

Vidalia City School System



Program for Gifted Students Handbook

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Gifted Education Program Rationale

Vidalia City School System educators are committed to the belief that education is a means by which each individual is provided the opportunity to maximize his or her fullest potential. Thereby, the rationale underlying is essentially the same for all students. Every student shall receive educational experiences appropriate to his/her individual abilities, interests and learning styles. Individual uniqueness of the gifted student is respected and provided through differentiated curriculum of content, processes, and products. The gifted student is able to meet challenges far beyond the regular classroom. In accordance with this rationale, the Vidalia City School System provides educational programs that recognize and make provisions for the gifted learner as outlined in State Board Rule 160-4-2.38 (See page 12).

Definition of a Gifted Student

A student 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 ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Gifted Education Program Goals

It is the belief of the Vidalia City School System that, among “all students”, there are gifted students that demonstrate potential for performing at exceptionally high levels compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. Such students exist within all ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups and require differentiated instruction to achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities. The goals of the Gifted Education Program are designed to provide enrichment and acceleration and to foster within each student, the attitudes and skills necessary for the attainment of future goals. The Vidalia City School System Gifted Program Goals are as follows:

- *Gifted students will develop advanced research/study skills and utilize technology while investigating advanced content areas.
- *Gifted students will develop and practice critical thinking and logical problem-solving skills in the pertinent academic area.
- *Gifted students will strengthen communication skills, verbal and non-verbal, through interaction of persons with varying abilities.
- *Gifted students will develop and strengthen their self-awareness and explore how their unique characteristics may influence interactions.
- *Gifted students will develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills through a variety of media.

Testing and Screening Windows

The Vidalia City School System will have a “window of referral” time for **screening** of any student who exhibits traits, attitudes, and behaviors of a gifted identified student. Students can be referred **during the last week of August and the first week of September of the first semester and the last week in January and the first week of February of the second semester**. Any student that is referred to Vidalia City School System Gifted Education for assessment must be documented through the completion of the **referral packet that is available in the student’s school**. No student can be assessed without a parent permission form.

Referral Procedures

Referral of potentially gifted students enrolled in the Vidalia City School System can be made by teachers, counselors, parents, peers, administrators, self and others knowledgeable about the student. All referrals must be complete and shall include the following:

1. A completed and signed Gifted Education Referral Form. This form must be signed by the guardian(s) regardless of the person making the referral and should be forwarded to the teacher of Gifted Education where the student is enrolled. The referral should be forwarded no later than the first week of September for fall referral consideration and no later than the first week of February for spring referral consideration.
2. Any previous mental ability or achievement scores (not CRCT, MAP, or Accelerated Reading Scores);
3. Copies of last two report cards and if needed, student created work (product assessment).
4. Evaluation and assessment will take place with the teacher of Gifted Education and if further assessment is needed, the parent/guardian will be contacted.

The Gifted Education Referral Form should be completed and given to the school counselor who will then forward it to Katrina Black, Gifted Education Coordinator.

Types of Referral & Gifted Identification Procedures

In December, each school will send a written notification to all parents regarding the gifted screening process. During a specified two-week period, (*which shall begin the first day students return in January, following the winter break, and ending on the tenth school day of the students’ return*), all teachers shall observe students for gifted characteristics using the Traits, Attitudes and Behaviors of Gifted Students (TABs) document. Any child who demonstrates in classroom performance five of the ten identified TABs shall be considered. All tests and procedures used to determine eligibility for gifted services meet standards of validity and reliability for the purpose of identifying gifted students and are nondiscriminatory with respect to race, national origin, gender, disabilities or economic background. There are two types of referrals that may be made:

1. *Automatic Referral*- School principals and teachers shall review the results of any norm-referenced testing that is available. Any student with a 90th percentile composite score, a 90th percentile total reading (including reading comprehensive), or a 90th percentile total math shall be considered. School principals and teachers shall also review the results of the *Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)*. Any student who has at least the 90th percentile on the reading and/or math for that grade level will be considered. The 90th percentile for each grade level shall be determined on the basis of the system wide scores. As previously indicated, during a specified two-week period, teachers shall observe students looking for the *Traits, Attitudes and Behaviors (TABs)* of a gifted child. Any child who demonstrates classroom performance in five of the ten identified TABs shall be considered. These criteria shall constitute an automatic referral procedure.

