

**Resource Guide
For the Education of
Gifted Students
in Florida**

**Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction
Division of Public Schools
Florida Department of Education
2010**

Acknowledgements

This document has been compiled to serve as a guide for professional educators as they provide services and program options for students identified as being gifted in Florida.

The intent is to provide a resource for school district staff in developing a district plan for meeting the needs of gifted learners. Therefore, it includes a reference to current statutes and rules relative to providing a free and appropriate education (FAPE) for students who have special needs and who have met the state criteria for eligibility for special instructional programs.

A special thanks to Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska who set the course for determining what significant gifted educational programs should address. Acknowledgement is also given to the stakeholders of Florida gifted education including the designated gifted contact person in each district and advocates who provided valuable guidance and feedback to the draft documents.

Resource Guide for the Education of Gifted Students in Florida

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I. OVERVIEW

“The most serious societal threat to the cultivation of giftedness occurs when excellence of performance or production is no longer deemed a standard.” Abraham Tannenbaum

A. Florida Department of Education’s Mission

Increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system, by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities, and to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:

- Highest student achievement
- Seamless articulation and maximum access
- Skilled workforce and economic development
- Quality efficient services

B. Florida Department of Education Vision

The Florida Department of Education is committed to changing the culture of our schools from PreK to postsecondary by raising the ceiling and raising the floor to better enable our students for success in the 21st century.

C. Florida’s Next Generation Pre K-20 Education Strategic Plan

- Strengthen foundation skills
- Improve quality of teaching in the education system
- Improve college and career readiness
- Expand opportunities for postsecondary degrees and certificates
- Improve K-12 educational choice options
- Align resources to strategic goals

There is common agreement that the education of all children is vital. But, clearly, one size does not fit all. The goal for the Florida Department of Education is to identify appropriate practices for Florida youth who could, should, and would benefit from gifted programs and services. Continuing priorities include maintaining the integrity of current programs and services, a focus on standards that apply to students from all populations, and appropriate services for all eligible students K-12.

Educators who work with these students shall provide an appropriately challenging learning environment with opportunities to impact the talents of these students. In the school district, parents, school boards and community members partner in the responsibility for providing support and resources for youth with exceptional abilities and potential.

These activities can succeed only with the joint commitment of all: teachers, parents, school administrators, and policymakers who support improved academic opportunities for all students.

D. A Brief History of Gifted Education in Florida

- 1956 Provision for state and local funds for gifted programs adopted in rule
- 1968 Gifted added to the definition of exceptional student education
- 1975 Mandate for gifted education under exceptional student education
- 1977 Rule 6A-6.03019, Florida Administrative Code (FAC.), *Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted* adopted establishing eligibility criteria
- 1981 Challenge Grant established
- 1983 Pilot projects initiated to address underrepresented populations following a notice from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
- 1991 Rule 6A-6.03019, FAC., *Special Instructional Programs for Students who are Gifted* revised to include option for developing alternative plans to address underrepresentation
- 1992 First attempt at eligibility rule revision
- 1992 Gifted endorsement requirement - Rule 6A-4.01791, FAC., *Specialization Requirements for the Gifted Endorsement* adopted
- 1995 Legislature requests OPPAGA report entitled, *Review of Florida's K-12 Gifted Program*
- 1994-1996 OPPAGA Reports Part I and Part II, 95-45 and 96-06, addressed:
 - District policies and procedures
 - Delayed identification (grade 3)
 - Funding issues
 - Districts offering service K-8 only
 - Impact of Plan B
- 2002 After multiple workshops and meetings held between 1990- 2002, the rule was revised to define underrepresented populations as limited English proficiency (LEP) and low socio-economic status families (SES)
- 2004 Rule 6A-6.030191, FAC., *Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students who are Gifted*, and Rule 6A-6.03313, FAC., *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students who are Gifted* adopted
- 2005 The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) questions Plan B policies. FDOE responds that the state requires districts to evaluate all eligible students under Plan A and permits them to implement an alternative plan if the student meets specific criteria determined by the district.
- 2006 Rule development workshop process initiated for Rule 6A-6.03019, FAC. The work group met to address the eligibility rule for gifted. The proposed draft was presented at regional hearings in November and feedback was compiled through January 2007.
- 2006 Guaranteed allocation funding for high school gifted students leveled
- 2007 OPPAGA study requested by legislature
- 2008 Report 08-01 presented by OPPAGA
- 2010 Report 10-36 presented by OPPAGA

E. Florida Statutes Relevant to Gifted

- Section **1003.01** (3)(a), Florida Statutes, (F.S.), defines exceptional student as any student determined eligible for a special program in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education (SBE). Section (3)(b) defines “Special education services” to mean specially designed instruction and such related services as are necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from education. Examples of services are cited.
- Section **1003.21**, (2) F.S., indicates children must attain the age of 5 years on or before September 1 of the school year to be eligible for admission to public kindergarten. Those who have attained the age of 6 years of age on or before September 1 and have completed requirements for kindergarten may progress according to the district’s student progression plan.
- Section **1003.429**, F.S., describes accelerated high school graduation options.
- Section **1003.57**, F.S., specifies each district school board- local education agency (LEA) - is responsible for providing an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services for all exceptional students including diagnosis and evaluation; special instruction, classes, and services and entitles the parent to a due process hearing. (1)(e) specifies “A student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional student until after he or she has been properly evaluated, classified, and placed in the manner prescribed by rules of the SBE”.
- Section **1008.31**, F.S., indicates that it is the intent of the Legislature that (1)(b) the performance accountability system include individual student learning gains and (2)(a) that the mission shall be to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system by allowing students to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research of value to students, parents and the community.
- Section **1008.32**, F.S., indicates that it is the intent of the Legislature that the SBE shall have the authority to request and receive information, data, and reports from the school districts to enforce all laws and rules.
- Section **1008.33**, F.S., indicates that the academic performance of all students has a significant effect on the state school system and the SBE shall enforce accountability requirements to improve the academic performance of all districts, schools, and students.
- Section **1011.62**, F.S., establishes for each district a guaranteed allocation to provide students who are gifted in grades K-8 a free appropriate public education and indicates that a district’s expenditure of funds from the allocation for gifted students in grades 9 through 12 may not be greater than the amount expended for these students during the 2006-07 fiscal year.

- Section **1011.75**, F.S., and Rule **6A-7.099**, Florida Administrative Code (FAC.), address support for the Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grants, the Governor’s Summer Program, and the Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) project.
- Section **1012.42**, F.S., specifies that the LEA shall assist any teacher out-of-field to pursue competencies as necessary. Parents of all students taught by an out-of-field teacher shall be notified in writing.

F, State Board of Education Rules Relevant to Gifted

- Rule **6A-1.0503**, FAC., *Definition of Qualified Instructional Personnel* directs that a teacher out of field shall complete at least six semester hours or the equivalent (two courses) each calendar year until requirements are complete.
- Rule **6A-4.01791**, FAC., establishes specialization requirements for gifted endorsement – academic class. The requirement is for a bachelor’s or higher degree with certification in an academic class coverage and completion of three semester hours each in five courses in gifted education:
 - Nature and needs of gifted students
 - Curriculum and instructional strategies for teaching gifted students
 - Guidance and counseling of gifted students
 - Educating special populations of gifted students
 - Theory and development of creativity
- Rule **6A-6.03019**, FAC., defines gifted as “one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.” Specifies criteria for eligibility to include:
 - a need for a special program (clarified to indicate a special instructional program)
 - a majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist
 - evidence of superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered test of intelligence
 - Or the student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria in an approved school district plan for increasing their participation.
- Rule **6A-6.030191**, FAC., sets criteria for development of educational plans (EPs) for students who are gifted.
- Rule **6A-6.0311**, FAC., states special programs for exceptional students encompass instruction and related services which provide significant adaptations in one or more of the following: curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment designed to meet individual learning needs of exceptional students.

- Rule **6A-6.0312**, FAC., provides that exceptional students (ESE) enrolled in basic courses shall be counted at ESE special program cost factors only if the class is taught by a qualified teacher in a special program for those students.
- Rule **6A-6.0331**, FAC., indicates the state’s goal is to provide full educational opportunities and a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all school age students who are gifted and specifies LEAs must ensure that all students who are gifted and in need of specially designed instruction are identified, located, and evaluated, and appropriate education made available if it is determined the student meets state eligibility criteria and procedures be set forth in the ESE Policies and procedures document. Specifies the LEA is responsible for conducting evaluations within a reasonable period of time to determine eligibility and determining the educational needs of the student beyond the general curriculum. Evaluation instruments are not to be discriminatory and are administered appropriately. In developing an educational plan (EP) for a student, districts shall draw upon data and information from a variety of sources and examples are provided. A student may not be denied eligibility for gifted if the determinant factor is limited English proficiency.
- Rule **6A-6.03313**, FAC., *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students who are Gifted* provides parents with information regarding their rights in decisions regarding their children’s education. These rights align with rights of parents of students with disabilities with provisions for
 - Prior notice before identification, evaluation, placement or provision of services
 - Content and provision of the procedural safeguards
 - Informed parent consent
 - Parent’s opportunity to examine records and participate in meetings
 - Evaluations obtained at private expense
 - State complaint procedures
 - Due process hearings.
- Rule **6A-6.0334** addresses IEPs and EPs for transfer students.
- Rule **6A-6.03411**, FAC., provides definitions related to ESE and ensures FAPE be provided for students who are gifted in kindergarten through grade twelve and establishes policies and procedures for evaluations and EP development.

G. Florida's Definition of "Gifted"

A student is determined to be gifted as defined by current state rule 6A-6.03019, FAC, *Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted*. Thus, a gifted student is one who demonstrates evidence of superior cognitive ability and evidences a need for services beyond those normally provided in the general education classroom. The rule requires a special instructional program for students who meet eligibility criteria.

Any student may be nominated as a potential candidate for gifted. Following the completion of assessment and evaluation, a team will convene to review the evaluations and determine the student's eligibility based on state criteria for eligibility for gifted. If the student is determined to be eligible, written consent for placement must be obtained from the parent before the student may receive gifted services. A parent may request that services not be provided at the current time. Once determined eligible for gifted, a public school student is eligible to receive services any time K-12. If the student does not meet state criteria he/she is determined ineligible for gifted services at the current time.

H. Priority Recommendations

Because gifted students differ from other students, the 2007-08 state gifted advisory group designated these statements of belief:

- A differentiated educational experience beyond the basic curriculum provided by gifted endorsed teachers is needed in order to meet the needs of gifted students.
- Gifted students require specially designed programs based on individual strengths, interests, abilities, and needs.
- Giftedness occurs across all populations. Gifted students need programs that meet the needs of exceptional students identified as gifted of all diverse populations.
- Gifted programs require the support of parents, teachers, administrators, and the community.
- Gifted programs offer differentiation in content, instructional strategies, products, environment, and instructional pace through enrichment and acceleration opportunities based on pace, depth, and complexity to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTRICT PLAN

“The cornerstone of education is the flexibility to recognize the needs of the individual child.”

A Nation Deceived, volume 1

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has adopted the *Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards* (Landrum & Shaklee, 1998). Those standards provide a framework for describing meaningful practices for meeting the needs of students who are gifted. In addition, *A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education* (2007) provides documentation of development and implementation of programs and services. This report also identifies Key Elements in Program and Curriculum Policy.

Guidelines for the District’s Plan

To ensure an appropriate educational opportunity for learners, each district should develop a plan for meeting the needs of students who are gifted in their district. The comprehensive K-12 Gifted Plan will include policies and procedures for identification, assessment of students, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, evaluation, support services, and parent involvement. This document may serve as a guide for development of the plan to include procedures for how the needs of gifted students will be addressed to ensure these students are provided with a meaningful educational program aligned to the state initiatives.

