

Challenge!

ACSD District Handbook



" Too often, we teach students
what to think but not how to
think."

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Contact Information

District Gifted Coordinator: Tara Kyle

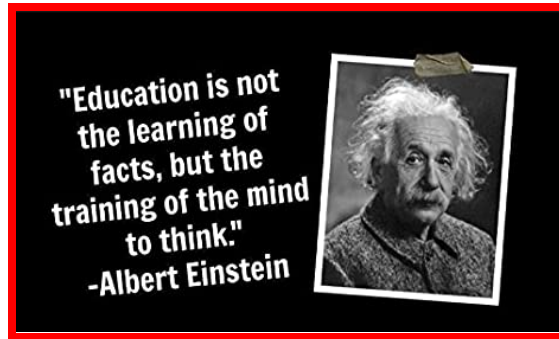
104 East Washington
Kosciusko, MS 39090
662-289-3986

Greenlee Elementary

26050 Hwy 12 East
McCool, MS 39108
662-674-5263

Long Creek Elementary

9534 Hwy 429
Sallis, MS 39160
662-289-1630



Definition

The **2013 Regulations for Gifted Education Programs** defines intellectually gifted children as those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process. Gifted learners demonstrate greater depth of understanding and utilize higher processing skills at a much younger age than their peers.

Mission Statement

It is our mission to embrace and nurture our intellectually gifted students' abilities by providing a **challenging** comprehensive program within a safe and receptive environment while maximizing their potential and metacognition growth.

Philosophy

It is our belief intellectually gifted students deserve and need to be **challenged** to reach their full potential and implementing a well-defined curriculum is essential. The ACSD intellectually gifted program, **Challenge**, is designed to accommodate the unique learning styles of our gifted children through qualitatively different educational experiences *beyond* those available in the general education setting.

Program Overview

The **Challenge** program's curriculum encompasses a well-defined set of outcomes/competencies that align to MDE's **2017 Outcomes for Intellectually Gifted Education Programs**. The overarching competency for intellectually gifted programs is metacognition. Simply put, metacognition is "thinking about your own thinking." Students should be aware of the mental processes they utilize while engaged in learning. They also should learn to self-regulate and oversee their own learning to make changes as needed.

The activities enhance the integration of advanced content and individual student's interests utilizing higher-level thinking skills, problem solving, critical thinking skills, research skills, personal growth and human relations exercises, leadership skills, creative expression, and an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community.

Program Standards and Guiding Principles

- I. **Curriculum and Instruction-** Gifted education services shall include curricular and instructional opportunities directed to the unique needs of the gifted students.
- A. The gifted education program shall provide a qualitatively and differentiated educational experience in addition to the regular program of instruction.
 - B. Career exploration, life skills and visual/performing arts shall be an integral part of the differentiated program of instruction for all gifted students.
 - C. On a student-by-student basis, the district may provide opportunities for high ability learners such as curriculum compacting at the elementary level and dual enrollment at the high school level. All accommodations must adhere to local and state law.
 - D. Instead of grades, the program of instruction provided to gifted students shall be measured on the mastery of the MDE gifted program outcomes.

