



# **GIFTED EDUCATION HANDBOOK 2025-2026**

## **Mission Statement**

Empowering Every Learner Every Day.

## **Vision Statement**

To prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world.

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The Richmond County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities for students.

The following have been designated to investigate any complaint communicated to the Board of Education alleging non-compliance of non-discrimination policies regarding student activities.

RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
**2025-2030 Strategy Map**



**Student Achievement**

**Objective**

Empower Every Learner to Take Ownership of their Learning.

**Critical Initiatives**

- ◀ Provide professional learning in evidence-based teaching methods.
- ◀ Provide all learners with access to engaging learning opportunities in a comprehensive curriculum.
- ◀ Promote student ownership of learning by fostering voice, choice, and accountability.
- ◀ Improve measurable academic outcomes using data-driven decision making.



**Stakeholder Engagement & Communication**

**Objective**

Engage with our Community using a Variety of Consistent Two-Way Communication Tools.

**Critical Initiatives**

- ◀ Streamline and centralize communications platforms.
- ◀ Develop a district-wide communications plan.
- ◀ Train staff and school district leaders in effective communication strategies.
- ◀ Create systems, processes and opportunities for student and staff achievement stories to be disseminated across multiple platforms.
- ◀ Enhance partnership program to foster community involvement.



**Talent Development**

**Objective**

Foster Student and Staff Potential to Embrace Ongoing Growth and Development.

**Critical Initiatives**

- ◀ Establish a framework for adult-centered professional learning opportunities based on staff input, experiences and roles.
- ◀ Enhance student agency for increased student opportunities for enrollment, enlistment and employment.
- ◀ Refine the comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for students and staff.
- ◀ Leverage technology integration to enhance student and staff performance and productivity.
- ◀ Develop a system for monitoring the implementation of professional learning.



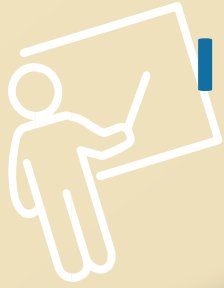
**Safe & Secure Learning Environment**

**Objective**

Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for All.