The district plan will specify the following components:

- Mission Statement for Gifted Education
 - The mission statement indicates the intent of the district to provide specialized programs and services to meet the unique cognitive, social and emotional needs of exceptional students identified as gifted K-12.
- Identification
 - Procedures for nomination, screening, referral and evaluation as required by state rules.
 - Educational relevance
- Placement and Development of the Educational Plan (EP)
 - Students with special needs
- Program Design and Management
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Instructional Materials
 - Support Services
- Personnel Preparation
 - Certification and Endorsement
 - Teacher Competencies
 - Professional Development
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Program Evaluation Design

The philosophy of the gifted program would be based on encouraging and facilitating higher levels of thinking to maximize intellectual growth, independent study skills, and leadership

opportunities with a challenging and rewarding curriculum designed to ensure students continue to make academic gains.

Policies should exist for acceleration, ability grouping, early matriculation, and dual enrollment. A broad-based planning committee representing educators, parents, and community members meets regularly to assess and support the program. Section 111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) states that progress for students who are gifted should be measured. Thus the district should indicate how they will monitor progress and thus determine whether services provided are clearly showing a measure of success.

This document may also serve as a starting point for discussions in the district regarding development of the plan and the elements indicated for ensuring the needs of gifted students are met with consistency across the district. It is appropriate for the district to determine whether all students in the district are considered equally as being potentially eligible for gifted service and then provided equal access to FAPE as a gifted student. The district regularly assesses the progress of gifted students to track continued academic gains.

“For compliance requirements for gifted programs in Florida, see *Exceptional Student Education Compliance Self-Assessment: Processes and Procedures Manual, 2009-10.*”

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III. IDENTIFICATION

“The search for giftedness is to find children in our schools who “because of their exceptionalities that affect their ability to acquire and process information are ill served by the regular grade level curriculum.” J.H. Borland

Determination of whether a student meets eligibility requirements for gifted service is founded on first establishing how we define giftedness. While millions of students are considered gifted and talented, interpretations regarding eligibility requirements for receiving service vary.

The Florida Department of Education Survey 2, October 2009, reported that of the 2,634,382 students in the PreK-12 population, a total 137,167, or 5.13%, participated in gifted programs.

	% of Gifted Population
White	56.56%
Black	9.67%
Hispanic	25.09%
Asian/Pacific	5.24%
American Indian/Alaskan	0.30%
Multi-racial	3.13%

- Alachua, Miami-Dade, and Sarasota counties reported serving 10% or more of their students (Pine View School in Sarasota offers a full-time school for gifted grades 2-12)
- 10 districts reported serving 5.00-9.99 % of their population
- 46 districts reported serving 1.00- 4.99 %
- 6 districts reported serving <1%
- Of those six only Liberty county reported no students currently identified or receiving gifted service at the time of the survey.

Florida’s current definition requires an individually administered standardized test of intelligence, thus making IQ testing one component of eligibility. While there is some debate about using IQ tests as an evaluative measure, it is widely accepted that the IQ is a standardized and objective means without bias to measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, abstract/visual reasoning, and memory. The average composite IQ score at any age is 100, with a standard deviation of about 15, depending on the instrument manual. A score of 130 is therefore two standard deviations above the mean, as currently required by rule.

A. Procedures for Nomination, Screening, Referral and Evaluation

There are typically four steps in the process of identifying potentially gifted students and determining eligibility for gifted services. The steps leading to the determination of eligibility are nomination, screening, referral and evaluation (refer to chart on page 18).

- A. A nomination (request for screening) may be made by a parent/guardian, general education teacher or other school personnel, community members or self or peer nomination. Nomination infers a request that the student be considered as a potential candidate and initiates the process of compiling information about the student.

Nomination procedures assume parents and teachers have adequate awareness of gifted education and the identification process, information relative to characteristics of gifted students, including underrepresented populations in the district. There are a variety of ways to address this including: brochures, website information, teacher awareness of gifted characteristics, parent meetings, letters to all parents, presentations to school boards and PTA groups, curriculum night information, back to school night, newspaper ads, or a district handbook.

- B. Screening provides a measure to identify those students who might be referred for an individual evaluation. Screening may be done with individual students or with groups of students. Local districts have discretion in decision-making about determining a process for increasing representation of underrepresented populations by assessing data about participation at individual schools as well as the district as a whole. Most districts view screening as a way to distinguish a student's potential for eligibility. Districts may set a cut off score for the screening to reflect a student's performance within their district. Screening should include a review of existing data and information about the student. The district will actively search for referrals among underrepresented populations.

The screening process may include one or more of the following as determined by district policy:

- A test of intellectual ability
- Review of school, district, or state assessments
- Review of grades over a period of two or three years
- Student interview
- Formal or informal observation of demonstrated performance
- Gifted characteristics/behaviors checklists
- Review of portfolio of student work and/or achievements

Some instruments commonly used for screening include:

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES)
- Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES)
- Gifted Rating Scale (GRS)
- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test – Second Edition (K-BIT-2)
- Kingore's Inventory
- Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)

- Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)
 - Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS)
 - Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students (SAGES)
 - Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT)
- C. A referral is the official request for an individual evaluation of a student who shows indications of needing gifted education services, often based on the screening process. The school staff initiates the formal move toward an individual evaluation. The *Procedural Safeguards for Students who are Gifted* will be provided to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian gives written consent, the student will be individually evaluated.
- D. An individual intellectual evaluation is required to determine eligibility for gifted service. A licensed/certified school psychologist will provide an individually administered intellectual evaluation. The parent/guardian also may choose to have the independent intellectual evaluation administered by a private licensed /certified psychologist at his/her own expense. The district shall consider the results of this independent evaluation in terms of whether it aligns with other data about the student.

An individual evaluation is a way of collecting information about a student’s learning needs, strengths, problems, and interests. It is used to make decisions about whether a student is eligible for service. No decisions about services can be made until after the individual evaluation is completed and reviewed. Some districts have a policy regarding re-testing if the student is determined ineligible and may require waiting a specified period before repeating the process. The district maintains data on students for use in reassessing students who are referred more than once.

The listing of evaluation instruments in the SP&P document is a representative list of individually administered, standardized instruments used in conducting comprehensive evaluations. The document indicates districts “are not limited to, or required to use, the instruments included in this section”. The procedures section provides guidance for districts when selecting evaluation instruments; however, districts may elect to use other instruments as long as these are selected and administered in accordance with Rule 6A.6.0331, F.A.C.

During the individual evaluation step, information will be gathered to determine if the student is eligible for gifted service. This information will include the individually administered intellectual evaluation and a standard gifted characteristics checklist to be completed by a teacher. A checklist may also be done by parent/guardian/others as directed by district policy. In addition, the team may wish to consider other factors in determining a need for service which could include:

- Review of state or district assessments
- Student interview
- Formal or informal observation
- Review of portfolio of student work and/or achievements

The psychologist will select the intellectual evaluation for the student based on the district's Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instructions and Related Services for Exceptional Students (SP&P) and to ensure nondiscrimination on a racial or cultural bias. It is recommended that the test administrator attend the initial EP meeting to discuss implications of the test scores with EP team participants.

Commonly used individually administered, standardized assessment instruments include:

- Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (C-TONI)
- Differential Abilities Scales (DAS-II)
- Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC –II)
- Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Individual Administration (NNAT)
- Ravens Progressive Matrices – Colored (CPM) and Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM)
- Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scale (RIAS)
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale– Fifth Edition (SB5)
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales for Early Childhood
- Test of Nonverbal Intelligence -3 (TONI-3)
- Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT)
- Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Third Edition (WPPSI-III)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Fourth Edition (WISC-IV)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Fourth Edition Spanish (WISC-IV Spanish)

A significant consideration is the use of part scores or the standard error of measurement (SEm). A technical assistance paper from the Florida Department of Education, *Standard Error of Measurement*, is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/y1996-7.pdf>. A second technical assistance paper, *Use of Part Scores with Tests of Intelligence*, available at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/y2005-9.pdf>, provides further guidance.

Personnel trained in gifted education and/or with an understanding of the special needs of gifted learners will meet regularly to determine eligibility of potential candidates. If the student does not meet eligibility as required in state rule, the team of professionals might then consider whether the student might be eligible under their alternative plan for increasing representation of students who are considered under-represented in gifted if their district has such a plan that has been state-approved. For this purpose, the rule currently defines under-represented groups as being those who are limited English proficient or who are from a low socio-economic status family. The intent is to foster and support students who are English-language learners or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have been exposed to the types of experiences necessary to acquire knowledge. This might mask the student's true abilities or impact performance.

Consideration in these cases should be given to:

- Specific aptitude as well as general intellectual ability
- Multiple criteria and instruments at the relevant level for screening and identification. The use of multiple criteria improves the chance of recognizing students who excel in a subject or specialized area. Teachers looking for talent and potential are more likely to

observe it in reviewing portfolios and student records and by tracking student interests and abilities.

- Use of instruments sensitive to underrepresented populations.
- Universal screening at all relevant levels of the K-12 continuum, specifically at least twice in elementary – prior to grade 2 and after grade 4; at parent or district request, and additionally, after annual review of students scoring at level 5 on FCAT or other times as indicated in the district’s SP&P.
- Teachers should be trained on the use of checklists that focus on gifted student behaviors indicative of general intellectual ability and specific aptitude areas in varied cultures. .

Suggestions for district leaders in gifted education:

- Strive for proportionate representation from all groups of the local population. Consider students raised with economic restrictions, ethnic/cultural differences, gender, rural demographics, twice exceptional, and highly gifted. Compare the gifted representation to the total population of the district. If current nomination and screening methods are not effective in identifying students from special populations, consider alternative assessment tools or strategies. Restrictive use of tests that are high in verbal content will likely identify a smaller number of students from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Collaborate with the English Language Learner (ELL) staff to identify strategies that may be effective for this population.
- Provide training for all educators on characteristics of the gifted. When general education teachers are asked to complete the checklist, have they been trained on what criteria to consider and what to look at in the way of behaviors?
- Be proactive in screening students rather than waiting for nomination or referrals. Review school, district and state test scores and track student progress.
- Consider forming a team of professionals to review student records on a regular basis.
- Mary Ruth Coleman’s *Twelve Traits of Giftedness* could be used as a training/discussion tool. (Appendix B).

B. Determining Need for Service

State Rule 6A-6.03019 FAC, *Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted* specifies that a student must evidence a need for a special program and expands that in section (3) to state “need for a special instructional program.” The EP team makes this determination based on all information compiled and presented to the team. The team may consider test scores and evaluation data, feedback from the general education setting including: class performance, feedback from the parent, evidence that the student is not performing to their potential academically, information from the checklist, indication that the student is capable of performing at a higher level of conceptualization and perception based on assessments and/or observable divergent behaviors, distinguishing awards or recognitions.

C. Exiting Gifted Service

There may be occasion for an eligible student not to receive gifted services. Some of the more common reasons:

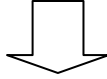
- A parent may elect to have the student remain in the current educational setting.
- General academic programs for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education Program (AICE), honors or other advanced courses may meet the student's current academic needs at the high school level. This would be a decision of the EP team. The team would then determine whether the student has further needs, such as goals to address characteristics of the gifted including perfectionism, underachievement, or social-emotional concerns that warrant unique service. In such cases the EP would indicate the student's academic needs are currently being met through general education programs and the goals would specify the related service to be provided. Typically such service is monitored through consultation. The level of consultation would be determined by the EP team based on the student's need.
- Before considering withdrawal of a student from gifted service, the EP team convenes to discuss the decision.
- Once identified as eligible, student may resume service at any time. In such cases the EP team would convene to determine the current needs of the student and to develop new goals.