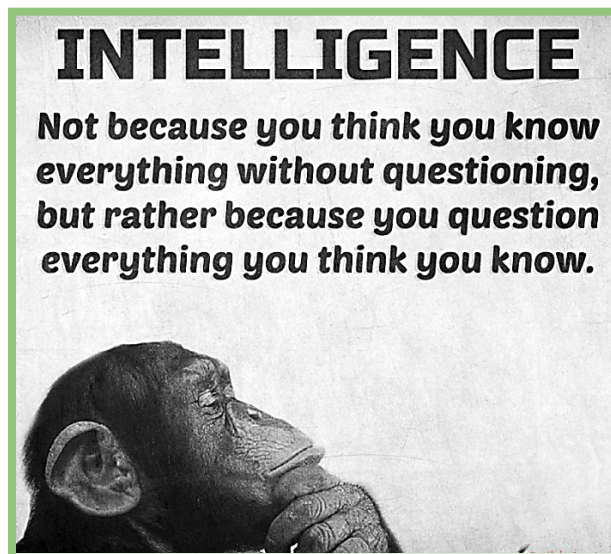
THINKING SKILLS	CREATIVITY
Given a topic/situation, the learner will define and classify the problem(s), make connections, and draw distinctions, analyze information objectively and critically (reflectively developing a relationship between facts and values), and differentiate truth and beliefs from his/her understanding of what is logically and realistically possible.	Given a real-life situation, the student will be able to select from divergent thinking, analogical thinking, visualization, attribute listing, morphological analysis, synectics, intuitive thinking, spontaneous thinking, creative problem solving, and/or the creative process in an appropriate manner to develop a workable solution(s).
INFORMATION LITERACY	COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Given a real situation, the student will identify and define the problem, design a research plan appropriate to the problem, conduct the investigation, decide on the most appropriate media for dissemination of the findings/ solutions, and present the results before an authentic audience.	Given the need to retrieve and/or disseminate information, the students will select and utilize the most appropriate media based upon available resources, technology, audience, and time available, for the most effective communication of information, ideas, feelings, and concepts and correctly interpreting those of others.
AFFECTIVE SKILLS	SUCCESS SKILLS
As a gifted learner, students will develop self-acceptance and awareness and demonstrate responsibility for personal growth along with awareness of personal and cultural diversity in others by recognizing forms of bias and stereotypes in order to respect unique beliefs and experiences in themselves and others by understanding and embracing giftedness, appropriately coping with stress in order to become healthy, responsive, contributing, and productive members of classroom communities and society as a whole.	Given a real-life situation, the student will utilize effective organizational, decision making, goal-setting, project management, and time management skills, including controlling impulses and adapting to unforeseen circumstances, in order to develop solutions to problems and achieve goals whether working individually or as a leader or member of a team.

Competency	Outcomes
Thinking Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Define and classify problems</i> 2. <i>Make connections and draw distinctions</i> 3. <i>Analyze information objectively and critically</i> 4. <i>Reflectively developing a relationship between facts and values</i> 5. <i>Differentiate beliefs and what is true from his/her understanding of what is logically and realistically possible</i>
Creativity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Divergent thinking</i> 2. <i>Analogical thinking</i> 3. <i>Visualization</i> 4. <i>Attribute listing</i> 5. <i>Morphological analysis</i> 6. <i>Synectics</i> 7. <i>Intuitive thinking</i> 8. <i>Spontaneous thinking</i> 9. <i>Creative problem solving</i> 10. <i>Creative process in an appropriate manner to develop a workable solution(s)</i>
Information Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Identify and define the problem</i> 2. <i>Design a research plan appropriate to the problem</i> 3. <i>Conduct the investigation</i> 4. <i>Decide on the most appropriate media for dissemination of the findings/solution(s)</i> 5. <i>Present the results before an authentic audience</i>
Communication Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Need to retrieve and/or disseminate information</i> 2. <i>Utilize the most appropriate media based upon available resources</i> 3. <i>Effective communication of information</i>
Affective Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Develop self- acceptance and awareness</i> 2. <i>Demonstrate responsibility for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Personal growth</i> → <i>Awareness of personal and cultural diversity in others</i> → <i>Recognizing forms of bias and stereotypes</i> → <i>Respect unique beliefs and experiences in themselves and others</i> → <i>Embrace giftedness</i>
Success Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Utilize effective organizational, decision making, goal setting, project management, and time management skills</i> 2. <i>Control impulses and adapt to unforeseen circumstances</i>

- II. **Program Administration and Management-** Appropriate gifted education programming must include the establishment of a systemic means of development, implementation, and management.
- A. **Qualified staff:** Appropriately qualified personnel shall direct services for the education of gifted students.
 - B. **Required services:** Gifted programming shall be an integral part of the district's overall educational offerings. Gifted students shall receive a minimum of 240-300 minutes of service per week.
 - C. **Collaboration:** Gifted education programming shall include positive working relationships with advocacy groups, parents, administrative and district instructional personnel.
 - D. **Funding:** Requisite resources and materials shall be provided to adequately support the efforts of gifted education programming.
 - E. **Pause of Service:** Parents of gifted students may submit a written request to their child's teacher of the gifted in the event a pause in gifted services is deemed necessary. A pause in service shall not collectively exceed 9 weeks within a school year. Requests from teachers - with substantial justification - may be submitted to the LSC committee for review; however, no determination can be officially made without parent consent.
 - F. **Termination of Services:** Only the parents of a gifted student may terminate services. A parent must complete and submit an exit form to their child's teacher of the gifted.
 - G. **Out-of-state transfers:** Students must be retested in the state of Mississippi. All confidential information should be sent directly to the Federal Programs Office attention to the program director.
 - H. **In-state transfers:** Students entering the program from other districts in Mississippi will be accepted when appropriate information indicating eligibility requirements have been received by the district.

