

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

**Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support**  
**Division of Public Schools**  
**Florida Department of Education**  
**Revised 2017**

## Acknowledgements

In 2009, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) invited Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Professor Emerita of the College of William and Mary School of Education, to collaborate with the department in developing a state plan for gifted education. Following the model developed in *A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education (2007)*, a small work group was convened to share perspectives on the program direction and focus on a systematic approach to new directions. The resulting report identified key elements which provided the frame for a proposed plan. The resulting draft was sent to district coordinators for gifted in late 2009, and the FDOE compiled the feedback and used the responses to form a draft for a subsequent plan which was sent to stakeholders in January 2010. Feedback from that draft has served as a guide to development of the Florida Plan for K-12 Gifted Education. 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.

The purpose of this document is to assist local school districts in examining the quality of their programs and services for gifted learners. It is updated when appropriate using research and best practices.

The intent is to provide a resource for school district staff in developing a plan for meeting the needs of gifted learners in their district. It includes reference to current statutes and rules relative to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students who have special needs and who have met the state criteria for eligibility for special instructional programs. A template for the district plan is included. Districts may also elect to implement the included Self-Assessment Tool as a means for evaluating their current programs. This will provide a means for assuring the community that the district intends to meet the learning needs of all students, including those who are gifted, and will move the state toward consistent programs that support advanced learning gains for all students.

# **Resource Guide for the Education of Gifted Students in Florida**

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## **Introduction**

“Excellence in education is when we do everything we can to make sure they become everything they can.” Carol Ann Tomlinson

### **Florida Department of Education’s Mission**

The Florida K-20 education system’s mission is to 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. The department is required to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:

- Higher student achievement;
- Seamless articulation and maximum access;
- Skilled workforce and economic development; and
- Quality efficient services.

### **Florida Department of Education Vision**

Florida will have an efficient world-class education system that engages and prepares all students to be globally competitive for college and careers.

### **Gifted Education in Florida**

Educating all children includes identifying appropriate practices for Florida youth who could, should and would benefit from gifted programs and services.

Educators who work with gifted students 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 teachers, parents, school administrators, policymakers and students who support improved academic opportunities.

Appendix 1, Key Elements in Policy Development, is offered as a place for districts to start the self-assessment of their district gifted education services.

### **Florida's Definition of "Gifted"**

A student is determined to be eligible for gifted service as defined by current State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03019, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted. This rule states that a gifted student is "one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance." The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are need for a special instructional program, evidence of characteristics of the gifted and evaluation documenting intellectual development.

In addition, districts may develop a plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted. These plans must be approved and must include evaluation procedures to document the minimum evaluation requirements. For the purpose of the rule, under-represented populations are defined as groups who are limited English proficient (LEP) or who are from a low socio-economic status (SES) family.

Any student may be nominated as a potential candidate for gifted services. 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 services, a public school student is eligible to receive services any time during K-12. If the student does not meet state criteria, he/she is determined ineligible for gifted services at the current time.

## I. IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED LEARNERS

Determination of whether a student meets eligibility requirements for gifted services in Florida is founded on establishing how the state defines giftedness.

Florida's current definition requires an individually administered, standardized test of intelligence, thus making IQ testing one component of eligibility. IQ testing is a standardized tool used 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. Districts have the option of developing an alternative plan for underrepresented populations.

### A. Procedures for Nomination, Screening and Evaluation

There are typically four steps in the process of identifying potentially gifted students and determining eligibility for gifted services in Florida. Steps leading to the determination of eligibility are nomination, screening, referral and evaluation (refer to chart on following page). Districts should have a nomination and screening procedures document that is published or is shared annually with parents and other community stakeholders in order to inform or remind them of the process and encourage participation. This document and any nomination forms should be accessible in languages that the parents can understand.

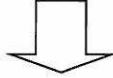
Step 1: A nomination may be made by a parent/guardian, general education teacher or other school personnel, community members, self or peer. Nomination indicates a request that the student be considered as a potential candidate and initiates the process of compiling information about the student. Nomination procedures assume parents and teachers have adequate awareness of gifted education and the identification process and information relative to characteristics of gifted students, including underrepresented populations in the district. Adequately ensuring that the community is informed about gifted education opportunities, gifted characteristics and the nomination process is one way to improve diversity and equitable representation and to combat stereotypes and misunderstandings regarding gifted education. Gifted students are found in all cultural groups and across all economic strata. There are a variety of ways to address this, including brochures, website information, teacher awareness of gifted characteristics, parent meetings, letters to parents, presentations to school boards and PTA groups, curriculum night information, back to school night, newspaper ads or a district handbook.

Step 2: 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 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. Screening should include a review of existing data and information about the student. The district should actively search for referrals among typically underrepresented populations.

## Determining Eligibility for Gifted Services

### Step One: Nomination

Parent/Guardian, teacher or other school personnel, a community member or 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.

Student does not meet screening criteria.

Parent is notified student did not meet screening criteria.

Student meets screening criteria.

### Step Three: Referral

Student is referred by district staff for individual evaluation with parent consent.

### Step Four: Intellectual Evaluation

The evaluation is administered by a psychologist.

Score is below state rule requirement.

Score indicates potential eligibility.

Does student meet district's alternative plan for underrepresented populations?

Yes

Team of educators reviews all information about student to determine eligibility and plan for EP development meeting.

No

Parent is notified student is not eligible at this time.



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 academic and/or social-emotional gifted characteristics
- Gifted characteristics/behaviors checklists
- Review of portfolio of student class work and/or achievements
- VPK assessment or school readiness screenings

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—Second Edition (NNAT2)
- 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)

Step 3: 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 should be individually evaluated.

Step 4: 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 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 and abilities. 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 a specified waiting period before repeating the process. The district maintains data for use in reassessing students who are referred more than once.