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Determining Eligibility for Gifted Services

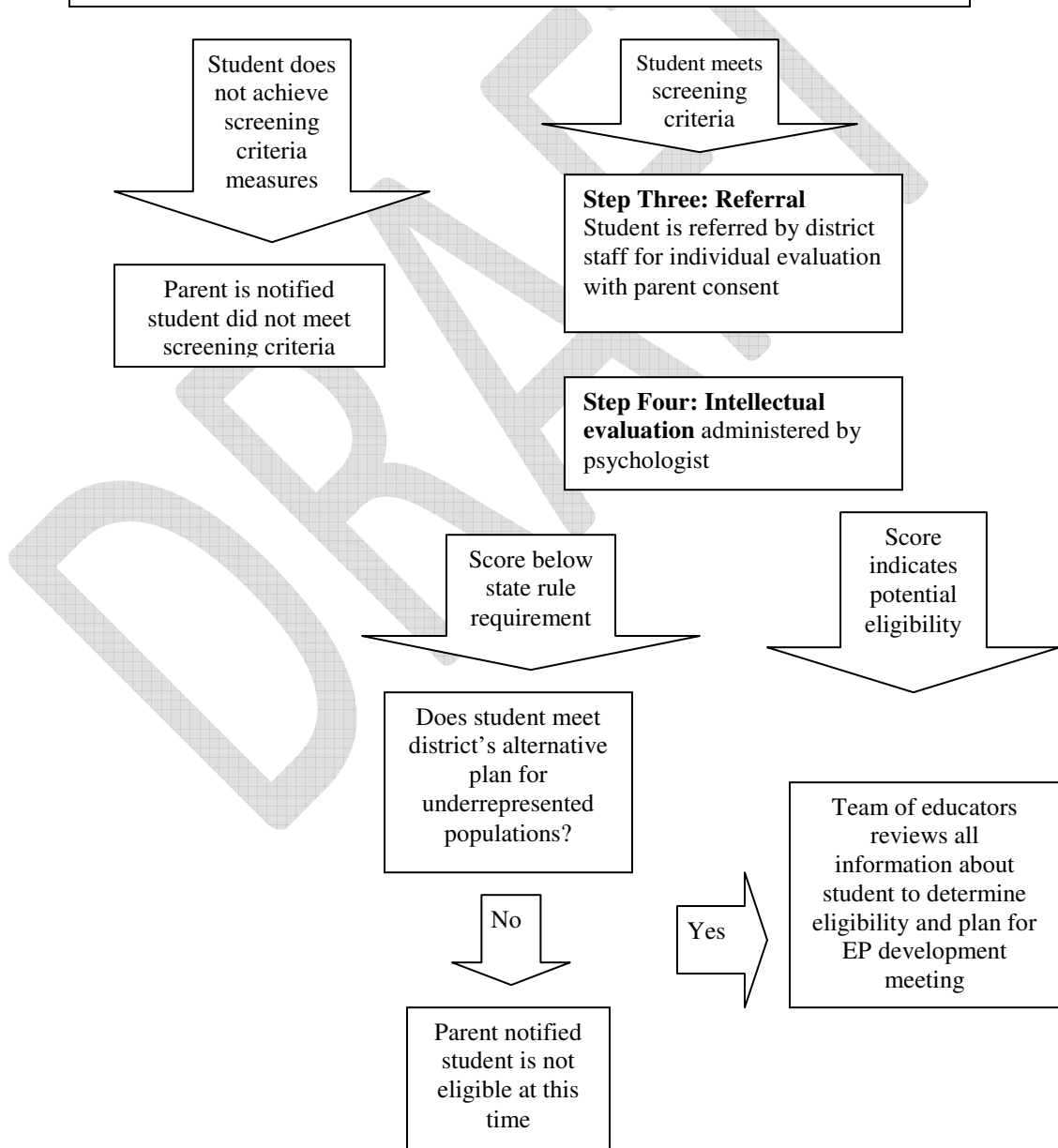
Step One: Nomination

Parent/Guardian, teacher or other school personnel, community member or a student may nominate a candidate. This initiates the process of compiling information to determine eligibility.



Step Two: Screening

The district has discretion in determining the screening process. Individual or group assessments or compiled data may be used. The screening should include all students who have the potential to evidence aptitude and achievement. Screening is likely to include a checklist of gifted characteristics.



IV. PLACEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Alice in Wonderland: *Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?*

The Cheshire Cat: *That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.*

Alice: *I don't much care where.*

The Cat: *Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.*

A. Guidelines for Placement

Once it is determined that a student is eligible to receive service, the educational plan (EP) team will meet to determine what steps to take to ensure an appropriate education to meet the needs of the student. The EP team is responsible for ensuring a meaningful connection between identification and the service to be provided so the student continues to make gains. Services are relevant to the identified needs of the gifted learners.

- Programming for gifted students must be an integral part of the school program and the general education school day.
 - Services for gifted students must be designed to supplement and build on the basic academic standards and the knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade levels.
 - Gifted students should be provided with curricular experiences at all grade levels to ensure continual student progress and learning.
- Rather than any single program for gifted learners, a comprehensive K-12 program should provide a continuum of services.
 - The K-12 program for gifted learners must be comprehensive, structured, and sequenced between, within, and across grade levels.
 - School districts should offer multiple service delivery options as no single service meets the needs of all gifted students.
 - Options include ability or cluster grouping, self-contained full time classes, honors classes, magnet schools, AP classes, etc.
 - Gifted students are included in flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade levels to ensure that they learn with and from their intellectual peers.
 - Early identification and intervention for underrepresented populations of gifted learners are crucial in realizing and developing their full potential.
- There should be an optimal match of student ability to program service and teacher expertise.
- Curriculum in the gifted program should relate to and be aligned with the state content standards.
 - A well-defined scope and sequence is articulated for all grade levels and subject areas in the core curriculum.
 - The differentiated curriculum enables gifted students to meet or exceed state standards with development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving and research skills, advanced content and authentic products.
 - Teachers must differentiate, replace, supplement, compact, and/or modify curricula to facilitate higher level learning goals for the gifted.

- A program of instruction must consist of advanced content and appropriately differentiated teaching strategies to reflect the accelerated learning pace and advanced intellectual processes of gifted learners.
- Alignment processes should include acceleration of standards, providing greater complexity, deepening the challenge level, and providing creative opportunities.
- Diverse and appropriate learning experiences must consist of a variety of curricular options, instructional strategies, and materials.
- Instructional strategies should be inquiry-based and engaging to gifted learners.
- The differentiated curriculum is provided with appropriate materials and technology.

Recent studies verify that little differentiation occurs for gifted learners in heterogeneous classrooms where the focus of the teacher is more likely to be on providing support for students who are not performing up to the grade level expectations.

- Authentic assessment of gifted student learning should occur regularly.
 - Use of performance-based tools to assess learning should be employed in classrooms.
 - Pre-testing enables the teacher to implement curriculum compacting, subject acceleration, flexible pacing, and other strategies to meet the needs of the student.
 - Collection of portfolio artifacts may represent the accumulation of long-term high level skills.
 - Standardized testing in core areas of the curriculum attest to gifted student growth (e.g., critical thinking).
 - Above-level testing allows students to demonstrate what they know, as well as what they are ready to learn. Above-level testing is the most accurate assessment to prescribe appropriate curriculum for gifted students.
- Acceleration should be provided as an essential element of gifted curriculum and instruction.
 - A flexible instructional pace is needed that allows for accelerated learning as appropriate.
 - Accelerative opportunities should be provided for early entrance to first grade, middle, and high school; subject and grade skipping; and early matriculation to college.
 - Learning opportunities should consist of an advanced continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches and resource materials.
 - The district has developed a policy and procedures for acceleration. *The Iowa Acceleration Scale* may be a helpful tool for use in making a decision about whether acceleration is appropriate for the student.
 - Specific acceleration options for high school students include: College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP), the International Baccalaureate Program (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education Program (AICE), Dual Enrollment and Early Admission, and virtual classes. While these are not gifted-specific services it could be determined by the EP team that these classes meet the academic needs of the student.
- Gifted programs should offer options within and beyond the core curriculum.
 - Independent study, competitions, and one-to-one mentorships should be considered program options.
 - Programs should include non-core areas of the curriculum such as foreign language and the arts as appropriate.

- The gifted program should coordinate with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives relevant to gifted learners.

B. Developing an Education Plan (EP)

An educational plan (EP) is a written plan for each student who is identified as eligible for gifted education services. EPs are developed for students identified solely as gifted.

The EP describes the student's educational needs based on the strengths of the student and the services that will be provided to ensure the student continues to make gains. School districts have the responsibility to provide students who are gifted in grades K-12 with an EP to ensure the student has an appropriate education (FAPE). The contents of the EP should provide detailed information that is useful to the student, school personnel and to the parent/guardians.

An EP must provide:

- A statement of the individual student's present levels of performance which may include, but is not limited to, the student's strengths and interests, the student's needs beyond the general curriculum, results of the student's performance on state and districts assessments, and evaluation results;
- A statement of goals, including benchmarks or short term objectives;
- A statement of the specially designed instruction to be provided to the student;
- A statement of how the progress toward the goals will be measured and reported to parents;
- The projected date for the beginning of services, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services;

Considerations in EP development, review and revision, include:

- The strengths of the individual student and needs resulting from the student's giftedness – "How is this student gifted?"
- Results of recent evaluations, including class work and state and district assessments that provide a gauge for determining where the student is currently performing,
- For limited English students, special language needs as they relate to the EP.

The focus of the EP should be on the student's giftedness and the strategies necessary to ensure the individual student continues to make appropriate progress and continued academic gains.

- The EP for each individual student may be developed or revised at least every three years for students in grades K-8, and at least every four years for students in grades 9-12 and when a student transitions to a higher level (elementary to middle and middle to high school. These are outside timelines and the EP team should make a decision about when to reconvene based on the needs and goals for the individual student. A parent/guardian or the school may request a review of the plan at any time to assure the student is provided an appropriate education. It is expected that the EP team will determine when they need to reconvene to address the student's progress. For a student receiving full-time or full-class service, the meeting will likely need to be scheduled within a year to determine whether the plan has been effective and whether the student has accomplished the current goals.

Before the student begins to receive services, a meeting must be held to write the EP. The EP team should include the following, as stated in Rule 6A-6.030191, FAC:

- The parent/guardians of the student
- At least one teacher of the gifted program
- The regular education teacher who can provide input about the levels of performance in the general curriculum
- A representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the student, and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources of the school district
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- Other individuals who may have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student at the discretion of the parent/guardian or school district
- The student, as appropriate.

If the primary language of the parent/guardians indicates a need for an interpreter, one should be provided.

In cases where the general education teacher is at a school other than where the student receives gifted service, the general education teacher may provide information in writing to inform the EP team about assessments and indicators of the student's current levels of performance to guide in making decisions about service.

The school district must notify parent/guardians before each EP meeting by written invitation. The written invitation serves as informed notice and contains the date, time and place for the meeting, the reason for the meeting, who has been invited, and the fact that the parent/guardians may invite anyone to the meeting who has pertinent information about the gifted student. The district will also provide the parent/guardians with a copy of the *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted*, which explains the legal rights of the parent/guardian, regarding the gifted education process.

The educational plan contains the following information to be discussed at the EP meeting and written into the plan:

- Present levels of performance - which is defined as statements of a student's performance in academic, social, emotional, or other areas including demonstrated skill mastery grade levels. End of the year tests could serve to indicate levels of performance in content areas. The statement of the student's present level of educational performance is the cornerstone of the EP. The purpose of the statement of present levels is to determine how the student is currently performing. It provides unbiased data from a variety of sources to identify the strengths of the student and guide decisions about educational needs.
- Pre-assessment to determine levels of performance guides development of the goals for the student, including benchmarks or short term objectives - individualization should be stressed to include skill performance mastery, data collection, and criteria for determining evidence of mastery.
- The student's strengths - which may include learning styles, characteristics, test scores or interest area(s).
- Results of recent evaluations - to be used to establish base-line data.

- Description of how the student’s progress toward the goals will be measured and when the parent/guardian will be informed of the student’s progress to ensure continued gains.
- Gifted education services - including participation in regular education programs.
- Initiation, duration, frequency, and location of services specifying the hours or percentage of time, as well as time spent with gifted peers.
- Signatures of attendees.

Present levels of performance specifically reference how the student is performing in classes. The data presented to the team should indicate educational performance for the last one or two years, pertinent information or work or formal or informal assessments that document priority educational needs to ensure the student will continue to make academic progress.