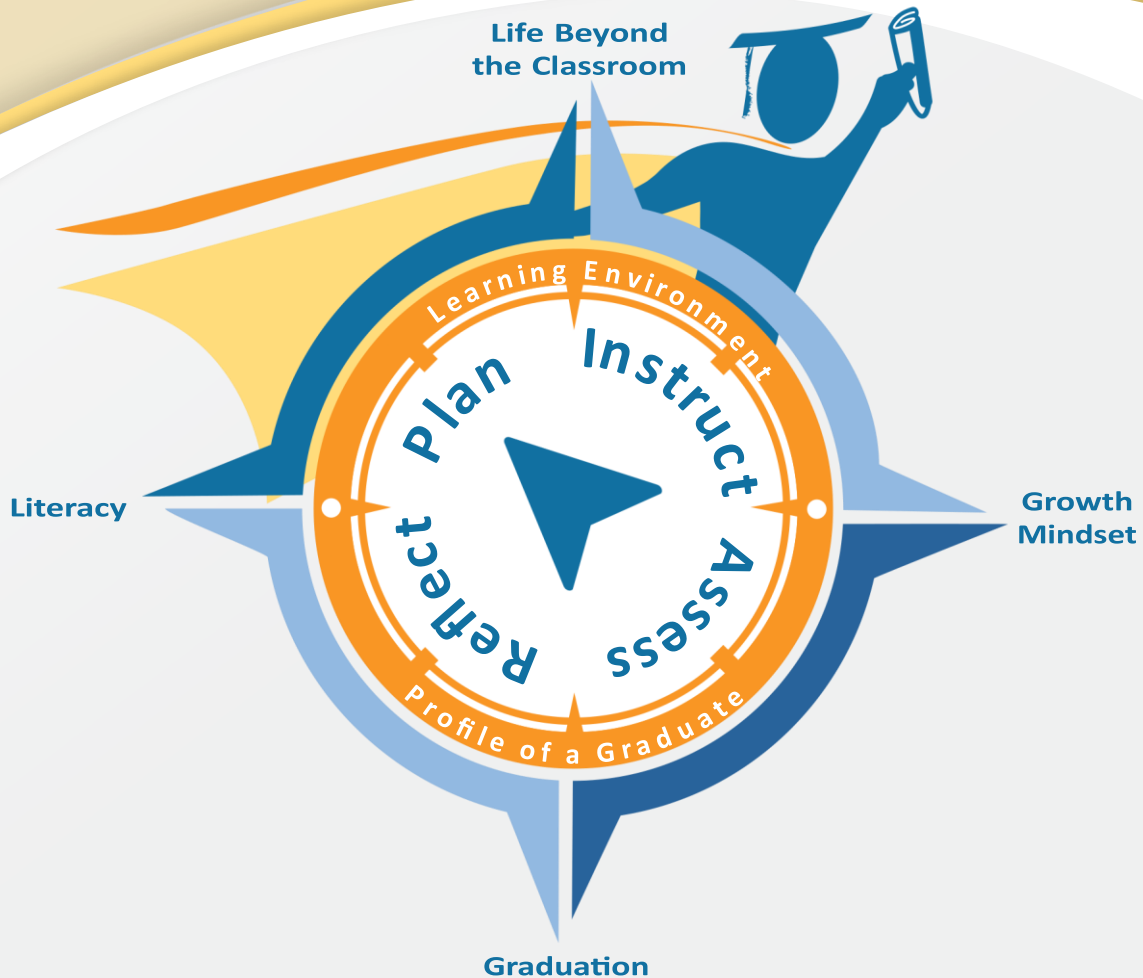
**Critical Initiatives**

- ◀ Define and develop a positive system culture.
- ◀ Ensure physical and emotional safety by enhancing security measures and providing emotional support for students and staff.
- ◀ Develop a comprehensive safety training plan.
- ◀ Design fiscally responsible processes and procedures for operational effectiveness.



Richmond County School System

# Instructional Framework



## Understand the Whole Child

- Compile the Learner Profile



## Assess

- Assess for Success
- Analyze Results



## Plan

- Understand the Standards
- Design Standards-Based Lessons



## Reflect

- Relearn and Reassess
- Celebrate Success



## Instruct

- Communicate Learning Expectations
- Implement the Lesson



## Provide Feedback—Clarify and coach

- Check for understanding





### History of the RCSS Instructional Framework

In 2018, Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc. completed a [comprehensive review](#) of the Richmond County School System's (RCSS) instructional program which outlined eight recommendations for improvement over a seven-year period. Instructional leaders studied with Larry Ainsworth, Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Nicole Law, LeAnn Nickelsen, and Rick Wormeli to define instructional expectations and grading practices. Instructional recommendations were based on John Hattie's [Visible Learning](#) research. Leadership teams used Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's Leverage Leadership and Get Better Faster tools to improve instructional leadership and teacher induction success. In 2022, all employees were trained in the newly designed RCSS Instructional Framework. Using feedback from teachers, leaders, and the 2024 Cognia accreditation review, the Instructional Framework was refined in 2024 to include a focus on learner outcomes, learning environments, student agency, and technology integration. Concepts from Digital Promise and Common Sense Media were added to our [Digital Learning Framework](#). Cognia's Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot) and Teacher Observation Tool are used to provide teachers and leaders with progress monitoring and feedback data via monthly instructional rounds.

This document is meant to help teachers, administrators, students, parents and other stakeholders understand our instructional expectations. Having a common instructional framework creates consistency for our stakeholders and reduces the differences among schools in our system. All components are purposefully connected to our strategic plan, vision and mission, and support continuous improvement.