Kindergarten students will only be evaluated in the Spring of their Kindergarten school experience. This is due to assessment instruments used and lack of available CRCT data.

2. *Reported Referral*- Any reliable person who is knowledgeable of a student's ability may refer a student through the reported process. The school gifted eligibility team shall review the records of any child under consideration for referral and will decide which students will proceed to further evaluation. A child will be referred for further evaluation if his or her name is listed in a minimum of five categories on the TABs *and additionally* demonstrates one of the following: *documented above grade level performance, qualifying achievement tests scores, documented outstanding products or performances, or a GPA at or above 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.*

The School Gifted Eligibility Team shall include a school administrator (mandatory), the teacher of Gifted Education (mandatory), and a certified grade representative. Additional team members may be also be selected from the following: School Principal or Assistant Principal from the child's school, counselor from the child's school, or regular education teacher who currently teaches the child under consideration. The eligibility team will review the records of any child under consideration for referral and will decide which students proceed for further evaluation. A child will be referred for further evaluation if his or her name is listed in a minimum of five categories on the TABs *and additionally* demonstrates one of the following: *documented above grade level performance, qualifying achievement test scores, documented outstanding products or performances, or a GPA at or above 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.*

Appropriate referrals will be compared to the list of students evaluated the previous year. Students can only be referred for a full evaluation every two years. This is two years from the date on the latest eligibility form for the individual student. Any one of the aforementioned individuals can initiate a referral on the student at this time. This will not be an automatic occurrence. In the second year, files may be reopened and additional information added.

Written consent shall be obtained from the guardian(s) before the evaluation process is begun.

All tests and procedures used to determine eligibility for gifted services will meet standards of validity and reliability for the purpose of identifying gifted students and are nondiscriminatory with respect to race, national origin, gender, disabilities or economic background.

Testing

Written consent shall be obtained from guardian(s) prior to evaluation. Once permission for evaluation has been secured, the following instruments/assessments/data collection may be used to evaluate students:

Mental Ability (ex. *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test- Second Edition NNAT-2, etc.*)

Mental Ability tests used for determining eligibility for placement shall meet the following criteria:

- A. Measure intelligence or cognitive ability
- B. The most current edition of published test
- C. Yield percentile rankings by age(s)
- D. Normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation
- E. Test development included bias review

Achievement (ex., *Iowa Test of Basic Skills, California Achievement Test, etc.*)

The Achievement test is used for determining eligibility for placement and the following criteria shall be met:

- A. Most current edition of published test
- B. Measure, at a minimum, reading, including reading comprehension, and give a total reading score or total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in math concepts and applications
- C. Normative data for these tests shall be no more than 10 years old
- D. Yield percentile rankings by age(s) (ex.: **ITBS**=grade instead of age)
- E. Normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation
- F. Test development included bias review

Creativity

The Torrance Test of Creativity Thinking or a Standardized Creativity Characteristics Rating Scale will be used for determining eligibility for placement and shall meet the following criteria:

- A. Provide for a measure of originality
- B. Include for any verbal measures: scores of fluency, originality, elaboration, abstractness of title and avoidance of premature closure
- C. Normative data for these tests shall be no more than 10 years old

- D. Yield percentile rankings by age(s)
- E. Normed on a nationally representative sample, that included minority representation
- F. Test development included bias review

Motivation *(ex. Gifted Rating Scale, GPA, etc.)*

A behavior rating scale or a student grade point average are options outlined in Rule 160-4-2-.38 to rate motivation. Behavior rating scales used to determine student motivation shall relate to the construct of motivation and differentiate levels such that judgments may be equated to the 90th percentile. GPA's of students are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the academic curriculum subjects and foreign language, if such language study is included in the student's records. The GPA criterion will be set at 3.5 on a 4-point scale, but under no circumstances should it be set lower than 3.5. (Appendix A -GA SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38) GPA is used in fourth, fifth, middle and high school grades. Product assessment will be taken into consideration if necessary.