An appropriate way to determine service for a student is to ask “How is this student gifted?” and provide service to meet those educational needs. All students who are gifted are not gifted in all areas. As for other ESE areas, it is understood that the range of disabilities in a district are likely to vary widely with a range of services. In the same way, students who are gifted are likely gifted in different ways. Some will excel in science, some read years above grade level, some are history buffs and some have mastered all math skills for their current grade level. If a limited continuum of service is available, the task is to then determine how best to meet the needs of the learner.

The parent/guardian receives a copy of the EP. The teacher of the gifted who will provide the gifted services must also receive a copy. The EP should be accessible to each teacher responsible for implementation. In addition, each teacher of the student shall be informed of the specific responsibilities related to the implementation. EPs should be reviewed at times of transition, such as when the student moves from elementary to middle school. The EP must be implemented as soon as possible after the EP meeting. An EP must be in effect before specially designed instruction is provided for the student. The teacher of the gifted is responsible for implementation of the EP.

Gifted students benefit from being grouped with their intellectual peers for a significant part of their instructional day, so this should be a consideration of the team.

Gifted education should be based on the unique needs of the student, not the student’s classification.

See Appendix A3 for “Assessing the Educational Plan (EP) for Students who are Gifted” which provides a guide to development of a significant EP.

C. Students with Special Needs

The Twice-Exceptional Student

An educational plan (EP) is a written plan developed for students identified solely as gifted. For gifted students who are also identified as having a disability, commonly referred to as being *twice exceptional*, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is written, unless it is a disability which

is not eligible for special education through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under those circumstances a 504 plan might be appropriate if indicated. For a twice exceptional student the gifted goals are addressed on the IEP. A teacher of the gifted must attend the IEP meeting to provide input into the gifted goals for the student.

The largest percentage of twice exceptional students are the gifted with specific learning disabilities. NAGC recognizes three types of students who could be identified as gifted learning disabled: 1) identified gifted students who have subtle learning disabilities, 2) students with a learning disability but whose gift has not been identified, and 3) unidentified students whose gifts and disabilities may be masked by average achievement. (NAGC position papers)

The focus on these students is in three areas: appropriate identification, instruction and remediation for the disability, and a continuing need for social and emotional support and fostering the area(s) of giftedness.

While students who are gifted often show inattention symptoms in learning environments that are not sufficiently challenging, students with ADHD typically show inattention symptoms regardless of the environment. It is critical that diagnosticians be aware of the characteristics of ADHD and how they can be present among the gifted population in order to prevent missed diagnosis or misdiagnosis (Webb et al., 2005)

In cases when a student who is gifted exhibits characteristics as a student with a disability, the student has rights outlined under IDEA 2004 and *Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities*. All guidelines for the gifted goals on the IEP are consistent with the other goals including terms of reporting progress to parents/guardians.

Some gifted students have a medical diagnosis that requires special accommodations in the general classroom setting, but the student does not have a disability. Those students may be considered for services with a 504 Plan. A gifted student may have an EP as well as a 504 Plan. A student who is gifted may not have accommodations unless the student has a 504 Plan.

English Language Learners

Nonverbal assessments may provide a more equitable method of assessment for a measure of ability and achievement. The EP team participants shall consider the special needs of students whose potential may be masked by their limited English proficiency. When the parent/guardian is not fluent in English, it is important to provide an interpreter while the EP is developed. Recommendations of the EP team should take into consideration the student's language and culture.

Transfer Students

In-state

A gifted student who is transferring from one Florida public school district to another and who has a current EP must be provided service. If the EP has expired, the receiving district will need

to initiate a new one. The EP should be reviewed and revised as determined necessary by the receiving district based on current needs of the student.

Out of State

Procedures for consideration of a transferring gifted student include the following:

- If there is evidence that the student was determined eligible in another state and was receiving gifted service the district should consider whether the student would meet Florida eligibility criteria. The district would then determine eligibility for permanent assignment based on the continued needs of the student, and whether the student does or does not meet exit criteria.

It is significant to keep in mind when determining eligibility that many other states define gifted with different criteria so it is necessary to assess the eligibility criteria to ensure alignment with Florida Rule 6A-6.03019(3), FAC.

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children - Changing schools can be a huge ordeal for military families and military children. Education curriculum and education requirements can vary tremendously between states and between school districts. The 2008 Legislature created a section in Florida Statute authorizing the Governor to execute the Compact and the rules became effective January 1, 2010. Okaloosa County then developed a matrix to serve as a guide in implementation.

The Compact assures that the receiving state school shall initially honor placement of the student in educational programs based on current educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state or participation/placement in like programs in the sending state. Such programs include, but are not limited to: 1) gifted and talented programs; and 2) English as a second language (ESL).

- The receiving school may perform subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student

To make a determination of eligibility, the evaluations required by Rule 6A-6.03019(3), FAC, must be conducted if the previous data are more than three years old.

- The district may elect to consider the student as being nominated for gifted and follow the steps to initiate consideration for service in Florida.

Underachievers

It is important to consider underachievement as a factor in determining services for students. Underachievement may result when a gifted student exhibits behaviors that prevent the student from achieving their potential. It is an issue to be addressed. Most commonly it is defined as a discrepancy between performance and an ability or achievement measure.

There are three types of underachievers: those with low grades and test scores despite indication of high ability, low test scores with high grades, low performance despite high test scores in some subjects.

Gifted students who are at risk or who do not display satisfactory performance in regular or gifted classes should be monitored and provided with appropriate intervention services. Parents are provided information and support.

Gifted Dropouts

The 1972 Marland Report to Congress indicated that 18% of high school dropouts are gifted. More recent studies cite figures closer to 20%. Studies indicate that gifted students drop out for the same reasons other students do. They don't like school or are bored, they're failing school, they're pregnant, they want to get a job, their parents didn't finish school, their home life doesn't particularly support learning, etc. The dropout rate for these students places them at risk and is indicative of consideration by the EP team in providing support for at-risk students.

Related Services

Gifted students may demonstrate a need for related services **in order to accomplish their gifted goals**. As part of the EP meeting the team would determine whether a related service is essential for the student to benefit from the gifted service and for the student to accomplish the goals on the EP.

Related services may include:

- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling

Appropriate counseling services might address issues related to characteristics of giftedness, including perfectionism, underachievement, exploration of cultural identity and value system issues related to identification, or social-emotional support. Technical assistance paper FY 2006-10, *Counseling as a Related Service* 312765 (<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/>) addresses this topic. An individual evaluation is sometimes required to assist an EP team in determining the need for related service. Related services are provided for gifted students through district funds.

V. PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

“The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” – Albert Einstein

A. Continuum of Delivery Models

Students identified as gifted receive services through different types of service delivery models. Service refers to what a gifted student receives that differs from non-gifted students. The district determines which models to use and the frequency of services as guided by the EP team’s determination of appropriate services for the student.

The overall goal of the service is to encourage and facilitate higher levels of thinking, communication, independent study skills, leadership abilities, productivity, creativity and self-awareness that will maximize intellectual growth. The student receiving gifted services should be made aware of the impact of his/her academic, social, emotional, creative, and leadership capabilities and the service to be provided.

Appropriate Service

Service for students should be provided through a defensible program that offers meaningful content, learning opportunities employing higher level thinking skills, and advanced skills to foster the intellectual growth of the student. Programs for gifted learners allow students to explore content typically unavailable in the general curriculum by looking into further depth and complexity in the material. The content and teaching strategies reflect an accelerated pace with skills beyond the general education curriculum. Because gifted students are exceptional education students they require a qualitatively different education that is not typically available in the general education classroom.

“An effective approach to programming for gifted learners should be seen as a combination of three elements: accelerative approaches, in which instruction is matched to the competence level of students; enrichment approaches, in which opportunities for the investigation of supplementary materials are given; and individualization, in which instruction is matched specifically to the learner’s achievement, abilities, and interests” (Feldhusen, 1998).

Courses cited as **Gifted (advanced academics)** in the Course Code Directory are designed to meet the needs of students who have met state eligibility criteria. Programs for students who are gifted encompass instructional and related services that provide significant adaptations in curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or the learning environment (Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC). Many gifted students spend most of the day in regular classroom settings which puts them at risk of failing to achieve their potential. Achievement scores that fall below expectations provide the evidence. Gifted students learn at an accelerated pace which requires a need to explore topics in depth which could be accomplished with options that might include cluster-skill grouping, curriculum compacting, contracting, original research, independent studies, or special classes.

Service may be provided in a variety of programs:

1) Gifted /Self-Contained Class (K-12) – Advanced Academics or Gifted Course Code

- The teacher of the gifted provides total instruction in these models in which all of the students have met gifted eligibility.
- Content and pacing should be differentiated to the degree that activities are clearly intended for students evidencing a need beyond the general curriculum as indicated by their individual educational plan (EP).

Full-time programs offer an opportunity for the teacher to adapt the curriculum to provide rigor and challenge in all content areas. Knowing that all students have met eligibility requirements ensures that the teacher might do preassessments and then practice curriculum compacting and other instructional strategies to nurture and support a more complex and integrated curriculum. Classes may have same or mixed grade levels.

Kolloff (1989) measured reading and mathematics achievement as well as self concept in a pull-out program and in a full-time classroom and found little difference in mathematics achievement but students in a full-time program scored significantly higher than students in a pull-out program in reading achievement. Delcourt, Loyd, Cornell, and Goldberg (1994) found that gifted children attending special programs performed better than their gifted peers not in programs and specifically, children in special schools, separate classes and pull-out programs for the gifted showed significantly higher levels of achievement than both gifted peers not in programs and those served in general class programs.

2) Resource Room or Pull-out (K-6)

- The setting is other than the general education classroom for the special instructional period.
 - Curriculum must have an academic content foundation, and focus on interdisciplinary activities as related to the educational plan(s) (EP) of the students.
 - Content and pacing should be differentiated to the degree that activities are clearly intended for students evidencing a need beyond the general curriculum.
 - The teacher of the gifted provides total instruction in these models in which all of the students have met gifted eligibility.
- Pull-out or Resource Rooms allow gifted students to meet with intellectual peers to work on critical thinking and problem solving skills, ideally to address community problems or to work on a challenging curriculum such as Junior Great Books, Algebraic thinking, Invention Convention or simulations based on content areas. **Enrichment programs** (based on Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model or the Purdue Three Stage Enrichment Model) are widely used in the resource room. Students are guided through independent investigations through in-depth concept development. Enrichment should be well-articulated and extend the regular curriculum by adding depth and rigor. Enrichment programs that keep learning on a superficial level (such as having activities without connection to a content area) may lose credibility for the program.

3) Advanced Content Class for gifted and non-gifted students (6-12) (general content course code)

- Students are grouped on the basis of achievement and interest in specific content area and the class may include students who have and who have not been identified as gifted.
- The district should develop a description of the course, showing clearly how the content, pacing, process skills emphasis, and expectations of student outcomes differ from the course other students at that grade level would take in that content area.
- If the course is identified on the EP as being the service for a student who is gifted, the gifted endorsed teacher must clearly document in the lesson plans the differentiation provided as necessary to match the goals for student educational plans (EPs).

Self-contained content classes provide challenging and more in-depth work in a specific content area. It is important to ensure that students in these classes are placed because it is an area of personal strength rather than a placement because of the student's eligibility for gifted.

4) Cluster Grouping (general course code)

- Identified gifted students with strengths in the same content area(s) placed as a group –typically three to six identified students with similar strengths - into an otherwise heterogeneous general classroom. If there are more than six students, more clusters could be formed based on their areas of strength.
- Classroom teacher has the gifted endorsement in addition to the required certification.
- The gifted endorsed teacher clearly documents in lesson plans the curriculum modifications/ differentiation for students who are gifted to address the EP goals.