The evaluation instruments in the Special Policies and Procedures (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 the district in 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 services. This information will include the individually administered intellectual evaluation and a standard gifted characteristics checklist to be completed by a teacher familiar with the student. 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; and
- Review of portfolio of student class work and/or achievements.

The psychologist will select the intellectual evaluation for the student based on the district’s SP&P to ensure nondiscrimination. It is recommended that the test administrator attend the initial educational plan (EP) meeting to discuss implications of the test scores with the team participants and guide development of the initial EP to ensure it is written to specifically address the student’s giftedness.

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—Second Edition (NNAT2)
- 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) and Fifth Edition
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition Spanish (WISC-IV Spanish)

Personnel trained in gifted education and/or with an understanding of the special needs of gifted learners should meet regularly to determine eligibility of potential candidates. A multi-disciplinary team is preferable, including a psychologist, a teacher and the gifted program coordinator. If the student does not meet eligibility as required in state rule, the team of professionals may consider whether the student might be eligible under their alternative plan referenced as Plan B under Rule 6A-6.03019, F.A.C., Special Instructional Programs for Students who are Gifted, section (2)(b) (if their district has such a plan that has been state-approved). For this purpose, the rule currently defines underrepresented groups as those who are LEP or who are from a low SES family. The intent is to foster and support students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have been exposed to the types of experiences necessary to acquire knowledge.

**Consideration in cases under Rule 6A-6.03019(2)(b), F.A.C., should be given to:**

- Aptitude as well as general intellectual ability. Many students are not identified as gifted but indicate a high potential or high ability.
- Underachieving students who exhibit gifted characteristics and needs. Many students have social-emotional characteristics that may make identification more difficult.
- 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 work portfolios and student records and by tracking (or student interests and abilities and behaviors both negative and positive inside and outside of the school environment).
- Use of instruments sensitive to underrepresented populations, such as non-verbal assessments.
- Universal screening at all relevant levels of the K-12 continuum, specifically at least twice in elementary (once in each primary and intermediate grade levels); at parent, community member, self, peer or district request, and additionally, after annual review of those students scoring at the top level of standardized testing, 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 gifted characteristics and needs, general intellectual ability and specific aptitude areas across cultures.
- Some students identified as gifted may be twice exceptional (also be learning-disabled, physically handicapped or behaviorally disordered).

## **English Language Learners**

Non-verbal 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.

### **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.
- Collaborate with the ELL staff to identify strategies that may be effective for this population.
- Provide training for all educators on recognizing the 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 behaviors might be expected?
- 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.

## **Transfer Students**

### **Within-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 using the prior EP as a guide. Re-evaluation is not required. The EP should be reviewed and revised as determined necessary by the receiving district based on current needs of the student and the program options in the receiving district.

### **From Out-of-State**

Procedures for consideration of a transferring gifted student should include the requirements of Rule 6A-6.0334 and Rule 6A-6.0331(4) and (5), F.A.C.

### **From Outside of the United States**

Students who were determined to be gifted by a non-United States school or district must be evaluated for gifted services using Rule 6A-6.03019, F.A.C. Test results from any age, and other evidence of placement and success in a gifted program, can be used as evidence to meet the criteria for gifted eligibility under Rule 6A-6.03019, F.A.C.

### **Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children**

Changing schools can be an ordeal for military families and military children. Education curriculum and requirements can vary tremendously between states and school districts. The 2008 legislature created a section in the Florida Statutes authorizing the governor to execute this compact. For more information, go to <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/military-families>.

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. **A gifted student who is a military child may be considered as transferring from another state, even if they were in a foreign placement.**

### **B. Determining Need for Service**

Rule 6A-6.03019 F.A.C., 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 and feedback from the general education setting including class performance, feedback from the parent, 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 or Change of Service Options**

There may be occasion for an eligible student not to receive gifted services. Gifted education support services in Florida are available to support gifted students throughout their K-12 education by providing both appropriate academic placement and social-emotional services. Some of the possible issues related to exiting or change in service are:

- A parent may elect to have the student remain in the current educational setting. This is possible while still allowing the child to keep gifted education status if the district provides consultation contact hours or additional support services.
- A parent may ask for the child to be completely exited from the program after being informed of the child’s academic options (which means ending all gifted support services).
- General academic programs for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education Program (AICE), honors, dual enrollment or other advanced courses may meet the student’s current academic needs. 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/s to be provided. Such service may be monitored through consultation as determined by the EP team based on the student's individual need.

- Students who are gifted should not be withdrawn from gifted services solely due to behavioral concerns or underachievement, as those may be signs of additional needs for support. Excessive behavioral concerns or underachievement may, however, require re-evaluation of the student's actual classroom placement and revising of the student's program goals by the EP team prior to the expiration of the student's EP. Gifted students may have learning challenges that need additional support and may be twice exceptional, meaning they have disabilities as well as gifted characteristics and needs.
- Before considering withdrawal of a student from gifted service due to parent request, the EP team convenes to discuss the decision and determine whether there will be a need for other support.
- Once identified as eligible, a 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.

## II. PROGRAM DESIGN/SERVICE DELIVERY

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

### A. Developing an Educational Plan (EP)

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

A child who is twice exceptional (who has disabilities and has met the gifted criteria) must have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) that covers all of their needs including gifted services.

The EP describes the student’s educational needs based on the strengths of the student and the services that will be provided to supplement and build on the basic academic state standards 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 FAPE. The contents of the EP should provide detailed information that is useful to the student, school personnel and 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 class work, district and state assessments, course grades and evaluation results;
- A statement of measurable goals, including benchmarks or short term objectives for skills or content areas where the student shows strength, high abilities or the potential for high abilities when appropriately supported;
- A statement of the specially designed instruction to be provided to the student;
- A statement of how progress toward the goals will be measured and reported to parents; and
- 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;
- Results of recent evaluations and assessments that provide a gauge for determining where the student is currently performing;
- For students with limited English proficiency, special language needs as they relate to the EP; and
- For underachieving gifted students, twice exceptional students or students who are in foster care or other programs with inherent placement transitions, the social-emotional support services that the child will need in order to perform at their highest potential for achievement.