The RCSS Instructional Framework consists of four distinct parts represented in the graphic located on the inside cover of this booklet. We will examine each part more closely in this resource. For more information about each part, please refer to the [Richmond Ready!](#) course on your Canvas dashboard. Scan the QR Code or visit [rcboe.info/RCSSIF](https://rcboe.info/RCSSIF) to watch an overview video explaining the Instructional Framework Graphic.



1. Learner Outcomes
2. Learning Environment
3. Profile of a Graduate
4. Plan-Instruct-Assess-Reflect Instructional Cycle

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# PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The purpose of the Richmond County Resource Manual for Gifted Educational Services is to provide area administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and the community with information regarding the identification and provision of services for gifted students.

## PROGRAM RATIONALE

The educators in Richmond County, Georgia, are committed to all students K-12 without discrimination with regard to race, religion, national origin, gender, disabilities, or background. RCSS believes that the educational experience provided should allow every student the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential. When a student falls in the upper percentiles on intellectual, academic, creative, and motivational spectrums, his or her abilities should be evaluated according to the guidelines established by the Georgia Department of Education. The Gifted Program is dedicated to embracing each student's uniqueness by providing differentiated learning opportunities to truly challenge and nurture the students.

Activities are designed to take them to levels beyond the scope of the regular classroom. In accordance with this philosophy, the GaDOE rule 160-4-2-.38, and the mandate of No Child Left Behind, provisions will continue to be made for the special needs of gifted students in the Richmond County School System.

The rationale underlying services for gifted identified students in the Richmond County School System is that each student receives educational experiences appropriate to his/her individual abilities, interests, and learning styles. Individual uniqueness of the gifted identified student is respected and provided through a differentiated curriculum of content, process, and product. Through the differentiation of more advanced, diverse, and rigorous curriculum, the gifted identified student is exposed to challenges far beyond the regular classroom. The goals of the Gifted Education Department are designed to provide enrichment, acceleration, and to foster within each student the attitudes and skills necessary for the attainment of future goals.

# REFERRAL & SCREENING FOR THE GIFTED PROGRAM

The purpose of identification in the gifted program is to find students whose potential and/or performance is superior and requires differentiation in their instructional program. Nominated students must meet Georgia Department of Education criteria for placement in the Gifted Program.

Referral of potentially gifted students enrolled in the Richmond County School System are made by classroom teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, peers, or any responsible person who has knowledge of a student's intellectual functioning. The referral of a student should be based on observed characteristics in the areas of mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

## **General guidelines for referral include:**

- Consistent high performance
- Advanced learning needs
- High motivation
- Creativity beyond the norm
- Standardized reading, math, or achievement test composite scores at the 80- 90th percentile or higher
- Mental abilities score of 80th percentile or higher

## **Gifted characteristics to be considered:**

The characteristics listed include those commonly attributed to gifted students. No student would be expected to exhibit every characteristic and may possess some that are not included.

### **ACHIEVEMENT/ MENTAL ABILITY**

- Has a large, advanced vocabulary
- Becomes deeply involved in topics
- Asks "who, what when, where, why, and how" questions for information
- Can deal effectively with abstractions

## **ACHIEVEMENT/ MENTAL ABILITY (CONTINUED)**

- Uses analytical ability to problem solve
- Easily grasps relationships and principles between objects/ideas
- Formulates hypotheses
- Generates multiple solutions for a problem
- Manipulates ideas and information
- Makes valid generalizations about people, things, and events
- Has quick mastery or recall of factual information
- Is a keen, alert observer
- Seeks logical, common sense answers to problems
- Shows unusual ability to create or adapt problem-solving methods

## **CREATIVITY**

- Generates unique ideas and responses
- Creates new ways of solving problems
- Adapts, improves, and modifies ideas
- Accepts new challenges
- Expresses and produces ideas freely
- Finds humor in ordinary situations
- Is individualistic
- Adventurous and speculative, unafraid to take risks
- Possesses emotional awareness beyond that of age peers
- May have deep interest or talent for visual or performing arts