Cluster Grouping may be an effective way to meet the needs of learners in situations where a small number of students need to be served and a full-time class is not warranted. In this case, a cluster of students with similar abilities are grouped together with a teacher who then designs learning activities and projects to meet their needs. Research shows (Moro, 1987) that the performance of students who work on math exercises in small groups is qualitatively superior, with students arriving at more advanced cognitive strategies than when students work by themselves.

5) Support Facilitation (general course code)

- The teacher provides services in class one-on-one. The teacher meets with an individual student or small group of students on an individualized basis within a traditional classroom but not as a co-teacher.
- The teacher of the gifted provides support for the gifted students' achievement in the general classroom.
- Gifted endorsed teacher, general classroom teacher, and gifted student (as appropriate) collaboratively plan the development of challenging assignments that substitute for or extend core curriculum objectives to meet the needs of the student.
- The teacher documents curriculum modifications through (a) separate lesson plans, (b) time log of collaborative planning, and (c) individual student contracts.
- The teacher of the gifted may provide support facilitation by working and moving among two or more classrooms working with teachers and students identified as gifted as needed.

- Frequency and intensity of support varies based upon students' and/or educators' need for assistance. Services may include revised lessons, independent research or related activities for gifted learners.

6) Mentorship/Internship (secondary option)

- Gifted students work with mentors to explore professions of interest.
- Gifted endorsed teacher supervises mentorship/internship experiences based on Course Number: 7965030, *Externship for Students who are Gifted*.
- Individual student contracts should document (a) the work to be done, (b) learning objectives, (c) dates and amount of time the student will be participating in the internship/mentorship, (d) means by which students' learning will be assessed, and (e) responsibilities of the gifted education teacher and mentor.

7) Dual Enrollment / Virtual courses

- Individual gifted student educational plan (EPs) should document (a) reason(s) the student needs a more advanced curriculum than could be provided on the school campus, (b) learning objectives for the gifted student, (c) dates and amount of time (in segments) the student will participate in the joint enrollment arrangement, and (d) means by which the gifted student's learning will be assessed.

8) Consultation (9-12)

- A teacher of the gifted meets regularly with students and/or teachers to plan, implement, and monitor instructional alternatives designed to ensure that the student who is gifted achieves successful accomplishment of gifted goals in Advanced Placement, Honors, International Baccalaureate or other academically rigorous programs.
- Teachers providing consultation are required to maintain a record of the students, teachers, courses, and services provided for students who are gifted as aligned with the student's EP goals.

Consultation is intended to support the student. A teacher of the gifted monitors the student's progress to ensure the gifted student achieves successful accomplishment of the gifted goals in the general education setting. The consultation teacher is required to maintain a record of the services as related to the EP goals. Consultation occurs at least once a month or more frequently as determined by the EP team for the needs of the student. The intent is for a student whose academic needs are being appropriately met in general educational programs and advanced courses to have a contact to ensure that the student's specific EP goals are being addressed.

It is understood that all students should be expected to master basic curriculum. Pulling a student from a content class to go to a resource center may prevent increased knowledge and skill development. All students are entitled to learn by receiving direct instruction at the necessary level. Typical instruction using grade level materials is not likely to meet the needs of advanced learners. Children who have mastered the majority of the grade level basic skills must be provided with advanced opportunities. VanTassel-Baska (1986, 1995) and VanTassel-Baska, Zuo, Avery, & Little, (2002) studied experimental and control classes of students in grades 2-8 across the country. Experimental classes were taught with a specially-created, integrated language-arts curriculum with high-level literary analysis and interpretation, persuasive writing,

and linguistic competency. Results showed the experimental classes made significant gains on all assessments while the control groups showed no significant gains.

What does it mean to be academically gifted? Certainly successful performance is an indicator. Administering the end-of-the-year basal test may indicate the student evidences mastery of most of the material intended to be covered that year. Gifted mathematics learners often seek the simplest means for solving a problem and their solutions often involve unique approaches. Multi-disciplinary in-depth study in science appeals to advanced learners who are able to draw conclusions from hands-on, in-depth specific studies. Sternberg (1982) suggests four components for the science curricula: problem finding, problem solving, problem reevaluation, and reporting.

Levels of service could begin with modifying the curriculum in the classroom, special classes, enrichment opportunities, pull-out programs in a specific area of the student's strength. Opportunities for highly gifted students (usually considered those with IQs of 145 and above) may need a broader range of options or a more individualized approach to ensure continued academic gains.

Student assessment must match the program. Since gifted students are not universally gifted, the programs, too, should indicate those differences. A student whose level of performance indicates a predominant strength in math and mastery of grade level standards would not be best served in a program that focuses on language arts or interdisciplinary units of study. The goals on that student's EP should indicate how he will receive advanced math instruction conducting research using his math skills in independent projects to ensure the student continues to make gains in mathematics. Gifted students should not be given "busy work" while a teacher works with other students. Continued motivation to learn comes with being successful when completing rigorous tasks, preferably with intellectual peers. Modifications could be provided through tiered assignments, flexible grouping, curriculum compacting, interest centers, higher levels of questioning and alignment with the goals of the Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners, planning progress for the student from the Know, Understand, Perform, and Accomplished levels as appropriate.

Class size should align with all other content area classes if core content is addressed in the class.

Programs with a history of success in meeting the needs of gifted learners include:

- **Magnet or special schools** enable a district to pool resources at one site to meet student needs.
- **Differentiated Curriculum** is widely referenced as a means of meeting the needs of gifted learners although most training is done to identify ways to differentiate for students with disabilities, rather than specifically for the gifted. In a class with gifted and non-gifted students, the gifted teacher must indicate in lesson plans how the curriculum is differentiated for students who are gifted as required by rule. When the EP goals are student specific, the goals would be the factor in determining the differentiation needed. An effective curriculum for gifted learners is typically a basic curriculum with modifications to meet the needs of students. Students who are gifted may learn more rapidly with far less practice and may be curious about exploring topics in greater depth. There should be sufficient time for self-

directed learning and making more connections across topics, disciplines, events and cultures.

- **Individualized programs** can be appealing to students. Curriculum compacting when the student evidences mastery of basic benchmarks and standards, learning contracts, or selecting engaging materials at a higher level can be effective.
- **Special classes** could be appropriate for students with interests or talents requiring intense programming. AP, IB, AICE programs, honors courses, dual enrollment with a college, career education and virtual courses may provide an opportunity for the student to develop their abilities and interests. The four courses in the Course Code Directory specifically for gifted students in grades 9-12 allow students to delve into a specific topic. For example, students may work with a mentor at the school or in the community through the externship program (Course 7965030); develop higher order thinking skills and leadership in the Skills course (7963090); complete independent research methodology using primary and secondary resources to produce original documents (7965010) or practice sophisticated levels of communication and assess the humanities - fine arts and philosophy (7965040).
- **Academic Competitions and Programs** help students expand creative and critical thinking skills and develop leadership and teamwork skills and may be added to the curriculum. Some of the more widely-known include Future Problem Solving (FPS), simulations, Junior Great Books, Odyssey of the Mind, Invention Convention, debate, 4-H, Junior Achievement, Math Olympiad, Knowledge Master, and the Stock Market game. While secondary schools are more likely to offer extended options, teachers at the elementary level may need to be proactive in seeking such programs for students.
- **Cooperative Learning** fosters development of skills in working with a group. Many students who are high achievers report resenting group assignments, feeling that they will be responsible for doing most – if not all - of the work. Students who are expected to teach other students may be reinforcing some skills, but they are not learning anything new, so these experiences should be used with caution. Group tasks should take into consideration differences in the students and ensure a fair balance of responsibilities and allow for students to work independently as well.

A district should determine the continuum of services to be offered based on the number of students to be served, specific needs of the students and the professional educators available to provide service. A gifted endorsed coordinator is designated and responsible for all aspects of the program.

The K-12 program for gifted learners must be comprehensive, structured, and sequenced between, within, and across grade levels. The district offers multiple service delivery options as no single service meets the needs of all gifted students.

The district plan will specify an appropriate amount of time to assure sufficient opportunity to meet the program's goals and objectives. The minimum time allotment for a student to receive gifted service should be:

K-2	four hours per week (or the yearly equivalent)
3-5	five hours per week (or the yearly equivalent)
Grades 6-12	one class period duration or equivalent daily

Consultation 9-12 at least every two weeks

Flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade levels ensure that students learn with and from their intellectual peers. Early identification and intervention for all students and particularly for underrepresented populations of gifted learners are crucial in realizing and developing their full potential.

Secondary Programs

There are particular challenges in providing service for secondary gifted students. With most teachers having had a preservice focus on content, teachers may have had minimal training in providing differentiated curriculum or instructional strategies to meet the needs of gifted learners. Adaptations within the curriculum may require further professional development in adapting the curriculum to meet learner needs.

Districts should consider the benefits of career and technical education for gifted learners. Benefits of these programs for the high ability student include:

1. Rigor with relevance with integrated academics
Broad career areas identify knowledge and skills
2. A reason to learn
Learning experiences provide a purpose and meaningful choices
3. Competition, teamwork, leadership, and recognition are fostered through Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). Within CTSO's there are opportunities for personal commitment and real-world community involvement and experiences
4. Reduced dropout rate
Students who report being bored or disengaged with school indicate classes are not interesting or meaningful. Career and technical education programs present real-world connections that can be motivating.

Honor classes, AP, IB programs, AICE, dual enrollment, career and technical programs and externships offer multiple options to meet student needs for academic challenge. Teachers for these courses who have the gifted endorsement are better prepared to provide appropriate service and differentiation for students who are gifted. EP teams should consider what additional programs/services will be meaningful for the individual student to continue to make gains.

B. Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum is the core of service for students who are gifted and must be qualitatively different from the general education program as indicated in Section 1003.01 (3)(a), Florida Statutes, (F.S.). Section (3)(b) defines "Special education services" to mean specially designed instruction and such related services as are necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from education. The development of appropriate programming for gifted students must include core elements directed to the specific needs of the learners.

State Board Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC., states special programs for exceptional students will encompass instruction and related services which provide significant adaptations to meet

individual learning needs of exceptional students. In addition, Section 1003.57, F.S., specifies each district school board- local education agency (LEA)- is responsible for providing an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services for all exceptional students including diagnosis and evaluation; special instruction, classes, and services. (1)(e) specifies “A student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional student until after he or she has been properly evaluated, classified, and placed in the manner prescribed by rules of the SBE.”

Instructional Materials

The district plan should assure that appropriate materials and resources are available to support the gifted program. Materials and resources for students who are gifted must align with and extend the content standards and provide opportunities to study topics in depth. Programming options should be available when a student demonstrates competence in a basic skill area. Gifted students should be allowed to make continuous progress by testing out of previously mastered material.

The district should have a protocol for assessing student proficiency to guide decisions regarding appropriate service. Grouping practices, independent study, and acceleration may be effective approaches to meet the needs of a student. Competence and skills should determine access to academic experiences rather than age.

Math

It is imperative that all students aim to master the basic math curriculum. In addition, enrichment activities that extend the learning could include abstract and practical mathematics. The district may determine to accelerate a student who evidences mastery of grade level skills.

Language Arts

It is not unusual for a student to enter kindergarten already reading – sometimes two or more years above grade level. A student may enjoy literature, word games and puzzles and may be writing their own stories and/or poems. This talent must be nurtured and developed. Advanced readers should be assessed to determine what skill instruction might be needed. Seldom does a basal text – designed to meet the needs of the average student - provide sufficient challenge for these students. Much of the success of support rests with the ability of the teacher to provide meaningful experiences to foster further development for the verbally gifted child.

Social Studies

Highly able students should be introduced to primary sources and be able to examine historical documents. Open-ended real-world problems are of great interest to students. Meeting practicing historians and museum docents can open the door to further interests. Even young students are interested in the biographies of historical figures and the reasons for their history-making decisions.

Science

Whereas a traditional science program is teacher-centered and based on text books, lecture and demonstrations, a newer approach promotes the nature and processes of science which align to

the revised state standards. The focus is on experiential, hands-on labs, with small group and in-depth problem-solving studies. Probably the most significant issue is the need for appropriate materials and practitioners to let students see what real scientists do in practice. At the secondary level a meaningful externship with the student studying science or developing research in a laboratory setting or on a university campus can be a powerful experience providing the student with technical skills and conceptual abilities.