**The focus of the EP should be on the student's giftedness and the strategies necessary to ensure the continual progress and learning of the individual student.**

The EP for each individual student may be developed or revised at least every three years for students in K-8, 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 who is new to 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, F.A.C.:

- The parent/guardian of the student
- At least one teacher of the gifted program
- One 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/guardian 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 decisions about service.

The school district must notify the parent/guardian before each EP meeting in writing. 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/guardian may invite anyone to the meeting who has pertinent information about the gifted student. The district will also provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted document, which explains the legal rights of the parent/guardian regarding the gifted education process.



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

- Present levels of performance: defined as statements of a student's performance in academic, social, emotional or other areas including demonstrated skill or mastery of 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.
- The results of pre-assessment tools that were used to determine the student's levels of performance: these should guide the development of the goals for the student, including benchmarks or short term objective. Individualization should be focused on skill performance mastery, data collection and criteria for determining evidence of mastery for the student.
- The student's strengths: may include learning styles, characteristics, test scores or interest area(s).
- Results of recent evaluations: used to establish baseline 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 toward the goals.
- Gifted education services, including participation in regular education programs.
- Initiation, duration, frequency and location of services specifying the contact 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, work and 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 exhibiting high-level skills or gifted characteristics related to success?" and provide service to meet those educational needs for continued growth in those areas. All students who are gifted are not high performing in all areas. As for other Exceptional Student Education (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 to express their abilities in a range of different ways. The task is to determine how best to meet the needs of the learner. Florida uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for all students, so EP teams need to decide on the level of support a gifted student needs and match services to their needs.

The parent/guardian receives a copy of the EP. 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. The EP must be implemented as soon as possible after the EP meeting. The teacher(s) of the gifted student is responsible for implementation of the EP.

An EP must be in effect before specially designed instruction is provided for the student, but a student may begin to attend a gifted program classroom while waiting for a Florida EP to be completed if:

- the student is new to the district from another state;
- the student was determined to be eligible for gifted services in the other state; and
- the student's parent/guardian gives consent. (Rule 6A-6.0334, F.A.C.)

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 2 for "Assessing the Educational Plan (EP) for Students who are Gifted," which provides a guide to development of a significant EP.

### **B. Guidelines for Placement/Program Design**

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.

Students identified as gifted receive services through different types of delivery models. Service refers to what a gifted student receives that differs from non-gifted students. Services can include academic and/or social-emotional skill supports. 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.

### **Continuum of Appropriate Service Delivery Models**

Services 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. Because gifted students are exceptional education students, they require a qualitatively different education that is not typically available in the general education classroom. As no single service delivery option meets the needs of all gifted students, the district should offer multiple service delivery options.

"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 **Advanced Academics** in the Course Code Directory are designed to meet the needs of students who have met state gifted eligibility criteria. Programs for students who are gifted should encompass instructional and related services that provide significant adaptations in curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment or the learning environment (Rule 6A-6.0311, F.A.C.). Gifted students learn at an accelerated pace, and so they need to explore topics in depth; this 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/Gifted course code**

- The teacher of the gifted provides total instruction in these models for students who have met gifted eligibility and have a need for this specialized service as determined through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) review process at the EP meeting.
- Content and pacing should be differentiated to the degree that activities are clearly intended for students evidencing a need beyond the general curriculum.

Full-time classes or programs offer an opportunity for the teacher to adapt the curriculum to provide rigor and challenge in the content areas. Knowing that all students have met eligibility requirements ensures that the teacher might pre-assess and 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.

**2) Resource Room or Pull-out (K-6)—no course code**

- The setting is other than the general education classroom for the special instructional period.
- Curriculum should have an academic content-based foundation and focus on activities as related to the EPs 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.

All students should be expected to master basic curriculum. Pulling a student from a content class to go to a resource room that does not address state standards with depth and complexity may prevent increased knowledge and skill development. Resource rooms or pull-out programs allow gifted students to meet with intellectual peers to work on critical thinking and problem-solving skills, to address community problems or to work on 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 a resource room. Students are guided through independent investigations through in-depth concept development. Enrichment should be well-articulated and extend the regular curriculum. This can be accomplished by adding depth and rigor and avoiding situations where the class becomes merely superficial enrichment. This happens when

learning contains activities that are without connection to content area standards that promote academic growth or without connection to planned social-emotional skill development.

### **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 areas; the class may include students who have and who have not been identified as gifted. The district may set criteria for class participation.
- The district should develop criteria for the course, showing clearly how the content, pacing, process skills emphasis and expectations of student outcomes differ from other courses in the same content area.
- If the course is identified on the EP as providing 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 student's EP goals.

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 gifted status.

### **4) Cluster Grouping—general education course code**

- Identified gifted students with strengths in the same content area(s) are 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.

### **5) Support Facilitation—no course code**

- The teacher provides services one-on-one. The teacher meets with an individual student or small group of students 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 the 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 career professions of interest.
- Gifted-endorsed teacher supervises mentorship/internship experiences based on Course Number 7965030, Externship for Students who are Gifted.
- An individual student contract 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 student's learning will be assessed, and (e) responsibilities of the gifted education teacher and mentor.

#### **7) Dual Enrollment/Virtual courses**

- Individual gifted student 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 service model with no course code**

- 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 progress in Honors, AP, IB, AICE, dual enrollment 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 who ensures the student's specific EP goals are being addressed.