## **MOTIVATION**

- Is persistent in seeking task or goal completion
- Becomes involved and absorbed in certain topics or problems
- Has a determination to learn; is intrinsically motivated
- Needs minimal teacher direction; works independently
- Pursues own interests with zeal
- Organizes and structures situations, people, ideas, and objects
- May concentrate intently on a topic for long periods of time
- Becomes tenacious when seeking information or pursuing an idea
- Is often a perfectionist, self-critical, and not easily satisfied
- Prefers to take personal responsibility for outcome of self-effort
- Often assumes a leadership role

# REFERRAL PROCESS

The Richmond County School System makes gifted education referral and eligibility information available to all interested persons through professional learning or via the district's website throughout the school year. Information will be available in all schools via gifted contacts and through other public announcements. **The RCSS' Gifted Education Manual, referral procedures, as well as eligibility criteria and process can be viewed at the gifted link at the Richmond County Board of Education's website.**

## AUTOMATIC REFERRALS

Formal identification of students begins as early as kindergarten and continues through grade 11. In order to identify all students in need of instructional modifications and/or special services, a comprehensive **Data Search** is conducted annually.

All students who meet either of the following criteria are automatically referred for further assessment to determine eligibility for gifted program services:

- Nationally normed, standardized, **academic achievement** test results at or above the 80-90th percentile in Total Reading, Total Math, or Total Battery.
- Nationally normed, standardized **mental ability** test results equal to 80th percentile or above (grades k-11) on a component or composite score.

## TEACHER REFERRALS

The teacher considers every student in the classroom who demonstrates superior performance, advanced learning needs, high motivation, and creativity. The Student Referral Form is completed by the classroom teacher. Available information is given in the areas of achievement scores, mental ability tests, creativity, motivation, and learning. The form is signed by the teacher and submitted to the school's gifted liaison. If no students are being nominated, the Student Nomination Form is signed by the teacher with the selected choice, "I have no students who meet nomination criteria," and the form is turned in to the gifted liaison.

### **PARENTS/GUARDIAN, PEERS, SELF, OR OTHERS REFERRALS**

Parents/guardians, peers, students, or any responsible person who has knowledge of a student's Intellectual functioning can refer a student. Please refer to the **Advanced Studies** web page on the Richmond County School System's website for more information.

## **SCREENING PROCEDURES**

- The teacher completes the Referral form for each child being considered and attaches a photocopy of the child's permanent record of standardized test scores.
- The gifted liaison lists all students being referred (by teachers and others) for evaluation to the Gifted Program Specialist.
- The complete packet is forwarded to the Gifted Program Department located in the Teaching and Learning Department at the district office by the designated deadline.
- A decision-making team uniformly considers information collected on student referrals. The team decides if it is appropriate to proceed with formal evaluation.

## **SCREENING TIMELINE**

The Richmond County School System will have a window of referral time for screening of any student who exhibits traits, attitudes, and behaviors of a gifted identified student. Referral forms for students who are recommended for screening must be received by the Gifted Department on or before the specified deadline. Any student who is referred to the Richmond County Gifted Education Department for assessment must be documented through the completion of the referral packet that is available at the Gifted Program Department located in the Teaching and Learning Department at the Richmond County Board of Education. No student can be assessed without a parent permission form. Incomplete referral packets cannot be processed and must be returned to the gifted contact person of the referring school.