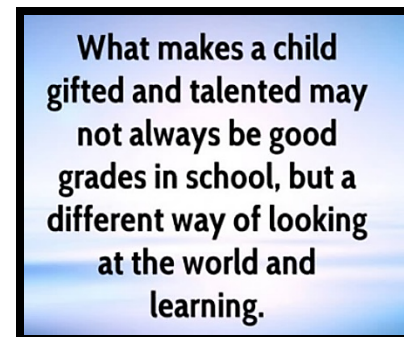
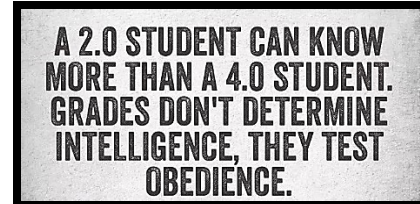


- III. **Program Design**-The development of appropriate gifted education programming requires comprehensive services based on sound philosophical, theoretical, and empirical support.
- A. Rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services shall exist for gifted learners.
 - B. The gifted education program is adequately funded through blended sources to purchase teacher & student classroom supplies, classroom equipment and necessary testing materials.
 - C. **Flexible grouping** of students in a resource room shall be developed to facilitate differentiated instruction and curriculum.
 - ✓ Combined grade level classes are allowed when deemed necessary
 - ✓ Up to (5) sections (dependent on enrollment)
 - ✓ To acquire the minimum of 240-300 minutes of weekly service, sections shall meet either
 - One day a week for 5 hours OR
 - Two days a week for 2.5 hours OR
 - Every day for 1 hour
 - ✓ Lunch, recess, and extracurricular/activity time shall **NOT** be included as part of the required service minutes of gifted students.
 - ✓ Maximum class size of each section: **12 students**



D. **Accommodations:** Policies for adapting and adding to the nature and operations of the general education program are necessary for gifted education.

- ✓ Providing gifted service to students for the required amount of time is a state mandate, NOT an option.
- ✓ The teaching of new material and completing graded assignments in the regular education classroom while gifted students are being served is NOT in the best interest of the students.
- ✓ Gifted students shall NOT be “held” from attending **Challenge** to complete class/makeup work OR as a form of punishment.
- ✓ **Be Mindful:** Not all students are both intellectually and academically gifted. To assume every intellectually gifted student can manage excess amounts of classwork and be capable of “catching up” because they are fast learners is a **total misconception**. For example, intellectually gifted students may also have learning disabilities, struggle with time management, or lack organizational skills.