Copies of the student report card shall be attached to the student referral. Students must have an A end of year average in core content areas (math, language arts, science and social studies) in order to qualify for gifted education with grades in the category of motivation in grades K-8. Students must have a 3.5 average on a 4.0 scale in order to qualify for gifted education with grades in the category of motivation in grades 9-12. Scores that are available from an achievement test during the prior two years shall be entered on the referral form.

Teachers and/or counselors shall help the student in gathering any Product/Performance information to be submitted as evidence of giftedness. Panels of three, composed of a gifted educator, a teacher based in the school that the child attends and a teacher not based in the school that the child attends shall evaluate any projects/performances submitted. All evaluators must have expertise in the content area of the product/performance and experience working with children of the age level being evaluated.

Existing information in all four areas will be forwarded to the Gifted Education Coordinator , Katrina Black. This information will be used to help determine eligibility based on the Georgia Department of Education criteria for placement in the Gifted Program.

Notification

Parents/guardians must be notified in writing of the Gifted Eligibility Team's decision. Parents/guardians may also request a meeting to discuss the results of the assessment. If a parent elects to appeal the placement decision of the eligibility team, the Superintendent, Dr. R. T. Smith, Vidalia City Schools and the Gifted Education

Coordinator, Katrina Black, must be notified in writing of the parent's intent to appeal the placement decision, *within 10 days after the guardian has met with the eligibility team and/or the school psychologist to discuss the evaluation results.*

Eligibility Criteria

Initial Eligibility: Information shall be collected in each of the four categories described below in Option B. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used to establish eligibility in another area. Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two-calendar years. Data gathered and analyzed by a source outside the school system shall be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process; however, such data shall not be substituted for data generated by the school and may never be used as the sole source of assessment data. Source: *Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.*

A student may qualify for gifted education services by meeting both criteria in Option A or three of the four criteria in Option B as specified by the Vidalia City School System. At least one of the four criteria must be met by a score on a nationally normed test.

Option A:

- 1. Mental Ability-** Students in grades K-2 must achieve a score at or above the 99th percentile on a composite or full scale score of a standardized test of mental ability. Students in grades 3-12 must achieve a score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full scale score of a standardized test of mental ability. No student may qualify on the basis of mental ability test score alone, even if that score is at the 99th percentile.
- 2. Achievement-** Students in grades K-12 must achieve a score at or above the 90th age or grade percentile on the composite or total reading or total mathematics sections of a standardized achievement test.

*Even if a student qualifies for placement under Option A, information must be collected in the areas of creativity and motivation.

Option B:

- 1. Mental Ability-** Students shall score the 96th percentile on a composite or full scale score or appropriate component score, as defined in Appendix A of the Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, on a standardized test of mental ability. Mental ability tests shall be the most current editions of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability and must have been reviewed for bias and normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation within a 10-year period (group tests) prior to administration. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s).
- 2. Achievement-** Students shall (a) score the 90th percentile or above on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a standardized achievement test; or (b) have produced a superior student-generated product or performance, where the superior

performance is one that can be translated into a minimum score 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators. Standardized achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and shall give a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in math concepts and applications. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s) or grade(s). Performances and products shall be judged by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators and must have been produced within the two years prior to evaluation.

3. Creativity- Students shall (a) score the 90th percentile or above on the total battery score of a standardized test of creative thinking, or (b) receive a score the 90th percentile or above on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or (c) receive from a panel of three or more qualified evaluators a minimum score 90 on a scale of 1-100 on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances. Standardized tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s) or grade(s). Rating scales used to evaluate creativity shall relate to the construct of creativity and differentiate levels such that judgments equivalent to the 90th percentile are possible. As evidence of creativity, students or individuals on behalf of students may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products/performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators as part of a comprehensive portfolio of creative productivity.

4. Motivation- Students shall (a) score the 90th percentile or above on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, or (b) receive from a panel of three or more qualified evaluators a minimum score 90 on a scale of 1-100 on a structured observation/evaluation of student generated products and/or performances, or (c) have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale (as defined in Appendix A of the Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*), where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, using an average of grades from the regular school program over the previous two school years if the student is in grades 3- 12. Rating scales used to evaluate student motivation shall relate to the construct of motivation and differentiate levels such that judgments equivalent to the 90th percentile are possible. As evidence of motivation, students or individuals on behalf of students may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products/performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators as part of a comprehensive portfolio that demonstrates a high degree of motivation and consistent productivity.