# ELIGIBILITY

To review the Gifted Program Assessment and Eligibility Criteria Overview of Eligibility Rule 160-4-2-.38, please see below. The information listed is the recommended assessment and eligibility criteria of the Georgia Department of Gifted Education. The referral and evaluation of students for the gifted program requires collecting data in (1) mental abilities, (2) achievement, (3) motivation, and (4) creativity. A student can qualify with one of two sets of criteria as follows:

## **OPTION A**

**A student must meet *both* of the areas below. . .**

<b>Mental Ability</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Grades K-2 -- 99%tile , Grades 3-12 -- 96%tile or higher on a composite of a standardized mental ability test	90%tile or higher on Total Battery (Composite) OR Total Reading OR Total Mathematics on a standardized achievement test

**OR**

## **OPTION B**

**Qualify through multiple-criterion assessment process in any three of the four listed below...**

<b>Mental Ability</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
96%tile or higher on a composite or qualifying allowable component of a standardized mental ability test	90%tile or higher on Total Battery OR Total Reading OR Total Mathematics of a standardized achievement test	90%tile or higher on a standardized creativity test OR 90%tile or higher on a standardized creativity rating scale	GPA of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale in grades 6-12 OR 90%tile or higher on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale OR 90 or higher on a portfolio assessment in grades K-5

Information shall be gathered in each of the four data categories. At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a nationally norm standardized test. Any data used in one category to establish a student's eligibility may not be used in any other category. Assessment data must be current within two years.

Richmond County School System will administer mental ability tests to collect student data. The system's Gifted Education Program Specialist may exercise discretion in the selection of test(s) to be used during the evaluation. All assessments used may be found on the GADOE's list of approved gifted education assessment measures. **STUDENTS MUST BE ENROLLED IN THE RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM BEFORE ANY TESTS ARE ADMINISTERED.**

# FORMAL EVALUATION

## STATE AND LEA GIFTED IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

### **Mental Ability**

- Mental ability tests shall be the most current editions, or editions approved by GaDOE, of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability, which have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
- Mental ability tests that were designed to be administered individually shall be administered by a qualified psychological examiner.

### **Achievement**

- Norm-referenced achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and shall yield a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in mathematics concepts and applications. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
- Performances and products shall be assessed by a panel of qualified evaluators and must have been produced within the two calendar years prior to evaluation.

### **Creativity**

- Norm-referenced tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.
- Rating scales used to qualify creativity shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation.

### **Creativity (Continued)**

- As evidence of creativity, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products or performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators

### **Motivation**

- Rating scales used to qualify student motivation shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.
- As evidence of motivation, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products, performances, or structured observations submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators.
- GPAs of students are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the subjects of mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, and full year world language, if such language study is included in the student's records. The GPA criterion will be set at 3.5 on a 4-point scale, but under no circumstances should it be set lower than 3.5. (Appendix A -GA SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38).

## **OUTSIDE TEST DATA**

Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or school system must be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process. However, these outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process and may never be the sole source of assessment data (State Board of Education Rule 1604-2-.38).

The RCSS shall never rely on outside data exclusively for determination of eligibility for gifted program services. Instead, outside test data may be used as part of a comprehensive profile of test and non-test evidence of advanced instructional needs. Please note that if the system elects to use outside test data to help establish gifted eligibility, the local board of education shall collect and maintain statistical data that will allow the Department of Education to evaluate the impact of this practice on the identification of gifted students from all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. For the complete guideline regarding the use of outside data, please view the Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

# TESTING SCHEDULE TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

The Gifted Education Department will administer assessments after review of referrals received during the Window of Referral time and after RCSS automatic testing of select grade levels is completed. Evaluation for the gifted program will begin and students who need further assessment will have the opportunity to do so on specific days that will be determined each school year. The gifted liaison will notify parents or guardians in writing of testing dates.

## **TEST ADMINISTRATORS**

Only persons properly trained in standard administration procedures and/or a certified gifted endorsed instructor for such instruments may administer group tests. Educators within the gifted education department are qualified to administer assessments to students under direction of the Gifted Education Coordinator. The Gifted Education Department is responsible for further assessment to determine student's final eligibility. All required assessment information is taken into consideration for final determination.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Parents/guardians must be notified in writing of the assessment Gifted Department's decision. Eligibility determinations are mailed to parents after all required data has been collected, recorded, and analyzed by gifted personnel. Parents and/or guardians may request a meeting to discuss the results of the assessment. If a parent elects to appeal the placement decision of the eligibility team, the Superintendent of Richmond County Schools, Gifted Program Specialist, and/or the Gifted Education Liaison must be notified in writing of the parent's intent to appeal the placement decision within 10 days after the parent has met with the system's Gifted Liaison to discuss the evaluation results.