Guidelines

- **There should be an optimal match of the student’s ability to the program/service and to teacher expertise.**

A well-defined scope and sequence needs to be articulated for all grade levels and subject areas in the core curriculum. Teachers must differentiate, replace, supplement, and/or modify curricula to facilitate higher level learning goals for the gifted learner. The scope and sequence specifies the differentiation to be implemented within each core academic area based on previous and subsequent learning experiences. No single format for providing service will effectively meet the needs of all gifted learners.

- **Curriculum in the gifted program should relate to, and be aligned with, the state content standards.**

A program of instruction should consist of advanced content and appropriately differentiated teaching strategies to reflect the accelerated learning pace and advanced intellectual processes of gifted learners. Alignment processes should include acceleration of standards, providing greater complexity, deepening the challenge level, and providing creative opportunities. Diverse and appropriate learning experiences consist of a variety of curricular options, instructional strategies, and materials. A protocol for assessing student proficiency takes into consideration the individual student’s demonstration of ability, readiness, and motivation to determine placement.

- **Grouping practices should be available on a continuum from clusters in regular classrooms to separate schools in districts.**

Flexible grouping arrangements should accommodate the delivery of differentiated curriculum. Intellectual peer grouping for portions of the school day should be required.

- **Instructional strategies should be inquiry-based and engaging to gifted learners.**

Differentiated instructional strategies may rely on fostering critical and creative thinking, problem solving, research skills, advanced content, and authentic and appropriate products. Homework assignments are intended to reinforce skills for learning the discipline. Students are guided and encouraged to discover new knowledge and draw conclusions. This requires challenging educational experiences, finding connections between content areas and applying fresh ideas to new learning. For each course, teachers develop course objectives, activities, and assessments to chart new learning. Many gifted students are interested in learning multiple

languages. Younger students are likely to be more flexible and less self-conscious about language instruction. It is reasonable to project that an ability to speak and write in other languages would be a valuable skill for the future.

- **Curriculum for underrepresented populations should provide scaffolding and other supports as needed for learning.**

Opportunities to access advanced curriculum should be made available to underrepresented populations with key learning strategies. Tutors, mentors, and internships should be used to augment the learning. While all students learn best when the teacher presents tasks at the appropriate level of difficulty, the teacher may scaffold, coach, and support the student in successful completion of tasks.

- **Authentic assessment of gifted student learning should occur annually.**

Performance-based tools to assess learning should be employed in classrooms. A collection of portfolio artifacts could be used to represent the accumulation of long-term high level skills. Standardized testing takes place in core areas of the curriculum to attest to gifted student growth (e.g., critical thinking). Curriculum compacting enables the instructor to provide appropriate instruction and curricula based on the academic needs of the student. Assessment of the student's knowledge and skills prior to instruction identifies what students already know and are able to do so that instruction is meaningful.

- **Acceleration should be provided as an essential element of gifted curriculum and instruction.**

A flexible instructional pace is needed that allows for accelerated learning as appropriate; and accelerative opportunities provide subject and grade skipping and early matriculation to college. District protocol should be established to address the processes through which acceleration will occur. Guidelines will include a consideration of demonstrated academic ability, an appraisal of the student's intellectual and social adjustment, family dynamics, and the district's capacity to support the student. Districts could use the *Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy*, a joint publication from NAGC, the Belin Blank Center at the University of Iowa, and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted as a guide in developing their policies and practice.

Clearly, acceleration is a cost-effective way to meet the learning needs of students. Multiple types of acceleration have been identified including subject acceleration, grade skipping, and early college entrance. For example, a fourth grader evidencing mastery of most of the fourth grade math objectives may be served by having him go to the fifth grade for mathematics. Decisions regarding acceleration are likely to be controversial for schools and for many parents. Information in *A Nation Deceived* (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004) describe a variety of acceleration procedures. The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) can be a useful tool to guide decisions regarding acceleration for an individual student. The IAS provides information about the student's academic ability and achievement; school information relative to attendance, motivation, participation in school activities, and whether a change in site may be indicated;

interpersonal skills – relationships with peers and teachers, emotional development, behavior, and parent involvement; and attitude and support including school support and the student’s attitude about acceleration.

Florida’s Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners provides guidelines supporting a challenging and rigorous curriculum that enhances the state standards. The goals of the Frameworks are defined by expected outcomes for gifted students. Each goal specifies the mastery expected by the time the student graduates:

- Goal 1 - The student will be able to critically examine the complexity of knowledge: the location, definition, and organization or a variety of fields of knowledge.
- Goal 2 - The student will be able to create, adapt, and assess multifaceted questions in a variety of fields/disciplines.
- Goal 3 – The student will be able to conduct thoughtful research/ exploration in multiple fields.
- Goal 4 – The student will be able to think creatively and critically to identify and solve real-world problems.
- Goal 5 – The student will be able to assume leadership and participatory roles in both gifted and heterogeneous group learning situations.
- Goal 6 – The student will be able to set and achieve personal, academic, and career goals.
- Goal 7 – The student will be able to develop and deliver a variety of authentic products/performances that demonstrate understanding in multiple fields/disciplines.

The goals are arranged by content (goals 1 and 2), process (goals 3 and 4), affect (goals 5 and 6) and product (goal 7).

Learning opportunities should consist of an advanced continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches and resource materials. The classroom provides an atmosphere of inquiry and discovery, with emphasis on problem solving and reflection and critical thinking, rather than mere coverage of the content. Students should be required to stretch themselves to succeed, with a blend of individualized and group activities including contact with experts in the field. Gifted students often have deeper interest in a topic that may go beyond traditional classroom instruction or resources.

As outlined in the **Parallel Curriculum Model (PCM)**, the key to providing a qualitatively differentiated curriculum involves:

- Opportunities to learn the **core knowledge** (enduring facts, concepts, principles, and skills) within a discipline.
- Opportunities to learn about the numerous **relationships and connections** that exist across topics, disciplines, events, time, and cultures.
- Opportunities to **transfer and apply knowledge** using the tools and methods of the scholar, researcher, and practitioner.
- Opportunities for students to develop **intrapersonal qualities and develop their affinities** within and across disciplines.

The PCM addresses “ascending intellectual demand” to meet the needs of learners as they become more advanced, providing tasks that call for a higher degree of complexity and understanding and products calling for evidence of increased understanding.

The **Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM)** for Gifted Learners was developed by the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary. The development of exemplary curriculum frameworks and units of study for classroom use with high ability learners has been an emphasis at the Center. The curriculum is designed to respond to gifted learners' characteristics of precocity, intensity, and complexity through its three dimensions of advanced content, higher level processes and product development, and interdisciplinary concepts, issues, and themes. The ICM is comprised of three interrelated dimensions. The ICM has been translated into a curricular framework and set of teaching units in the areas of language arts, social studies, and science.

Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grants

The Department of Education offers grants to support districts in developing curriculum for gifted learners. The Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grant Projects are intended to enhance the academic achievement of students who are gifted through the innovative redesign of instruction and meaningful collaboration between gifted students and teachers, other students, colleagues, mentors, or agencies. It is expected that this collaboration will enhance instruction and thus the academic performance of the students by introducing new information, skills, talents, and perspectives to the instruction.

Collaboration in the past has coordinated with general education classrooms, classrooms for students with disabilities, other schools or school districts, professionals in a particular field who are willing to become mentors and share expertise, colleges or universities, museums, and laboratories.

Section **1011.75**, F.S., and Rule **6A-7.099**, FAC., initiated in 1983, address support for the Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grants, the Governor's Summer Program, and, subsequently, the Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) project. Each district school board, two or more school boards in collaboration, or a public school principal through the district school board may submit to the commissioner a proposed program designed to effectuate an exemplary program which will challenge gifted students. Proposed programs are judged by the following criteria: a) will improve the quality of existing programs through a redesign of instruction or professional development, b) will initiate a model or demonstration program, or c) will expand student participation in existing programs. Typically grants are awarded for 8-10 projects annually. Participation is open to all schools and school districts in the State of Florida. Funding is competitive and based on the recommendations of a review team. A summary of recent programs is indicated below:

Program Year	Funding	Programs
2007-08	\$80,000	Eight programs funded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broward: Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students and Teachers ▪ Escambia: Just Imagine ▪ Flagler: A Quest in Archeological Findings ▪ Hillsborough: Curriculum Revision ▪ Miami Dade: Outdoor Science ▪ Pinellas: Diverse Environment Network

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St. Lucie: Technology for Middle Grades ▪ Suwannee: Career Exploration for Middle School Gifted
2008-09	\$100,000	<p>Ten programs funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collier: Rigor Plus – for middle schools ▪ Florida State University Lab School: Chemistry Integration ▪ Highlands: Art Exploration ▪ Lee: Gopher the Cache! ▪ Marion: Water Wonderland (environment) ▪ Miami-Dade: Physical Science/Physics Continuum ▪ Orange: Forensic Fusion ▪ Palm Beach: Puentes Al Mundo ▪ Polk: Implementing the <i>Frameworks</i> (redesign of curriculum) ▪ Volusia: Legendary Florida (integrated curriculum)
2009-2010	\$93,466	<p>Ten programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alachua: Rural Globalization Through Technology ▪ Brevard: Canine Commando Challenge ▪ Broward: Bald Eagle Project ▪ Hernando: Collaboration with the Community ▪ Highlands: ENGAGE – connections with the community ▪ Marion: Academy of Law and Government ▪ Miami-Dade: Cultivating the Arts ▪ Orange: Writing Through the Ages ▪ Orange: Disease Detectives ▪ Pinellas:” Ancient Civilizations, Virtual Investigations: A 21st Century Collaboration

C. Support Services

Students who are gifted need affective as well as cognitive growth. Section **1003.01** (3)(a), Florida Statutes, (F.S.), defines an exceptional student as any student determined eligible for a special program in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education (SBE). Section (3)(b) defines “Special education services” to mean specially designed instruction and such related services as are necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from education.

Counseling and guidance services should be offered to gifted learners at all levels of programming.

- Teachers, parents, administrators, and school services personnel would be provided with information and training regarding the characteristics of gifted students and their related socio-emotional development.
- Teachers incorporate strategies to support affective learning in their classrooms.
- Counselors and others with specific training in the socio-emotional needs of gifted students should provide counseling and guidance services at all levels of schooling.
- Guidance and counseling services to meet the socio-emotional needs of gifted students are ongoing, K-12. Characteristics typical of the gifted learner provide some direction for the services: perfectionism, underachievement, lack of self-confidence of gifted girls, a tendency to be introverted, family emotional factors, and learning disabilities. Gifted children are aware that they are not like their age peers and may struggle with social adjustment.

- Referrals are made to community resources/professionals for special needs as necessary.

Academic planning and career planning should be provided by the secondary level.

- Curriculum that outlines services in academic development, career development, and personal/social development for gifted students should be developed and implemented.
- Gifted students should receive college/career exploration and development experiences throughout grades 6-12.
- Gifted students from low income backgrounds should receive guidance in selecting college opportunities and financial aid by grade 9.
- High performing students may become frustrated at having to select a major field of study or a career path when they have a wide variety of interests and skills. It becomes difficult to narrow that path. Appropriate guidance should be available. The middle school course for *Advanced Academics and Career Development* would be advised.

Social-emotional guidance services should be offered to underrepresented populations at all levels of programming.

- Gifted students who are at risk or who do not display satisfactory performance in regular or gifted classes should be monitored and provided with appropriate intervention services. Parents are provided information and support.
- Teachers, administrators, school services personnel, and parents/guardians are trained to collaborate in implementing intervention strategies for at-risk students. These intervention strategies can take place at home, at school, or in the community.
- Transition counseling services by teachers, counselors and administrators are provided and documented.