Evaluations Conducted from Outside Agencies

Assessment data that was gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or school system must be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process. However, this outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process and may never be the sole source of assessment data. Systems shall never rely on them exclusively for determination of eligibility for gifted

program services. Instead, outside test data may be used as part of a comprehensive profile of test and non-test evidence of advanced instructional needs. If any system elects to use outside test data to help establish student's eligibility, the local board of education shall collect and maintain statistical data that will allow the Department of Education to evaluate the impact of this practice on the identification of gifted students from all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Source: *Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

Continued Participation

Local boards of education shall review the progress of each student receiving gifted education services each year. Any student who receives gifted education services shall continue to receive services, provided the student demonstrates satisfactory performance in regular and gifted education classes, as described in the local board's Continuation Policy. Parents/guardians will be provided with notification about the type of services to be offered annually. They shall also be notified about the continuation/discontinuation of services. Local boards of education shall provide to any student who fails to maintain satisfactory performance in regular and gifted education classes a probationary period in which the student shall continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status. The length of this probationary period shall be determined by the local board of education. Students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in both regular and gifted education classes during the probationary period and for whom gifted services are no longer appropriate shall have a final review before cessation of services occurs. A student may resume receiving gifted education services upon meeting the criteria adopted by the local board of education for the continuation of gifted services.

Reciprocity

Any student who meets the state eligibility criteria for gifted education services shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any school system within the state. However, a student transferring from one school system to another within the state shall meet the criteria for continuation of gifted services established by the local board of education of the receiving school system. There is no mandated reciprocity between states.

Curriculum Overview

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

requires local boards of education to develop curricula for their gifted students that incorporate the State Board of Education-approved student competencies and Georgia Performance Standards. Curriculum objectives shall focus on developing cognitive, learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation, in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, foreign language, fine arts and vocational/technical education. Local boards of education shall submit to the Georgia Department of Education a description of the differentiated curricula used for instruction of gifted students. The local system shall review and revise (if revisions are needed) its curricula

for gifted students at least annually. An updated copy of the local program description shall be submitted to the Department of Education whenever changes are made. 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 on the approved models described in Appendix A of the Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*.

Principles of a Differentiated Curriculum for the Gifted/Talented

- Present content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems.
- Integrate multiple disciplines into the area of study.
- Present comprehensive, related, and mutually reinforcing experiences within an area of study.
- Allow for the in-depth learning of a self-selected topic within the area of study.
- Develop independent or self-directed study skills.
- Develop productive, complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
- Focus on open-ended tasks.
- Develop research skills and methods.
- Integrate basic skills and higher level thinking skills into the curriculum.
- Encourage the development of products that challenge existing ideas and produce new ideas.
- Encourage the development of products that use new techniques, materials, and forms.
- Encourage the development of self-understanding, i.e., recognizing and using ones abilities, becoming self-directed, appreciating likenesses and differences between oneself and others.
- Evaluate student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal, criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments.

Source: National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented, *Developed by the Curriculum Council* (James J. Gallagher, Sandra N. Kaplan, A. Harry Passow, Joseph S. Renzulli, Irving S. Sato, Dorothy Sisk, Janice Wickless)

Delivery Models

Primary, Elementary and Middle Schools

The primary delivery model at the primary, elementary and middle school level is the Resource Model. Students are served at minimum five segments weekly using the Resource Model. The curriculum, as mandated by the state, is an interdisciplinary enrichment curriculum. National and state standards are embedded in the curriculum.

The Vidalia City School System's Gifted Curriculum presents content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems and is integrated into multiple disciplines as recommended by the Georgia Department of Education Gifted Education Program. The content and skills are complex, abstract, and challenging. This curriculum is a connection to core content standards (Georgia Performance Standards).

Probation and Termination of Services

According to Georgia Department of Education and Vidalia City School System Procedures, continued placement in the Gifted Program shall be based upon satisfactory performance in both regular education and gifted classes.

For primary, elementary, and middle school students, satisfactory performance in regular education shall be based on the student maintaining passing grades in all subjects and an overall 85 average. Satisfactory performance in the gifted class shall be based on the recommendation of the teacher of the gifted, with such recommendation to be based on required products, active participation, and regular attendance. A child who fails to meet these criteria will be placed on probation for one entire nine weeks' grading period. At the end of the probationary period the student's status regarding continued placement will be reviewed by the Gifted Eligibility Team.