# **STUDENT TRANSFERS**

There is no mandated reciprocity between states. Students who are transferring into the Richmond County School System from out of state, county, private, or home school settings, who have not previously been identified as gifted and who wish to be evaluated to determine eligibility for gifted education services will be eligible for assessment during the window of referral OR after one semester of enrollment in the county. However, if a student is transferring to the county and was identified gifted in another state or private school, the student will be assessed as soon as possible to determine if the states' gifted eligibility requirement can be established. The evaluation process must include observational data that is based on a minimum of nine weeks. It is the responsibility of the system's Gifted Education Liaison to evaluate the gifted eligibility records of students transferring from another state or a private school system to determine if Georgia eligibility standards have been met or if the student must be re-evaluated. Evaluations and assessments from private, licensed psychologists will be taken into consideration.

**There is mandated military reciprocity.**

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2161 states that, “Continuing the student’s academic program from the previous school and promoting placement in academically and career challenging courses should be paramount when considering placement.” Accordingly, the school must initially honor placement of the student in courses based on the student’s enrollment or assessments in the sending school if the school offers the courses. Additionally, if offered, the school must initially honor course levels, such as honors, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, vocational, technical, and career pathways. A school may perform subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in any course.

For which students do these children of military family laws apply? Who is an eligible student? Eligible students are school-aged children who are eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 and are members of a household of at least one of the following:

1. An active-duty member of the uniformed services.
2. A member or veteran of the uniformed services who is severely injured and medically discharged.
3. A member of the uniformed services that died on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty.

Children who are eligible students because the member of their household was severely injured and medically discharged or died on or as a result of injuries on active duty will remain eligible students for one year after the medical discharge or death of the veteran.

**There is mandated reciprocity between Georgia Schools.**

Students transferring to the Richmond County School System, who have already met the state’s eligibility criteria for gifted education services in another Georgia public school, shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services. The receiving school’s gifted contact person will immediately notify the system’s Gifted Education Liaison of the enrollment of any transfer student who indicates he/she has been previously identified gifted in the state of Georgia.

The system's Gifted Education Liaison will request a copy of the gifted eligibility records from the student's previous school. Once the student's eligibility status has been confirmed, the system Gifted Education Liaison will notify the principal, counselor, the school's records clerk, and teacher at the student's attending school of his/her eligibility status. The student may then be enrolled in the county's gifted program only after the parent/guardian has completed and signed a "permission to serve" form giving consent for the student to be served in the gifted education program. The form is then placed in the student's gifted education folder located at the central office. Please note that the RCSS' gifted department will honor the continuation policy of the transferring school. If a student was on a continuation or probation plan in the transferring school or school district, then the student will complete the goals outlined in the plan before entering the RCSS' gifted program (GaDOEResource Manual for Gifted Education Services).

# DELIVERY OF SERVICES

## **Curriculum Overview**

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

requires local boards of education to develop curricula for their gifted students.

There are certain characteristics that generally differentiate gifted learners from more typical learners: learn at faster rates, their capacity to find, solve, and act on problems, their ability to manipulate abstract ideas and make connections, etc.

Although it is recognized that not all gifted students exhibit identical behaviors and characteristics and, thus, have different needs, it is the unique behaviors and characteristics of gifted learners that must serve as the basis for establishing gifted program curriculum goals and then making decisions regarding specific curriculum units and activities. The LEA reviews and/or revises its curricula annually as needed.

Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

## **Principles of a Differentiated Curriculum for the Gifted/Talented**

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

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

### **Resource Class (Grades 1-5): Direct Services**

Students are enrolled in a resource program and are served a minimum of five segments per week. Materials and equipment are selected to meet sequential and developmental needs of the gifted identified student. All students, including students identified as gifted are responsible for mastery of the Georgia curriculum standards. In addition, gifted-eligible students participate in interdisciplinary enrichment activities through the resource class, which are focused in the areas of advanced research skills and methods, creative thinking and problem solving, higher order and critical thinking skills and advanced communication skills.

The curriculum of interdisciplinary thematic units is based on the Georgia standards in science, mathematics, and humanities, while integrating fine arts, vocational awareness, technology and civic leadership. Mini units integrating the academic areas form the basis of the curriculum. Teacher created curriculum using the state standards, includes higher critical thinking skills that encourage rigor and relevance while establishing collaborative relationships.

All units are based on Bloom's taxonomy of Educational Objectives and The Multiple Intelligences. Units for each grade level include the basic skills areas basic to gifted education:

- Developing cognitive skills
- Communication skills
- Creative thinking skills
- Metacognition and learning skills
- Research and Reference Skills

### **Advanced Content Class (6-12): Direct Services**

Gifted students are homogeneously grouped based on achievement and interest in a specific academic content area that is taught by a gifted endorsed teacher. High school students may also enroll in college level courses on the high school campus through the Advanced Placement (AP) program or the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

### **Cluster Grouping (1-8): Direct Services**

Gifted students are placed as a group (recommended 6-8 students) into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom, rather than being dispersed among all the rooms/courses at that grade level. The regular classroom teacher must have a current state approved gifted endorsement.

## **ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP WORK**

Time spent in the gifted service class is governed by State Regulations. Therefore, students should not miss any of the scheduled time provided for gifted services. Assignments due (from general education class) on the day the student is to attend the gifted program are to be turned in the next scheduled general education class time. Students should be given two days to complete assignments given the day of their gifted services. It is important that gifted identified students succeed in their academic classes, therefore by not requiring daily assignments in addition to gifted education assignments (that have been mastered) for these students, the classroom teacher can take some of the pressure off and encourage their success. The thinking skills that gifted students are learning and practicing in the gifted program can only enhance their performance in general education classes. Working together as educators is essential for the education of all students in RCSS; careful consideration must also be made for students being served in the gifted education program. It is important for the students to succeed in all of their classes and be able to participate in academic and extracurricular activities in school. Planning and collaborating together can ensure that parents and students do not feel pressured to “decide” which class to attend on the day indicated for gifted services. Gifted services are in place at the beginning of each school year to provide everyone the opportunity to plan accordingly.

# ANNUAL REVIEWS

In accordance with state regulations, a formal review of yearly progress will be done for each student receiving gifted services. Parents of all gifted students shall receive a copy of the annual review form. Parents who wish to discuss their child's progress may at any time contact the child's gifted teacher and request a conference.

## CONTINUATION OF GIFTED SERVICES

The gifted education teacher will monitor a student's progress informally during the school year. The student must meet the minimum requirements to continue participating in the gifted program. Most students will meet or exceed these requirements.

### ELEMENTARY GIFTED STUDENTS

For continued placement, a student must:

- Receive an overall assessment of "meets expectations" for gifted program progress reports.
- Maintain an 80 average in the academic subjects (reading, language arts, mathematics, yearlong foreign languages, and social studies).
- Fulfill the requirements of the Gifted Education Plan if on probation. Receive an overall assessment of "meets expectations" for gifted program objectives.

### HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

For continued placement, a student must:

- Maintain an overall average of 80 in the content classes identified for gifted services.
- Maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in core classes

The regular classroom teacher and the gifted education teacher share the responsibility of communicating with each other concerning a student's progress. A student who has more than one content class may be discontinued only in the classes for which the student does not meet minimum requirements. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration. Final consideration for continuation rests with the RCSS Gifted Department.