Governor’s Summer Program

At any time the district may choose to work with local institutions of higher learning to offer programs for gifted and high ability students. The purpose of the Governor’s Summer Program is to provide an opportunity for outstanding gifted and high-achieving students to participate in and use the resources of the universities, community colleges and colleges in the State of Florida during summer programs. Institutions of higher education, public or private, submit proposals to provide summer programs for gifted and high-achieving students entering grades 8-12. The goal is to use the academic strengths and unique instructional resources of the sponsoring institution to provide participating students with learning experiences not typically available in their secondary education programs. Often the programs offer dual enrollment course credit. A summary of past programs is indicated below:

Program Year	Funding	Programs
2007	\$215,574	Nine programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brevard Community College – Mathematics ▪ Daytona Beach Community College - Robotics ▪ Florida Atlantic University – Engineering ▪ Florida Community College at Jacksonville

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manatee Community College – Science ▪ Pensacola Community College – Codes ▪ Seminole Community College – Striving for Excellence ▪ South Florida Community College – Musical Theatre ▪ University of Central Florida- Burnett Honors -Technology
2008	\$215,575	<p>Seven programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brevard Community College - Mathematics ▪ Florida Atlantic University - Engineering ▪ Lake City Community College –Anatomy and Physiology ▪ Manatee Community College -STEM ▪ North Florida Community College – Science ▪ South Florida Community College –Germanic Literature/Theatre ▪ University of South Florida at Tampa – Research
2009	\$127,370	<p>Five programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Florida Atlantic University – Engineering ▪ Florida Community College at Jacksonville – Aerospace ▪ Manatee Community College – Sciences ▪ Palm Beach Community College – Math and Science ▪ South Florida Community College – Chinese literature and art
2010	\$127,370	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partial funding to support the 2009 Governor's School for Space Science and Technology for gifted Florida high school seniors sponsored by the Florida Institute of Technology and NASA. <p>Two additional programs funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daytona State College – Motorsports ▪ Florida Atlantic University – Engineering

VI. PERSONNEL PREPARATION

“Research indicates that teachers who have received training in gifted education are more likely to foster higher-level thinking, allow for greater student expression, consider individual student strengths and weaknesses, and provide a variety of learning experiences to challenge students. This vital expertise that benefits all students is not developed merely as a result of one-hour training sessions; refining teacher skills requires high-quality professional development, time, materials, and continued support.” National Association for Gifted Children

A. Certification and Endorsement

All K-12 teachers providing service to students who are gifted must meet the highly qualified certification requirements for the grade/course content and have the gifted endorsement. If the course is not based in a specific content area, certification must be for the age/grade of the students. A teacher of the gifted who is out-of-field must take at least two courses each year to meet endorsement requirements. Parents must be notified at the beginning of the year when the teacher is currently out of field.

All teachers should be academically qualified, caring and supportive of students. State Board Rule **6A-4.01791**, FAC., establishes requirements for a teacher of the gifted to align with content of the course and gifted endorsement which involves completion of three semester hours each in five courses:

- **Nature and needs** of gifted students to include student characteristics; cognitive, social, and emotional needs; and history and research
- **Curriculum and instructional strategies** for teaching gifted students to include modification of curriculum content, instructional process, student products, and learning environment
- **Guidance and counseling** of gifted students to include motivation, self-image, interpersonal skills, and career options for gifted students
- **Educating special populations** of gifted students such as minorities, underachievers, handicapped, economically disadvantaged, and highly gifted to include student characteristics and programmatic adaptations
- **Theory and development of creativity** to include elements of creativity such as fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration

The **Working on Gifted Issues** (WOGI) project is a state project providing professional development and technical assistance for *district coordinators of the gifted* to improve the teacher quality and provide significant services and academic achievement for students who are gifted. The goals of the project are determined each year to align with state initiatives. To provide support for district coordinators in ensuring teachers are highly qualified, WOGI:

- Continually revises and updates the five required endorsement courses to reflect current research and practices.
- Supports offering the endorsement courses online for districts unable to provide the courses through in-service programs.
- Provides an annual Institute focused on professional development and dissemination of support materials for the district and supports regional meetings as appropriate for district coordinators.

- Maintains a website to provide links to current support materials and information.

B. Teacher Competencies

Teacher competencies for working successfully with gifted students (i.e., CEC-NAGC Teacher Standards) are correlated with the state approved professional development program and the courses in rule. Districts seek and hire teachers, administrators, and coordinators who hold the gifted endorsement or are working to complete it following the guidelines above.

Hansen and Feldhusen (1994) concluded that teachers who have a specific training in gifted education are more likely to demonstrate:

- Fast pacing of instruction
- Emphasis on creativity and thinking skills
- Teacher-student interactions
- Appropriate motivational techniques
- Student directed activities, and
- Use of media and models in teaching.

Dr. Sandra Kaplan (1989) listed five basic competencies for these teachers:

1. To develop an appreciation for scholarliness and intellectualism. This provides students with multiple and varied opportunities to experience a scholarly environment.
2. To create an atmosphere wherein gifted students develop an understanding of productivity and a sense of industry. This provides students with opportunities to plan and execute their own work and foster independence.
3. To stimulate awe and wonder. This provides students with opportunities to reexamine the world in order to uncover the elements within it that activate a sense of wonder.
4. To develop an awareness of intellectual stamina.
5. To develop intellectual leadership. This enables gifted students to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to use their giftedness to influence other people and situations.

In an update of her synthesis of research, Dr. Karen Rogers (1999) summarized that effective teachers of the gifted have the following characteristics:

- 1) High degree of intelligence, intellectual honesty
- 2) Expertise in a specific intellectual or talent area (mathematics, writing, etc.)
- 3) Self-directed in own learning, with a love for new, advanced knowledge
- 4) Equanimity, level-headedness, emotional stability
- 5) A genuine interest in, liking of gifted learners
- 6) Recognition of the importance of intellectual development
- 7) Strong belief in individual differences and individualization and
- 8) Highly developed teaching skill and knowledge.

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson (1997) in "What It Means to Teach Gifted Learners Well",

"What it takes to teach gifted learners well is actually a little common sense. It begins with the premise that each child should come to school to stretch and grow daily. It includes the expectation that the measure of progress and growth is competition with

oneself rather than competition against others. It resides in the notion that educators understand key concepts, principles and skills of subject domains, and present those in ways that cause highly able students to wonder and grasp, and extend their reach. And it envisions schooling as an escalator on which students continually progress, rather than a series of stairs, with landings on which advanced learners consistently wait.”

Gifted education’s professional organizations have designated a set of Standards for Graduate Programs in Gifted Education (National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC], 1995) and a set of joint standards for initial teacher standards in gifted education (Council for Exceptional Children, The Association for the Gifted [CEC-TAG], and NAGC, 2004. (see appendix C2)

The last three decades evidence a wealth of research indicating that teachers who receive training in the nature and needs of gifted learners and instruction in appropriate instructional strategies to use with high ability students are better qualified to identify and meet the needs of their students.

FDOE offers regular updates through newsletters and conference calls with district contacts as well as presentations at state conferences and the Institute to ensure districts have access to current information related to gifted education. District coordinators may use this information in professional development in the district.

C. Professional Development

On-going professional development should be available for teachers and for administrators and other personnel working with gifted students.

Administrators, counselors, and support staff should participate with teachers in the on-going professional development program dealing with gifted learners. Districts could provide specific training related to their roles and responsibilities in the program of services for gifted students.

Teachers of students who are gifted are required to have the certification for the course and grade of the students and to have the gifted endorsement. There are several options available for teachers to obtain the gifted endorsement:

- Classes are offered through many colleges and universities both on-line and on campus.
- Local Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Systems (FDRLS) Centers or educational consortiums frequently offer the courses.
- Through local school districts: District gifted coordinator or ESE administrator arrange to offer courses.
- Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) has arranged for teachers to access the endorsement courses on-line.

Alternative delivery models for professional development could be offered as well (e.g., Webcasts, online modules). Districts should support professional development in gifted education (e.g. staff development, workshops, conferences, and inservice courses) with knowledgeable and credentialed trainers or consultants.

District coordinators who receive training are also resources. The local coordinator should have a high level of expertise to implement innovative teaching strategies. District coordinators attend meetings and conferences related specifically to gifted education to be aware of knowledge and current practices and research in the field related to effective identification and instructional strategies for subsequent sharing with district staff. Districts should establish a policy for release time for professional staff and other personnel to allow for attendance at ongoing professional development programs dealing with gifted education. Teacher coaching models should be employed as a follow-up to training. Once a teacher accomplishes the gifted endorsement there is currently no specific requirement for further professional development to ensure the teacher remains current in knowledge about the field, which makes it critical for the district to provide access to renewed resources. The district coordinator plays a key role in ensuring ongoing staff development and in-service programs are provided related to identification, curriculum and instruction, pedagogy and gifted research about best practices, and rule/ policy changes. Without training programs addressing gifted education, teachers may not be prepared to deliver appropriate curricula to meet the needs of students. Tomlinson et al. (1994) found teachers are not always clear about assessment and meeting the needs of gifted students, having been focused in preservice training on classroom management and on covering required content material.

The district should provide staff development to address this need to ensure teachers at all levels have an understanding of the characteristics of gifted students and the challenge of providing meaningful learning experiences and rigorous curriculum. Training enables teachers to modify curriculum appropriately with appropriate instructional materials.

The **Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grant** funds may be used for professional development (including planning or training in an innovative or exemplary program) and resources not currently provided by the school district that are determined necessary to meet instructional objectives.

The **Working on Gifted Issues** (WOGI) project provides professional development and technical assistance *to impact teacher quality* and provide significant services and academic achievement for educators who work with students who are gifted. The district may elect to provide inservice credit for participation in these activities. To support professional development WOGI:

- Provides the gifted endorsement modules and course materials.
- Supports the endorsement courses as an online option.
- Provides professional development for teachers new to gifted education through an annual workshop.
- Provides input on current initiatives and supportive project activities with a state-wide advisory group.
- Provides a website with links to current support materials, curriculum and updated information.

Professional development must be part of the strategic plan for the district. The effectiveness of the training should be evident over a multi-year period.

VII. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

“What's done to children, they will do to society.” ~Karl Menninger

Parents want to know how the school and district intend to provide an appropriate education for their children. One primary role of the parent/guardian is to serve as an advocate for the child. The district needs to maintain connections with parents and the community by involving them as much as possible. To meet that need, the district should provide the community with:

- Information regarding the process for nominating a child
- Information related to awareness of the characteristics of a gifted learner
- An overview of the continuum of services available in the district
- A local advisory group that may include, but not be limited to, gifted educators and administrators, general education teachers and administrators, school psychologists, parents, and community members
- Open meetings at least once per year to provide an overview of the program and to address parents concerns. Meetings could be school or district wide. Administrators and/or teachers of the gifted present information about:
 - eligibility
 - program services
 - volunteer opportunities
 - addressing needs related to characteristics of the gifted learner
 - addressing social and emotional concerns of advanced students
 - special programs and activities available
 - topics of concern specific to parenting a gifted learner
 - materials to be used in the home to enrich learning experiences
 - networking with other parents to support the program.

Parent/guardians could be invited to take part in the district plan to:

- Understand gifted regulations, parent/guardian rights, and procedural safeguards.
- Be knowledgeable of the school district’s board policy on gifted education.
- Advocate for the district’s gifted program.
- Volunteer as a resource and provide information about special materials, events and facilities to help meet gifted students’ needs.
- Encourage and support students in the process of selecting and participating in learning alternatives that promote excellence.
- Advocate for appropriately accelerated and enriched curriculum.
- Encourage the student to develop the skills necessary to become an independent life-long learner.
- Play a role in the District Self-Assessment as a member of the team.
- Remember that the role of a parent/guardian changes as the student reaches different ages/grades.
- Use effective communication skills. It is imperative that parent/guardians and educators become partners rather than adversaries.

When students experience problems in school it is important to address the problem while remembering that education involves the school and the student with parent/guardian support.