#### **Appropriate Program Models**

All students should be expected to master basic curriculum. Pulling a student from a content class to go to a resource center that does not address state standards with depth and complexity 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 two through eight 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.

Levels of service could begin with modifying the curriculum in the classroom, special classes, enrichment opportunities or 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.

Programs should be offered that meet the student's individual needs as much as possible. Since gifted students are not universally high performing, the classes and program options a student is enrolled in should reflect those differences. A student whose level of performance indicates a predominant strength in math and mastery of grade-level standards but who is reading near grade level would not be best served in a program that focuses on high-level language arts or interdisciplinary units of study. The goals on that student's EP should indicate how advanced math instruction will be received using math skills in independent projects to ensure the student continues to make gains in mathematics. 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, alignment with the goals of the Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners and 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.

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

- **Magnet or special schools** which enable a district to pool resources at one site to meet student needs. The district provides transportation to the site.
- **Differentiated curriculum** is referenced as a means of meeting the specific needs of the learner. Training for differentiated instruction should identify ways to differentiate for students with disabilities and strategies effective for differentiating 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. When EP goals are student specific, the goals would be the factor in determining the necessary differentiation. An effective curriculum for gifted learners is 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 high achievement 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 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 (Course [7963090](#)); complete independent research methodology using primary and secondary resources to produce original documents (Course [7965010](#)); or practice sophisticated levels of communication and access the humanities (Course [7965040](#)).
- **Academic competitions and programs** help students expand creative and critical thinking skills and develop leadership and teamwork skills and may be added to, but not be the total focus of, 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, science and history fairs, chess tournaments 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 programs for students.

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 should establish a protocol for assessing proficiency to guide decisions regarding appropriate service. Competence and skills should determine access to academic experiences rather than age. For example, the district may determine it is appropriate to accelerate a student who evidences mastery of grade-level skills in one content area or to move the student to a higher grade if there is evidence of proficiency across content areas.

Dual enrollment is available under s. 1002.3105, F.S., for students in grades 6-12.

Virtual instruction and/or blended learning courses are available, and an eligible student may apply and enroll in an online course offered by any district in the state.

A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education (2007), referenced by Dr. Van Tassel-Baska, recommends minimum contact time be specified for a student to receive gifted service.

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

The district plan should specify an appropriate minimum amount of contact time to assure sufficient opportunity to meet the program's goals and objectives and the student's needs. 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 a pre-service focus on content, there may have been 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 ensuring it meets the needs of these students for a challenging program.

Districts should advise gifted learners on the benefits of career and technical education. Career education includes challenging, highly scholastic and technical curriculum and a multitude of programs to fit student interests. Career education includes hands on areas of study such as welding, cosmetology, biotechnology, architecture, integrated technologies, dental assisting, veterinary assisting, engineering, marketing, teaching, energy fields, robotics and more. All of these areas are aligned to earning industry certifications and most have dual enrollment opportunities available. Enrolling in career education courses allows students to leave high school as both college and career ready.

Benefits to gifted students include:

1. Rigor with relevance and integrated academics—Broad career areas develop knowledge and skills students need for success in the field.
2. Applied Academia—Use current technology and innovative practices to solve real-world problems within the context of the career area.
3. Competition, teamwork, leadership and recognition are fostered through Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)—Within CTSOs, 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.



5. Entry into a high-wage, high-skill and high-demand field through industry certifications—Students can earn industry certifications upon completion of the program and enter the workforce qualified for what research shows are often high-paying wages.

Honor classes, AP, IB programs, AICE, dual enrollment, career and technical programs and externships offer multiple options to meet student needs for academic challenge. Schools should avoid using accelerated or high-achievement classes exclusively without support for social-emotional characteristics and needs by an endorsed gifted teacher. Teachers for these courses who have the gifted endorsement are likely prepared to provide differentiation and social-emotional support 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.

Guidelines:

1. Programming for gifted students must be an integral part of the school program and the general education school day.
  - Services for gifted students should supplement and build on the basic academic standards and the knowledge learned in general education classrooms.
  - Gifted students should be provided with curricular experiences at all grade levels to ensure continual student progress and learning.
2. Rather than a single program for gifted learners, comprehensive K-12 services should provide a continuum of services.
  - The K-12 services 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.
3. There should be an optimal match of student ability to program service and teacher expertise.
4. Curriculum for gifted learners 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 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 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.
5. 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 attests 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. This may include testing for high school credit for middle school students and college credit such as AP, IB or AICE credit for high school students.
6. Acceleration should be an essential element of gifted curriculum and instruction. Districts must have ACCEL plans under s. 1002.3105, F.S.

“The overwhelming research evidence in favor of acceleration makes the intervention a highly valued option for all schools. The evidence is compelling that for highly motivated gifted students acceleration must be an option; therefore, all schools need to have written policies that allow the possibility of the various forms of acceleration as an academic intervention for carefully selected high ability students.” (2009 Colangelo. Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy)

Forms of acceleration may include:

1. Grade-skipping
2. Continuous progress
3. Self-paced instruction
4. Subject-matter acceleration/partial acceleration

5. Combined classes
6. Curriculum compacting
7. Telescoping curriculum
8. Mentoring
9. Extracurricular programs
10. Correspondence courses
11. Early graduation
12. Concurrent/dual enrollment
13. Advanced Placement
14. Credit by examination
15. Acceleration in college
16. Early entrance into middle school, high school or college

A flexible instructional pace allows for accelerated learning, as appropriate. Accelerative opportunities should be provided for early entrance to 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.

Specific acceleration options for high school students include AP, IB, AICE, Credit Acceleration Program, dual enrollment, 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.