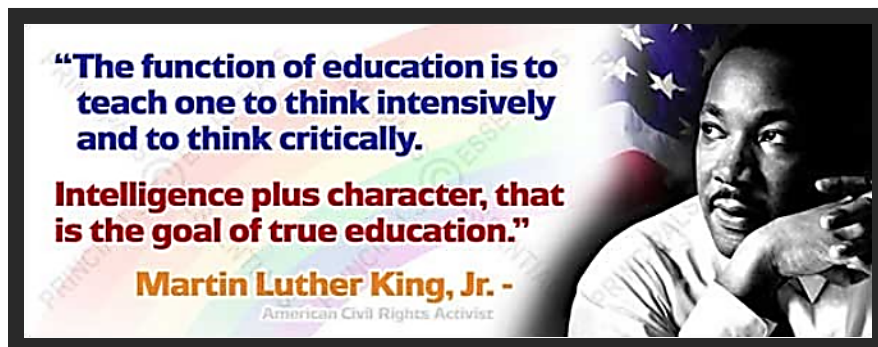


- IV. **Program Evaluation-** The systematic study of the value and impact of services provided.
- A. **State level:** An annual self-evaluation of the program shall be completed and submitted to the state department to ensure the district's compliance.
 - B. **District level:** An annual needs assessment survey shall be conducted competently and ethically soliciting feedback from all stakeholders to identify strengths and improve any weaknesses of the program.
 - C. **Dissemination of results:** The results of the needs assessment survey shall be made available to all stakeholders by request at each elementary school and the Federal Programs Office.
 - D. **Student evaluations:** Each gifted student is evaluated annually for progression in the gifted program.
- V. **Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counseling-** Gifted education programming must establish a plan to recognize and nurture the unique social-emotional development of the gifted learner.
- A. **School Counselor:** *At risk* gifted students shall be provided with socio-emotional guidance and counseling with supporting activities as needed to help them reach their potential.
 - B. All gifted students shall be taught affective skills as part of the gifted program curriculum.
 - C. Gifted students shall be provided with career guidance services particularly designed for their unique needs and interests.
 - D. *Underachieving gifted students shall not be excluded* from the gifted identification process or from receiving differentiated services. The regular education teacher *and* teacher of the gifted will
 - ✓ collaborate on a regular basis
 - ✓ monitor student progress in both classroom and the gifted program
 - ✓ communicate with and involve parents

I feel as if I'm made
to understand but not
to be understood.

VI. **Professional Development-** Gifted students are entitled to be served by professionals who have specialized preparations in gifted education, expertise in appropriate differentiated content and instructional methods, involvement in ongoing professional development, and who possess exemplary personal and professional traits.

- A. **All staff:** Teachers of the gifted conduct gifted training annually and provide and maintain a list of online resources that is accessible by all staff.
- B. **Teachers of the gifted:** Opportunities to attend professional development centered on teaching gifted students shall be provided for all teachers of the gifted. The District Gifted Coordinator will provide regular technical support meetings throughout the school year.
- C. **Gifted supporting staff:** Opportunities to attend professional development shall be provided for any school/district staff involved with the education of gifted students. This includes personnel involved in the identification and assessment of potentially gifted students.



VII. **Student Identification-** Potential gifted students must be assessed to determine appropriate education services.

- A. District guidelines shall outline a coordinated, comprehensive, and coherent process for student referral and assessment to determine eligibility for gifted services. *The gifted program is available to **all** students regardless of race, gender, religion, including students identified as homeless, migrant, ELL or with disabilities.*
- B. All student identification procedures and instruments shall be based on best practices and research.
- C. Written procedures for student identification shall include provisions for confidentiality (FERPA), informed consent, notification of results, student reassessment, and student exiting.
- D. Student assessment instruments used to determine eligibility for gifted education services shall be selected based on the strengths of the individual student comprehensive student profile considers multiple factors.
- E. Equitable consideration for gifted education services is given to all students through the screening process.
- F. Referrals for gifted screening are acceptable from multiple sources.
- G. Information about characteristics of giftedness and gifted programming is provided to all stakeholders.
- H. Reliable and valid instruments are used for identifying gifted students.

I. Parent appeals:

Step 1: Local teacher of the gifted notified by parent of appeal in written form, signed and dated. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, go to Step 2.

Step 2: Local teacher of the gifted gives appeal to district gifted coordinator for review. Date received and signature will be written on the appeal by the coordinator. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Coordinator gives appeal to superintendent for review. Date received and signature will be written on the appeal by the superintendent. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, go to Step 4.

Step 4: Superintendent puts appeal on the agenda for the next board meeting for discussion and decision.

Step 5: Following the board's decision, the coordinator will contact parent(s) with the results.

Nomination to Placement Procedures

Stage One – Nomination Process

- Anyone can nominate a student.
- All nominees are subject to meeting specific state and district criteria prior to being considered for testing.
- Nomination forms are distributed to all parents and homeroom teachers in grades 1-5.
- The nomination form includes traits of giftedness and all steps of the referral process.
- Nomination forms can be completed by anyone but can only be signed by a parent.
- Once all nomination and parent permission to screen forms are received, teachers of the gifted administer a mass screener to all 1st and 3rd grade students. All other nominees may be given the screener individually or in a small group setting.
- A nominee that scores at or above 90% meets one of three acceptable criteria needed to progress to the next stage of the process.
- Teachers of the gifted enter all nominees and their information into a district chart for tracking purposes.