- District meetings involving community members could include invited local experts in a given field to assist in evaluating student products and provide meaningful feedback to students.
- Partnerships with local scientists, historians, communication experts, writers, architects, and businesses allow the student to become familiar with the standards and expectations in that field.
- Subject specific community groups are asked to partner with a class or school or program to provide an expert point of view.
- More importantly, community involvement fosters a sense of community partnership with the school district.

The district should facilitate appropriate mentors at all grade levels to address special interests and abilities of the students.

Collaboration between the schools, parents and community is critical in sharing information about what is happening for students, dispels a misperception of elitism, and makes it clear what the district is doing to prepare students for the future as active community members.

Resources for parents are available through:

- The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization addressing the unique needs of students who are gifted. On this site you may access the *Mile Marker* series which is a guide to understanding giftedness and talent development. This series is designed to help parents find useful, up-to-date, practical information and resources at www.nagc.org.
- The Florida Department of Education website provides a direct link to rules and statutes, publications and resources for gifted. Of particular interest might be the rules for eligibility and development of an educational plan (EP) and the Handbook for Parents of Students who are Gifted at http://www.fldoe.org/bii/Gifted_Ed/.
- The Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) project website has links to information for parents of the gifted. A consultant addresses questions about gifted children and multiple resources are cited at <http://www.unfwogi.com/>.
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) focuses primarily on the adults in the lives of gifted children. SENNG provides information on identification, guidance, and effective ways to live and work with gifted individuals at www.SENGGifted.org.
- The National Parent Information Network (NPIN) is a project of the ERIC system and is administered by the National Library of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. The mission of NPIN is to provide access to research-based information about the process of parenting, and about family involvement in education. npin.org

- Hoagies' Gifted Education Page is a resource guide for the education of gifted children with links to resources on nearly every aspect of gifted education available on the Internet, plus annotations and first hand information provided by parents. www.hoagiesgifted.org

DRAFT

VIII. PROGRAM EVALUATION

“Program evaluation is the systematic study of the value and impact of services provided.”

Carolyn Callahan

A. Criteria to Consider

In addition to ongoing FDOE monitoring for compliance with legislative policy governing gifted education, districts will engage in continuous self-monitoring efforts between periodic reviews by the FDOE. District self-monitoring, as recommended in the NAGC *Aiming for Excellence* guide, will be used along with state-collected data to evaluate compliance. Program evaluation indicates whether what is being done is making a difference. Each student should be showing at least one year’s academic growth each year.

“The effectiveness of services to gifted students is likely to be improved if decisions about the development of all program components are guided by careful decision-making based on valid and reliable evidence of what works and what does not work across all the major aspects of program operation. Hence, the most robust provisions for gifted learners will evolve from careful collection of data regarding the context in which the services are delivered, the adequacy and appropriateness of resources available, the quality of activities carried out, and finally, the degree to which goals and objectives have been achieved.” Carolyn Callahan (Landrum et al. 2001).

In 1998, NAGC developed and released the *Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards* as a guide for districts in examining the quality of their programming for students who are gifted.

The Florida Department of Education provides the **Florida School District Gifted Self-Assessment Tool** to assist districts in aiming for the highest standards in providing an appropriate education for gifted students. Self assessments will be considered along with regular FDOE monitoring.

As specified in *Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program Standards* (2001) guiding principles for assessment include:

1. **An evaluation must be purposeful.**
 - The district provides ongoing student and program assessment that reflects the program’s philosophy, goals, and standards.
 - Gifted student outcomes, both cognitive and affective, are addressed and tracked in the gifted program.
 - Program assessment occurs on a regular basis.
 - The results are used for continuing program development.
2. **An evaluation must be efficient and economic.**
 - Districts provide sufficient resources, time, personnel and support to conduct a program evaluation.
3. **An evaluation must be conducted competently and ethically.**

- All components of the program are periodically reviewed by individuals knowledgeable about gifted learners and who have competence in the evaluation process.
- The assessment reports the strengths and weaknesses found in the program.
- Individuals involved in the assessment are given every opportunity to verify information and the resulting interpretation.

4. The evaluation results must be made available through a written report.

- Results of the program assessment are presented to the local Board of Education and are accessible to all constituencies of the program.
- The intent of the self-assessment presents the results and enables follow-through by stakeholders in the district.

The Guide to State Policies (2007) indicates key elements in Assessment/Evaluation Policy:

- Includes regular state review of local education agency (LEA) plans
- Requires that LEA plans address:
 - Screening, identification, and referral processes
 - Program provision employed at each grade level , K-12
 - Goals and student outcome assessment process for each program model
 - Contact time for each model
 - Pupil-teacher ratios for classes
 - Gifted teacher planning time
 - Professional development plans for educators working with gifted learners
 - Counseling and guidance
 - Program evaluation design
- Describes a state monitoring plan that involves all districts and requires regular on-site visits.
- Requires LEAs to submit an annual progress report to the state containing program and student evaluation data.

B. Florida School District Gifted Program Self-Assessment Tool

The **Florida School District Gifted Self-Assessment Tool** may serve to open discussions in the district about coordinating services to effectively meet the needs of students and to address appropriate programs and services for students who are gifted. This tool identifies the following components:

- Identification
 - Procedures for Nomination, Screening, Referral and Evaluation
 - Educational Relevance
- Placement and Development of the Educational Plan (EP)
 - Students with Special Needs
- Service Delivery
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Instructional Materials
 - Support Services

- Personnel Preparation
 - Certification and Endorsement
 - Teacher Competencies
 - Professional Development
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Program evaluation design

The District Self-Assessment Tool provided (Appendix A4) is based on policy and programs identified from state and national guidelines for meeting the needs of gifted learners. The district may use the tool to assess ongoing practices and to initiate a study of the value and impact of services in the district and move toward meeting the highest standards. Assessing the current status may well indicate specific areas to address further to meet the needs of students for future assessments.

The district may determine that it would be helpful to bring in one or two outsiders to take part in the self-assessment process. This has some advantages in giving a greater degree of objectivity and perhaps a set of experiences derived from working with other programs. Knowing what has worked in other settings may provide a different point of view. However, a local evaluation provides local knowledge and a stronger stake in the findings. Regular evaluation of the program should serve as a guide to reinforce positive practices and point out areas in need of further reflection. The overall goal is to ensure the district is striving to meet the needs of the gifted learners in the most appropriate way.

Appendix A 1

Key Elements in Policy Development

Key Elements in Identification Policy

- An operational definition of gifted and talented
- Use of multiple criteria
- Use of instruments that are sensitive to the inclusion of underrepresented groups such as low socioeconomic status (SES), minority, and English Language Learners (ELL)
- A match between identification processes and operational definition
- A match between placement options and operational definition
- The arts and other specific domains
- A connection between identification, curriculum and service
- A process of decision making
- A process for appeals

Key Elements in Program and Curriculum Policy

- Includes specific grouping arrangements to match the program and to meet the needs of gifted learners
- Specifies a minimum number of minutes per week of contact time for gifted program/service
- Describes appropriate curriculum options
- Links gifted curriculum to existing state content standards
- Embeds higher-level thinking processes within content areas
- Matches student assessment approaches to curriculum objectives
- Acknowledges program modifications for at-risk and highly gifted learners
- References social-emotional support as part of program services
- Includes appropriate guidance and counseling services related to academic and career planning
- Requires shared leadership

Key Elements in Personnel Preparation Policy

- Requires teachers who work directly with gifted learners to complete university-based coursework in gifted education
- Links gifted course work to National Association for Gifted Children and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC/NAGC) standards for teacher preparation
- Addresses program leadership that includes coursework in educational leadership
- Calls for on-going, comprehensive professional development for program administrators and teachers of the gifted
- Provides regular professional development in gifted education for all school personnel

Key Elements in Program Management: Assessment/Evaluation Policy

- Includes regular state review of LEA plans
- Requires that LEA plans address:
 - Screening, identification, and referral processes

- Program provision employed at each grade level , K-12
- Goals and student outcome assessment process for each program model
- Contact time for each model
- Pupil-teacher ratios for classes
- Gifted teacher planning time
- Professional development plans for educators working with gifted learners
- Counseling and guidance
- Program evaluation design
- Describes an SEA monitoring plan that involves all districts and requires regular on-site visits
- Requires LEAs to submit an annual progress report to the SEA containing program and student evaluation data

Source: *A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education* (2007) A service publication of the National Association for Gifted Children.

DRAFT

12 Traits of Giftedness

(Adapted from material from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D., University of North Carolina.)

Trait, Aptitude, or Behavior	General Description	How It May Look
Motivation Evidence of desire to learn.	Internal drive or encouragement that initiates, directs, or sustains individual or group behavior in order to satisfy a need or attain a goal.	Demonstrates persistence in pursuing or completing self-selected tasks (may be culturally influenced); evident in school or non-school activities. Enthusiastic learner; has aspirations to be somebody, to do something.
Interests Intense, sometimes unusual, interests	Activities, avocations, objects, etc. that have special worth or significance and are given special attention.	Unusual or advanced interests, topic, or activity; self-starter; pursues and activity unceasingly beyond the group.
Communication Skills Highly expressive with words, numbers, or symbols	Transmission and reception of signals or meanings through a system of symbols (codes, gestures, language, and numbers).	Unusual ability to communicate (verbally, nonverbally, physically, artistically, symbolically); uses particularly apt examples, illustrations, or elaborations.
Problem-Solving Ability Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems.	Process of determining a correct sequence of alternatives leading to a desired goal or to successful completion of a performance task.	Unusual ability to devise or adopt a systematic strategy to solve problems and to change the strategy if it is not working; creates new designs; inventor.
Memory Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics.	Exceptional ability to retain and retrieve information.	Already knows; needs only 1-2 repetitions for mastery; has a wealth of information about school and non-school topics; pays attention to details; manipulates information.
Inquiry/Curiosity Questions, experiments, explores.	Method or process of seeking knowledge, understanding or information.	Asks unusual questions for age; plays around with ideas; extensive exploratory behaviors directed toward eliciting information about materials, devices, or situations.
Insight Quickly grasps new concepts; sees connections; senses deeper meanings	Sudden discovery of correct solution following attempts based primarily on trial and error; putting disparate elements together in unexpected ways.	Exceptional ability to draw inferences; appears to be a good guesser; is keenly observant; heightened capacity for seeing unusual and diverse relationships, integration of ideas and disciplines.
Reasoning Logical approaches to figuring out solutions.	Highly conscious, directed, controlled, active, intentional forward-looking, and goal-oriented thought.	Ability to make generalizations and use metaphors and analogies; can think things through in a logical manner; critical thinker; ability to think things through and come up with a plausible answer.
Imagination/Creativity Produces many ideas; highly original	Process of forming mental images of objects; qualities, situations, or relationships which aren't immediately apparent to the senses; problem solving through nontraditional patterns of thinking.	Shows exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials; is keenly observant; has wild, seemingly silly ideas; fluent, flexible producer of ideas; highly curious.
Humor Conveys and picks up on humor well.	Ability to synthesize key ideas or problems in complex situations in a humorous way; exceptional sense of timing in words or gestures.	Keen sense of humor that may be gentle or hostile; large accumulation of information about emotions; capacity for seeing unusual; uncommon emotional depth; openness to experiences; sensory awareness.
Intensity ("Overexcitabilities") Strength of reactions, responses, behaviors. (The term "overexcitabilities" comes from Polish psychologist Dabrowski.)	Very Strong, even extreme, responses to stimuli in five areas: emotional, intellectual, sensory, psychomotor, and imagination.	Intense desire for experiences in the area(s) of overexcitability; powerful emotions; seeks intellectual stimulation; sensory experiences evoke strong responses; constant or repetitive movement or gesturing; intense fantasy life; may need creative outlets for intensity.
Sensitivity Strong reactions to emotional stimuli	Events and situations in the affective and social domains elicit a stronger response than usual.	Strong sense of compassion; keen sense of justice; empathy; moral and ethical sensibilities; sense of being "different" socially; existential worrying; often overly self-critical.