7. Gifted services 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.

### III. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

“The cornerstone of education is the flexibility to recognize the needs of the individual child.”  
A Nation Deceived, Volume 1

The curriculum is the core of service for students who are gifted and must be qualitatively different from the general education programs as indicated in s. 1003.01(3)(b), F.S., which states, “Special education services means 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. Curriculum selected for use for gifted learners should be challenging and ensure that critical thinking and problem-solving are clearly a priority.

Rule 6A-6.0311, F.A.C., 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, s. 1003.57, F.S., specifies each district school board or local educational 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.

Section 1003.57(1)(c), F.S., specifies “A student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional student until after he or she has been properly evaluated and found eligible as an exceptional student in the manner prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education.”

Rule 6A-6.0334, F.A.C., allows a gifted student with an educational plan for gifted services in effect from another state to be provided with services comparable to those described in the plan from the other state while the district conducts an initial evaluation and develops or adopts a Florida EP.

#### **A. Curriculum Models**

**Florida has gifted education standards that can be found on CPALMS at <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard#0>.**

Florida also has course descriptions for Advanced Academics for Gifted Students:

- Elementary (K-5) <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/12852>
- Middle (6-8) <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/12851>
- High+ (9-12 and adult)  
<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/12984>  
<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/13061>  
<http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/13063>
- Externships <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/13062>

These outline what students in these courses should know and be able to do at the end of the course.

**Florida's Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners** provide guidelines supporting a challenging 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 of 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.

These goals are arranged by content (goals 1 and 2), process (goals 3 and 4), affect (goals 5 and 6) and product (goal 7). Florida's Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners are available at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/k12giftedlearners.pdf>.

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, 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; and
- 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 teaching units in language arts, social studies and science. More information on this model is at <http://cfge.wm.edu/curriculum.htm>.

## **B. Instructional Materials**

District plans should ensure that appropriate materials and resources are available to support teachers who are serving students who are gifted. Materials and resources for students who are gifted should align with and extend the content standards and provide opportunities to study topics in depth. Programming options should support continuous growth when a student demonstrates competence in a basic skill area or shows progress by testing out of previously mastered material. Ability, achievement and aptitude tests may serve as a guide in determining the student’s present level of development and where instruction should begin to ensure continued learning gains. Decisions about instructional materials should be based on what the student needs to continue to make academic gains.

**Cluster grouping** may enable a group of advanced readers to select from above-grade-level reading materials. The district should ensure appropriate instructional materials are available for providing rigor and challenge beyond the general curriculum, as stated in the identification rule. Some specific special materials being used include the William and Mary School of Education Curriculum for Gifted (based on the ICM referenced above), Junior Great Books, Accelerated Math (Renaissance Learning), Math Counts, Sunshine Math Superstars and science resources and challenges such as those under the STEM Scholars program. The primary consideration should be finding an optimal match between the student’s ability and the appropriate instructional level.

**Curriculum compacting** allows teachers to streamline learning activities for students who demonstrate proficiency. When pre-assessment indicates achievement beyond the intended curriculum, the teacher may provide enriched and enhanced curriculum to provide challenge and enable students to move at a faster rate. The student who is gifted should have opportunities to explore topics in greater depth, draw generalizations and work to solve real-world problems.

### **C. Grants Supporting Gifted**

#### **Challenge Grant Program for the Gifted**

FDOE supports districts in developing curricula for gifted learners. The Collaborative Curriculum Challenge Grant, under s. 1011.75, F.S., encourages districts to create projects intended to enhance academic achievement of students who are gifted and who show a readiness for post-secondary-level challenges. Projects should show innovative redesign of instruction and meaningful collaboration with a college or university partnership. Each school district is eligible to apply for funds to initiate a redesign of instruction for students who are gifted. A summary of the results of prior programs is available on the FDOE gifted education webpage at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/gifted-edu.stml>.

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Programs</b>
2007-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broward - Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students and Teachers</li> <li>▪ Escambia - Just Imagine</li> <li>▪ Flagler - A Quest in Archeological Findings</li> <li>▪ Hillsborough - Curriculum Revision</li> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Outdoor Science</li> <li>▪ Pinellas - Diverse Environment Network</li> <li>▪ St. Lucie - Technology for Middle Grades</li> <li>▪ Suwannee - Career Exploration for Middle School Gifted</li> </ul>
2008-09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collier - Rigor Plus - for middle schools</li> <li>▪ Florida State University Lab School - Chemistry Integration</li> <li>▪ Highlands - Art Exploration</li> <li>▪ Lee - Gopher the Cache!</li> <li>▪ Marion - Water Wonderland (environment)</li> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Physical Science/Physics Continuum</li> <li>▪ Orange - Forensic Fusion</li> <li>▪ Palm Beach - Puentes Al Mundo</li> <li>▪ Polk - Implementing the Frameworks (redesign of curriculum)</li> <li>▪ Volusia - Legendary Florida (integrated curriculum)</li> </ul>
2009-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alachua - Rural Globalization Through Technology</li> <li>▪ Brevard - Canine Commando Challenge</li> <li>▪ Broward - Bald Eagle Project</li> <li>▪ Hernando - Collaboration with the Community</li> <li>▪ Highlands - ENGAGE - Connections with the Community</li> <li>▪ Marion - Academy of Law and Government</li> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Cultivating the Arts</li> <li>▪ Orange - Writing Through the Ages</li> <li>▪ Orange - Disease Detectives</li> <li>▪ Pinellas - Ancient Civilizations, Virtual Investigations: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Collaboration</li> </ul>

