If a student does not meet the minimum criteria (90th percentile) on the normed group measure of intelligence during the mass screening process, and does not qualify for Emerging Potential for Gifted criteria, they can be referred by anyone for the Individual Referral Process.

A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe the student may be intellectually gifted. A referral must be initiated by written request to the school psychometrist. The person that refers a student will sign the referral form and date it. District personnel shall then collect data required to satisfy the referral criteria. Once a form has been initiated, signed, and dated, only the LSC or parents can stop the identification process.

Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy three of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the superior range on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
7. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
8. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

STAGE 2: LOCAL SURVEY COMMITTEE REVIEW

The completed Referral Form will be forwarded to the Psychometrist for submission to the appropriate Local Survey Committee.

Upon receipt of the Referral Form, the LSC will meet and review the information submitted and will make one of the following recommendations:

1. the student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage, or

2. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time, or
3. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

Once the LSC has made the decision to refer a student for individual testing, the Psychometrist or her designee will obtain written permission for testing on Part II of the Gifted Pupil Personnel Data Sheet (PPDS). Parents are informed of the Family Rights and Privacy Act. Written parental permission must be obtained before any individual testing is initiated.

Provisions for Emerging Potential for Gifted Populations

At this point the LSC shall make the decision as to the possibility that the student could be eligible for consideration as a candidate for an emerging potential for gifted assessment. If it is believed that the student might have emerging gifted potential, then the Emerging Potential for Intellectually Gifted Assessment Checklist will be completed for possible use during the assessment process. The Emerging Potential for Gifted category makes provisions for factors that exist and may put the student at a disadvantage when inappropriate instruments are used during this assessment process.

STAGE 3: PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING

At this time, district personnel will obtain written parental permission for testing and will notify parents in writing of their rights under FERPA.

STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT

District personnel will compile data on the student and a licensed examiner will administer an individual test of intelligence.

In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner will review all available data on the student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use that information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures should be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected by the examiner's manuals.

A student must score on or above the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

Identification criteria, as approved by the MDE on the Franklin County School District Gifted Education Program Proposal, must be satisfied for a student to be ruled eligible by the LSC for the intellectually gifted program.

Emerging Potential for Gifted

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

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

Potentially Twice Exceptional Students

Students who already have a eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria but did meet at least one referral criterion shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence (composite score or approved subtest score) or in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

STAGE 5: ASSESSMENT REPORT

District personnel shall write an Assessment Report, which must contain the following components:

1. Student's name,
2. Name of at least three measures from Stage1: Referral that were used to determine the need to administer an individual test of intelligence,
3. Results of each measure,
4. Name of individual who administered or completed each measure and the date administered or completed,
5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s),
6. Interpretation of the results of each individually administered test(s),
7. Name of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence and data test was administered,
8. Qualifications of the individual who administered the individual test of intelligence,
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and identified strengths and weaknesses,
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position, and
11. Date of the Assessment Report.

STAGE 6: LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

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

Parental Notification

Parents of students that are tested will be notified in writing about the assessment results. District personnel shall offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. They shall also notify parents of their rights in writing under FERPA.

OUT OF STATE GIFTED ELIGIBILITIES

A student moving to Mississippi with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy Mississippi eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi.

There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the district.

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR PLACEMENT

Each gifted student will have an Individual Educational Plan on file and parental consent for placement. Permission must be granted in writing prior to a student being placed in a program for the gifted.

Participation in the Gifted Education Program is NOT a reward. It is an Entitlement under State Law (Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181).

Once a student is determined eligible for a gifted program in Mississippi, no re-evaluation testing is required to remain in the program. Although criteria may vary from district to district, an eligible determination is accepted by all school districts within the State of Mississippi.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

FLAME students' work is managed under a specific Instructional Management Plan which includes specific outcomes and time frames, so withholding permission to attend gifted classes shall not be used as a disciplinary measure. The activities in this class develop and enhance the process skills as established by the MDE required outcomes document and the gifted program standards document. Failure to meet objectives on this plan can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

According to MDE Gifted Regulations, gifted students may not be required to make up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. Homework assigned to the regular classroom students for the evening of the FLAME day must be completed.

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT

The Local Survey Committee will meet and reassess each student's participation in the gifted program at least annually. The LSC must include at least the student's teacher in the gifted program and a designated administrative representative such as the school principal or assistant principal. Documentation of this meeting will be maintained and will include the name of the student discussed, a list of committee members present and the date of the meeting. The student should remain in the program as long as progress is being made.

As stated in MDE Gifted Education Regulations, "since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the law, the students should remain in the gifted program as long as they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular education program are the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program."

If a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's performance. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress in the program, the student will be placed on probation in the gifted program for the next 9-weeks

term. The parents will be notified and given an opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the decision and develop a plan of action. During this time, the student will continue to participate in the gifted program. If at the end of the period of probation, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level, the student will be removed from probation and recommended for continued placement. If at the end of the 9-weeks term the student has failed to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained.

If the committee determines that the student should exit FLAME due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents will be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. If the parents do not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the district shall grant the parents a hearing.

HEARING PROCESS

Parents who are not in agreement with the school based committee decision to remove a student from the gifted program will present their concerns, orally or in writing to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally. If the parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parents shall, within five (5) school days after the meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the Franklin County gifted contact person. The parent will be given an invitation to attend the gifted hearing committee meeting for a time to be agreed upon by the parent and committee. The committee will consist of the district's coordinator of gifted programs, a district or school level administrator, and a teacher of program education other than the student's current teacher and/or administrator. The gifted hearing committee will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting. The decision of the hearing committee will be mailed to the parent. The decision of the hearing committee is final. If the student is removed from the program, written documentation will be given to the gifted teacher within three (3) school days. The teacher will provide the counselor with a copy of the written documentation within three (3) school days of receipt. The student shall be removed from the gifted program within five (5) days of the decision or as indicated on the documentation form.

REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES

Students will be considered for reinstatement in the gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of classroom teachers. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the Local Gifted Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teacher of the student. Written parent permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

PERFORMANCE IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

In the event the student has difficulty keeping up with regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, teacher of the gifted, and the student, if appropriate, to discuss the problem and to determine an appropriate course of action. The conference and plan of action will be documented and follow-up conferences will be held as needed.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Intellectually Gifted Pull-Out (Grades 2-6)

Gifted students are grouped together for a minimum of five hours per week to participate in enrichment activities. These activities are designed to enhance the integration of thinking skills, research, creativity, group dynamics, self-directed learning and communication skills.

FLAME, Franklin's Lab for the Achievement and Motivation of Excellence, is a resource enrichment program for intellectually gifted students from second through sixth grade.

Concurrent Enrollment

The gifted student who attends regular school in grades 11 - 12 are encouraged to pursue college courses at the local institution of higher education. All expenses related to attendance at the institution of higher education are the sole responsibility of the student's family. This program allows the student to finish college early and gain early admission to a graduate program. This program option is open to students in grades 11 and 12 only.

Mentorship

The gifted student is assigned as an intern to a professional or expert in a selected field related to the student's interest. The student develops a written contract with the teacher of the gifted and the mentor. Mentors are required to attend an in-service orientation conducted by the district prior to participating in such a program. This program option should not be used below the sixth grade.