For high school students, satisfactory performance in gifted education shall be based on maintaining passing grades. However, high school students should not be removed from gifted level courses that they are passing without guardian consent. Guardians will be notified by the teacher of Gifted Education when a student's placement is in danger. A student who fails a gifted level class will not be allowed to continue to take gifted level classes in that content area during the following semester. Upon satisfactory performance in a subsequent honors level class in that content area, a student will be allowed to petition for reinstatement in a gifted level class.

After a period of academic probation, any student who has not demonstrated appropriate academic progress in accordance with the Vidalia City School System policy for the continuation of gifted services will be terminated from the program. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be provided with written notification of termination of services.

Gifted Education Make-up Work Policy

Gifted Program students are to be held responsible for mastery of all standard curriculum objectives. However, due to the unique nature of the Gifted Program and the workload that these students are expected to carry, they will, *in most cases*, be excused from daily and related homework assignments given while participating in Gifted Program classes (Resource Model Only). While all classroom assignments are important, requiring Gifted Program students to make up all work is actually a penalty to the gifted student. The following are guidelines to be used when making decisions regarding work missed while attending Gifted Program classes:

1. Students attending Gifted Program classes will be excused from the daily/homework assigned during the class period(s) missed. Students will be excused from these assignments without penalty to their grades, loss of other scheduled activities, or loss of any classroom privileges.

2. Mastery of standard curriculum objectives may be determined by oral review, teacher observations, quizzes modified assignments, and/or a few selected problems. It is the responsibility of the regular classroom teacher and the student to determine mastery of objectives reflected in daily/homework assignments missed while participating in the Gifted Program.
3. If mastery of standard grade appropriate objectives become a problem for any Gifted Program student, the classroom teacher and the teacher of the gifted should work together to find a solution to the problem.
4. Tests, science labs, and other major or long-range assignments should not be made up before or after school. It is the responsibility of the student and classroom teacher to make alternate arrangements to ensure that the assignment is completed in a reasonable time period (i.e., three days, etc.) or as agreed upon by the teacher and the student. (For example, a test administered while the gifted student is attending the Gifted Program might be made up the following class day in lieu of that day's assignment.)
5. Time spent in Gifted Program class is governed by State Regulations; therefore, students should not miss any of the scheduled time for Gifted Program services.

It is certainly important that Gifted Program students succeed in their academic classes. By not requiring daily assignments in addition to Gifted Program assignments for these students, the classroom teacher can take some of the pressure off and encourage their success. The thinking skills that gifted students are learning and practicing in the Gifted Program can only enhance their performance in regular education classes.

Certification of Personnel

State guidelines require that full time gifted program teachers meet professional gifted endorsement requirements prior to beginning work in gifted education.

Data Collection

The Vidalia City School System makes Gifted Education referral and eligibility information available to all interested persons through newsletters and the Vidalia City School System website. Brochures informing guardian(s) and others of Gifted Education are available in all schools.

Local boards of education must annually review and revise if necessary its curricula for gifted students.

Local boards of education must collect and maintain statistical data by grade level, gender, and ethnicity of all students referred for evaluation of eligibility for Gifted Education Services, the number of students determined eligible for services, and the number of students actually served during the school year. Analyses of this data will guide on-going program improvement efforts.

Gifted Program Information

The Vidalia City School System uses a variety of communication vehicles to inform stakeholders about the gifted services provided. Information regarding gifted program services is provided in the form of a handbook, brochures, correspondence through the US mail system, and on the system website. Parents, teachers, students and school administrators can find information regarding referral, screening and eligibility in any of the above listed forms.

Family and Community Involvement

Gifted program teachers seek to keep families informed of activities and events taking place within their classrooms and that effect gifted program students. Teachers inform parents of lessons and activities being conducted in class via frequent written communication via newsletters, notes, and letters.

Professional Development

The Vidalia City School system provides professional learning opportunities in order to improve the quality of instruction and services provided to gifted education students including mentoring for teachers and other program personnel as it relates to the Gifted Education Program.