2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Florida State University Lab - Space Technology and Engineering</li> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - The Gifted Program Exploring Science Project</li> <li>▪ Osceola - Fostering Opportunity and Renewal in Gifted Education</li> <li>▪ Volusia - Design Thinking: From Insights to Innovation</li> </ul>
2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Gifted Program Exploring Science (GPEX)</li> <li>▪ Osceola - The Gift of Reading</li> <li>▪ Volusia - Design Thinking II: From Insights to Innovation</li> </ul>
2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - The Gifted Program Exploring Science Project</li> <li>▪ Osceola - Learning and Living a Parallel Curriculum</li> </ul>
2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Gifted Program Exploring Science</li> <li>▪ Osceola - Insight and Intellect through Inquiry</li> </ul>
2014-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brevard - Gifted Mindset Project</li> <li>▪ Hillsborough - Advancing Math Performance</li> </ul>
2015-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jefferson - CATS (Creative and Academically Talented Students) Chronicle</li> <li>▪ Pinellas and Hillsborough - Advancing Math Performance 2</li> <li>▪ Volusia - Tech Tools for Gifted Teenagers</li> </ul>
2016-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brevard - Gifted Mindset Project</li> <li>▪ Miami-Dade - Opportunity Changes Everything</li> <li>▪ Osceola - Affective Development for Academic Success</li> </ul>



## IV. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

“Counseling gifted students and their families is one of the most challenging and rewarding functions for a counselor. Gifted students have tremendous variability not only in their cognitive capacity, but in their affective development. While there are clearly common themes to the social-emotional issues confronting gifted students, there are profound individual differences among gifted students....” Nicholas Colangelo

### **A. Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Learners**

Students who are gifted need affective as well as cognitive growth. Section 1003.01 (3)(a), 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.

Appropriate counseling services might address issues related to characteristics of giftedness that may include perfectionism, anxiety, depression, underachievement, exploration of cultural identity and value system issues related to identification, peer concerns, behavioral challenges, addictions, learning difficulties or other social-emotional support. Technical Assistance Paper: Counseling as a Related Service (October 2011) addresses this topic. An individual evaluation is sometimes required to assist the EP team in determining the need for related services. Related services are provided for gifted students through district funds.

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

- Teachers, parents, administrators and services personnel should be provided with information and training regarding the characteristics of gifted students and their related social-emotional development.
- Gifted teachers should incorporate strategies to support affective learning in their classrooms.
- Counselors and others with specific training in the social-emotional needs of gifted students should provide counseling and guidance services at all levels of schooling.
- Guidance and counseling services to meet the social-emotional needs of gifted students should be ongoing, K-12. Gifted children are aware that they are not like their age peers and may struggle with social adjustment.
- All educators, administrators, counselors, psychologists and other professionals in the school system should be trained in identifying gifted characteristics and needs so that unidentified gifted students may be referred for gifted evaluation as part of the behavioral or academic planning processes. These professionals should also be knowledgeable about special populations, including gifted identification of ELLs.
- Referrals should be made to community resources/professionals for special needs as necessary.

**Academic planning and career planning should be provided during the secondary grades, as well as continuing to provide social-emotional support for gifted students through consultation and/or exposure to leadership opportunities.**

- 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, and it becomes difficult to narrow that path. Appropriate guidance should be available. The middle school course 7855042 Advanced Academics and Career Planning for Gifted Students 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 should be provided information and support.
- Teachers, administrators, school services personnel and parents/guardians should be 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 should be provided and documented.

## **B. Support for Students with Special Needs**

### **The Twice-Exceptional Student**

An 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, or 2e, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is written, unless it is a disability that is not eligible for special education through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under those circumstances, a 504 Plan might be appropriate. 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. The National Association for Gifted Children (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. Identification may become difficult when the student is bright enough to be somewhat successful in the classroom despite learning disabilities.

The focus on these students is in three areas: 1) appropriate identification, 2) instruction and remediation for the disability, and 3) 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 attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (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 Parents of 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.

### **Social Issues**

Students who are gifted may experience high levels of stress regarding friendships and social situations. Support may be needed to help these students find interests they share with other students or staff members, and they may need specific encouragement and support in order to engage. Gifted children often get along better with intellectual peers rather than same-age peers and may even prefer friends who are much younger or much older than their own age. Working to help gifted students feel like they are welcome and fit in with other students or adults in the school community may be an important part of supporting their emotional needs.

### **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. 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, and low performance despite high test scores in some subjects.

Students who are gifted and 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 should be provided information and support.

### **Gifted Dropouts**

Studies indicate that students who are gifted drop out for the same reasons other students do. 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.

### **Homeschool**

Homeschooled students who are identified as gifted may continue to have access to social-emotional support from their zoned school district through extra-curricular programs at the schools, events, competitions, outreach and other opportunities under s. 1002.41(4), F.S., and s. 1006.15, F.S.

### **Related Services**

Students who are gifted 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

## V. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

“Goals are dreams with deadlines.” Diana Scharf Hunt

### **A. Development and Implementation of the District Plan**

To ensure an appropriate educational opportunity for learners, each district is encouraged to develop a plan for meeting the needs of students who are gifted in their district. The comprehensive K-12 Gifted Plan should include policies and procedures for identification, assessment of students, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, evaluation, support services and parent and community involvement.

This document may serve as a guide for development of a district plan. A template to guide formatting the plan is also available (see Appendix 2, Assessing the EP for Students who are Gifted).

The district plan should specify the following components:

- I. Identification of Gifted Learners
- II. Program Design and Service Delivery
- III. Curriculum and Instruction
- IV. Guidance and Counseling
- V. Program Administration and Management
- VI. Professional Development
- VII. Program Evaluation

The district determines the plan for meeting the needs of students who are gifted and determines the continuum of services to be offered based on the number of students to be served, specific needs of the students and the educators available to provide service. The state of Florida requires that a student who is eligible must receive service K-12.