## PROBATION PROCEDURES

If a student has a severe drop in grades, the gifted education teacher will use various means (phone call, parent conference, consultation with classroom teacher, etc.) to try to determine the source of the difficulty. If a student fails to meet the minimum requirements for continued participation, he or she will be placed on probation for the following grading period. The parents will be notified of this probation in writing. An education plan/contract will then be given to the student and parents outlining requirements to continue services in good standing. The student will continue to receive gifted services during the probationary period. At the end of the probationary period, the gifted education teacher will review the student's progress. At that time, one of the following alternatives will be recommended:

- Extended probation through the next grading period
- Administrative withdrawal from the gifted program for a designated time while the student works on fulfilling the goals of the education plan
- Continued placement with no probationary status

The recommendation will become part of the student's gifted records. The parents will receive a written copy of this recommendation.

# WITHDRAWAL AND RE-ENTRY PROCEDURES

An administrative withdrawal removes the student from the gifted program when requested in writing from a parent or when the student fails to meet the minimum requirements for continuation during the probationary period. Parents shall receive a copy of the withdrawal form.

If there is a “break in service” due to the child being homeschooled, transferred out of the district, or parent/student request, parents may request re-entry for their child into the gifted programming. A gifted re-entry form will be issued. The student must meet the minimum requirements for continued participation to be eligible for re-entry. Multiple requests for break in services by the parent/student may result in dismissal from the program. Dismissal from the program will result in the student having to meet the state’s eligibility criteria for re-entry into the gifted program.

## STUDENT RECORDS

The gifted education specialists and the RCSS Gifted Education Department are the creators and caretakers of gifted education records. Gifted education folders contain the longitudinal records of students’ gifted eligibility. In addition, eligibility forms provide a record of consideration for eligibility of all referred students. All student folders, eligibility forms, and tests are kept in a locked room. Effective May 2011, all gifted records will also be stored electronically in the department’s information technology system designated for gifted use. Access to these materials is restricted to the Gifted Education Department and other certified personnel on a need-to-know basis.

### **Eligibility Forms**

When parents request consideration for gifted education services, an accurate record of previous reviews is essential. Therefore, eligibility forms must be kept for all referred students for a minimum of two years (automatic and reported).

### **Inactive Records**

When a student is removed from the program, the student's record is labeled inactive and is retained in a secure location in the Gifted Education Department. As students move to the next level within the system, records of inactive students remain in the department until graduation. The records of students withdrawn from the program and for those who were tested but found ineligible for gifted services are also maintained in department files. However, after a designated period of time and procedure, the folders of ineligible and withdrawn students are destroyed.

# **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All gifted personnel attend monthly gifted professional development activities to review gifted mandates, policies, and procedures (state and local), participate in all county wide professional development related to the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards and the Georgia Standards of Excellence. It is also the responsibility of the gifted staff to provide professional development to staff members at every school level. During the professional development gifted staff focuses on the nomination and testing procedures for the program, characteristics of the gifted learner, and the use of any rating scales being utilized by the department for the purpose of assessing motivation and/or creativity.

Professional development opportunities will also be made available to further develop instructional practices in the field of gifted education.

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The RCSS' gifted department will continue to work on informing parents and community of the rationale, objectives, and overall crux of the department. The department recognizes that a mutual relationship between the community and the department will prove beneficial to both, but more importantly, it is beneficial to the students of Richmond County. To involve the community, the gifted department and the school system communicates with families and the community in the following ways:

- Gifted literature is made available via the RCSS homepage.
- Gifted personnel will be available at open house for the purpose of presenting information about the program's rationale, objectives, and nomination process.
- Parents are invited to meet with gifted teachers at any time during the school year to discuss student progress.
- Progress reports are completed twice a year for each student to provide parents with an update of their child's academic performance in gifted classes.
- Every parent of a gifted student will receive an annual review of students' performance for the year and their participation status for the following year.
- Members of the community are invited to participate in classrooms as volunteers and/or classroom presenters on topics of relevance to the units being studied in the gifted class.
- Parents are invited to classroom presentations to view students' work or student performances.