Stage Two – Referral Data

- Teachers of the gifted request data from teachers and parents for each nominee.
- Information collected on students include (but not limited to) a Referral Form, a Gifted Pupil Personal Data Sheet (GPPDS), checklists, and academic performance.
- The teachers of the gifted review all documentation for accuracy and score the checklists and/or other measures.

Stage Three – Eligibility to Test

- The eligibility team then meets to review each student's data and determine if the District Requirements for Testing have been met.
- Students who meet the District Requirements for Testing are eligible to be assessed for giftedness through a formal IQ examination by a licensed psychometrist.
- No further action is taken if students do not meet the District Requirements for Testing
- Determination letters are sent home to all parents of nominees. The letter includes the determination for testing and privacy notice (FERPA).
- A parent **consent to test form** is attached to determination letters of eligible students.
- Teachers of the gifted update the district tracking chart as forms are returned.

Stage Three - Testing

- District gifted testing occurs in the spring of each school year. Students may be assessed by the district up to (2) times while enrolled in grades 1-5.
- Testing is scheduled and administered at the student's designated school during school hours by a licensed psychometrist.
- The psychometrist reviews all student referral data, determines appropriate assessment(s), conducts testing, and completes an official assessment report.
- Students identified as potentially emergent may be given a second test if deemed necessary by the psychometrist.
- Students who meet criteria of potentially twice exceptional may use the district matrix to configure IQ results if deemed necessary by the psychometrist.
- Once testing is complete, the psychometrist returns all student referral information and assessment reports to the Federal Programs Office.

Stage Four – Eligibility to Place

- The eligibility team then meets to review all tested students' data and decide each student's eligibility for placement of the program.
- Students whose IQ scores are at or above the state requirement are eligible to receive services in the district's gifted program.
- No further action is taken if students do not meet or exceed the state's required scores.
- Determination letters are sent home to all parents of students assessed. The letter includes placement eligibility and parent appeal procedures.
- A **parent consent to place** form is attached to determination letters of eligible students.
- Teachers of the gifted update the district tracking chart as forms are returned.

Stage Five - Placement

- When applicable, teachers of the gifted will collaborate with the teachers and parents identified as twice exceptional and emergent on a regular basis to monitor each student's progress in the gifted program.
- A list of students receiving gifted educational services will be given to the counselor of the school to be identified as gifted in the school's database.
- Gifted services begin the following school year in August.
- Student records will be kept on file at the Federal Programs Office until graduation. A public announcement is placed in the local paper for the release of documents to the parents annually. All remaining records are destroyed.

Resources on Gifted Education

Regulations and Curriculum:

- [2016 Mississippi Code Title 37 – Education Chapter 23 - Exceptional Children Gifted Education \(§§ 37-23-171 - 37-23-181\)](#)
- [MS 2013 Gifted Standards – MDE Website](#)
- [MS 2013 Gifted Regulations – MDE Website](#)
- [MS 2017 Outcomes for Intellectually Gifted – MDE Website](#)

For Educators:

- [Mississippi Association for Gifted Children Teacher Website](#)
- [Hoagies for Teachers Website](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children Teacher Website](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children Admin Website](#)
- [Gifted Resources for Admin \(NAGC Website\)](#)
- [Gifted Resources for Educators \(NAGC Website\)](#)
- [The Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Students Webinar](#)
- [Identifying and Serving Gifted Students of Poverty Webinar](#)
- [Changing the Culture: Developing Creative Problem Solvers Webinar](#)
- [Differentiation Toolkit: Simple Strategies That Work Webinar](#)

For Parents:

- [Mississippi Association for Gifted Children Parent Website](#)
- [Hoagies for Parents Website](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children Parent Website](#)
- [Self-Regulation and the Underachieving Gifted Learner Webinar](#)
- [The Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Students Webinar](#)
- [5 Tips for Helping Gifted Children Make Friends Article](#)
- [Gifted Resources for Parents \(NAGC Website\)](#)