Section 1003.57(1)(b), F.S., requires that district school boards submit to FDOE proposed procedures for the provision of special instruction and services (SP&P) for exceptional students once every three years. Approval of this document by FDOE is required by Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C., as a prerequisite for a district's use of weighted cost factors under the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Information requested for the district gifted plan is intended to identify how the district provides oversight to ensure that the program and services address the needs of gifted learners with a degree of consistency across the district to benefit students.

The district should indicate how they will monitor progress and thus determine whether services being provided are clearly showing a measure of success. As gifted students' achievement and performance levels vary greatly, it is recommended that districts emphasize individual gains, rather than group performance (for example, an individual student's growth on standards as opposed to how many students in the school or district achieved a high-level score on a standardized test). Measuring how many students are in high-level courses may be deceiving because performance in the class can vary, but looking at how many gifted

students are in the high-level class and showing individual growth on a regular basis would be more valuable data.

Districts may find the NAGC Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards helpful in reviewing the quality of their programming for gifted students. These standards provide minimum as well as exemplary standards for determining measures of program quality.

Districts electing to implement the Florida School District Gifted Program Self-Assessment Tool (Appendix 3) may find this an effective means for opening discussions about current programs and services to determine whether they are meeting the needs of students. Designating a gifted endorsed coordinator with expertise in the field responsible for all aspects of the program is indicative of the district's intent to focus on this special population. Coordinators who do not have gifted endorsements may participate in endorsement training along with their staff members. See section VI, Professional Development of this Resource Guide.

For compliance requirements for gifted programs in Florida, see Exceptional Student Education Compliance Manual, 2016-17.

Management of the gifted program is coordinated by the designated district contact. Responsibilities of the district contact include:

- Oversight of screening practices leading to identification of students with potential from all populations;
- Oversight of the program and service models necessary to meet the needs of students;
- Review of EPs for all students who are gifted in the district to ensure programs are appropriate to meet their needs and that EPs are compliant and that progress toward goals is reported to parents;
- Leadership in supervising the implementation of innovative teaching strategies to enable curriculum modifications and identification of appropriate instructional materials;
- Professional development related specifically to gifted education;
- Ensuring staff development and in-service programs are provided related to identification; curriculum and instruction; social-emotional characteristics and needs; special needs students; culturally relevant teaching related to gifted students; pedagogy and gifted research about best practices; and rule/policy changes for administrators, counselors, placement specialists, general educators and parents of the gifted;
- Coordination of transition EPs;
- Development of district policy regarding placement and program management; and
- Review of assessments to chart progress of students who are gifted to ensure continued measurable gains and evaluate program effectiveness.

## **B. Establishing Community Support**

A broad-based district gifted education advisory committee representing educators, parents and community members should meet regularly to review and discuss ways to support the program. Because they share responsibility for the continued academic growth of gifted learners, the designation of an advisory/support group for gifted education enables the district to maintain the connection and involve stakeholders in the outcomes. The group could be composed of members of any stakeholder group including parents, educators of the gifted, school counselors/school psychologists and/or other mental health providers, ELL and ESE specialists, community and business leaders, specialists in the building (such as the librarian, art teacher, technology coordinator, reading specialist), school board members and/or university staff.

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. 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; and
- Meetings — school based and/or district-wide — to provide an overview of the program and to address parent concerns. Administrators and/or educators who work with the gifted may present information related to:
  - Eligibility
  - Program services
  - Volunteer opportunities
  - Addressing needs related to characteristics of the gifted learner
  - Addressing social and emotional concerns
  - Special programs and activities available
  - Topics of concern specific to parenting a gifted learner
  - Suggestions that might be used in the home to enrich learning experiences
  - Networking with other parents to support the program
  - State laws, regulations and rules
  - State and national resources (see next page)

It is imperative that parents/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. Parents/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
- Participate on the district's gifted advisory board
- 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
- Advocate effectively for gifted education

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 standards and expectations in that field.

Subject-specific community groups could be asked to partner with a class, 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 the connection for students with appropriate mentors at all grade levels to address special interests and abilities of the students.

Resources for parents are available at these sites:

- The [Handbook for Parents of Students who are Gifted](#) on the FDOE website provides a direct link to rules, statutes, publications and resources.
- 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.
- [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.
- The [National Parenting Education Network \(NPEN\)](#) provides access to research-based information about the process of parenting and about family involvement in education.
- [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.



- Florida Association for the Gifted (FLAG) is the state gifted organization and NAGC affiliate. FLAG holds an annual conference with workshops on gifted issues for parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists and other community members.
- Florida Gifted Network, also an NAGC affiliate, is a state gifted organization consisting of parents, educators and community members who work to improve the education of Florida's gifted children.

## VI. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“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 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 by the administration at the beginning of the year when the teacher is teaching out of field.

All teachers should be academically qualified, caring and supportive of students. Rule 6A-4.01791, F.A.C., 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 the Gifted** to include modification of curriculum content, instructional process, student products and learning environment;
- **Guidance and Counseling for the Gifted** to include motivation, self-image, interpersonal skills and career options for gifted students;
- **Education of Special Populations of Gifted Students** such as minorities, underachievers, handicapped, economically disadvantaged and ELL, to include student characteristics and programmatic adaptations; and
- **Theory and Development of Creativity** to include elements of creativity such as fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

There are several options available for teachers to obtain the gifted endorsement. Endorsement classes are available through:

- Colleges and universities through online and on-campus courses
- Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Systems (FDRLS) Centers or an educational consortium
- Local school district in-service training
- On-line options

To provide support for district coordinators in ensuring teachers are qualified, FDOE:

- Regularly revises the five required endorsement courses to reflect current research and practices
- Supports availability of the endorsement courses online specifically intended for districts unable to provide the courses through in-service programs

If your district needs assistance in setting up endorsement training add-on classes or would like to increase participation of staff in these trainings, please contact the gifted education specialist at FDOE for more information.

## **B. Teacher Competencies**

Teacher competencies for working successfully with gifted students (i.e., CEC-NAGC Teacher Standards in Appendix 2) are correlated with the state-approved professional development program and the courses in rule. Districts should 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 specific training in gifted education are more likely to demonstrate these competencies:

- 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.

Gifted education professional organizations have designated Standards for Graduate Programs in Gifted Education (NAGC 1995) and a set of joint standards for initial teacher preparation standards in gifted education (Council for Exceptional Children, The Association for the Gifted [CEC-TAG], and NAGC, 2004) (Appendix 2). These standards are correlated to the contents of the state endorsement modules.

NAGC released a position paper identifying the competencies needed by teachers who work with gifted students. The paper clearly states that “all children deserve the highest quality of instruction possible and that such instruction will only occur when teachers are aware of and able to respond to the unique qualities and characteristics of the students they instruct. Gifted and talented students present a particular challenge and often experience inadequate and inappropriate education. To provide appropriate learning experiences for gifted and talented students, teachers need to possess:

- a knowledge and valuing of the origins and nature of high levels of intelligence, including creative expressions of intelligence;
- a knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, social and emotional characteristics, needs, and potential problems experienced by gifted and talented students from diverse populations;
- a knowledge of and access to advanced content and ideas;

- an ability to develop a differentiated curriculum appropriate to meeting the unique intellectual and emotional needs and interests of gifted and talented students; and
- an ability to create an environment in which gifted and talented students can feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.”

Additionally, FDOE offers updates through newsletters and conference calls with district contacts, as well as presentations, 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**

#### **Ongoing professional development should be available for teachers and for administrators and all other personnel working with gifted students.**

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

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, in-service courses) with knowledgeable and credentialed trainers.

Trained district coordinators are also resources. The local coordinator should have a high level of expertise to guide implementation of innovative teaching strategies. District coordinators attend meetings and conferences related specifically to gifted education to be aware of current practices and research in the field related to effective instructional strategies for subsequent sharing with district staff. Districts should establish a policy for release time for professional staff and other personnel to allow attendance as part of ongoing professional development programs dealing with gifted education. Teacher coaching models should be employed as a follow-up to training.

Once a teacher earns the gifted endorsement, there is currently no specific requirement for further professional development to ensure the teacher remains current in the field, which makes it critical for the district to provide access to the most updated 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.

The district should provide staff development opportunities to address this need to ensure teachers at all levels have an understanding of the characteristics of gifted students, training about identifying and supporting students from special populations, and the challenge of providing meaningful learning experiences and rigorous curriculum. Training enables teachers to differentiate 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 development of resources not currently available that are determined necessary to meet instructional objectives. See section III C, Curriculum and Instruction, of this resource guide.

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. 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 state policy governing gifted education, districts should engage in continuous self-monitoring efforts as well as periodic reviews by the FDOE. District self-monitoring should be used along with state and district data to evaluate compliance. Program design should ensure each student shows at least one year’s academic growth each year.

In 2010, NAGC released updated Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards to guide districts in examining the quality of their programming for students who are gifted.

FDOE provides the Florida School District Gifted Self-Assessment Tool (Appendix 3) to assist districts in aiming for the highest standards in providing an appropriate education for gifted students. Self-assessments will be reviewed along with regular FDOE monitoring to determine the impact of programs and services on student performance and gains.

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

#### **An evaluation must be purposeful.**

- The district provides ongoing student and program assessment that reflects the program’s philosophy, goals and standards.
- All components of the program are conducted equitably and checked for any potential biases or disparate impacts.
- 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.

#### **An evaluation must be efficient and economical.**

- Districts provide sufficient resources, time, personnel and support to conduct a program evaluation.

#### **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.

**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 district uses a self-assessment tool and presents the results to stakeholders in the district who are then responsible for follow-through for necessary improvements.

## **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 (Goal I)
- Placement and Development of the Educational Plan (EP) (Goals II, III)
- Service Delivery (Goals II, III, IV, V)
- Personnel Preparation (Goals III, V, VI)
- Parent and Community Involvement (Goals V, VII)
- Program Evaluation Design (Goals V, VII)

**The District Self-Assessment Tool** provided (Appendix 3) is based on policies and programs identified from state and national guidelines for meeting the needs of gifted learners. The district may use this 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 indicate specific areas to address further to meet the needs of students for future assessments as well as highlight areas where the district is meeting and exceeding expectations.

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 experience 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 goal is to ensure the district is striving to meet the needs of the gifted learners in the most appropriate way.

# Appendix 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) 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
- An evaluation team including a gifted endorsed educator and a psychologist

### Key Elements in Program and Curriculum Policy

- Includes specific grouping arrangements 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 including the gifted 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
- Includes culturally sensitive strategies
- Distinguishes between advanced or accelerated options and gifted services

### Key Elements in Personnel Preparation Policy

- Requires teachers who work directly with gifted learners and gifted education administrators/coordinators to complete university-based coursework in gifted education (available through districts, colleges and universities)
- Links gifted course work to National Association for Gifted Children and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC/NAGC) standards for teacher preparation
- 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
  - Gifted services 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
  - Diversity membership
  - Acceleration and other alternative education plans that can be used for high performers and gifted students, including information on the options, district plans and utilization statistics
- 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.

## Appendix 2

### Assessing the Educational Plan (EP) for Students who are Gifted

**6A-6.030191, F.A.C. Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students who are Gifted.**

Educational Plans (EPs) are developed for students identified solely as gifted. Parents are partners with schools and school district personnel in developing, reviewing, and revising the educational plan (EP) for their child. Procedures for the development of the EPs for exceptional students who are gifted, including procedures for parental involvement, shall be set forth in each district's Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services to Exceptional Students document and shall be consistent with the following requirements. (If a student who is gifted also has a disability, their gifted goals will be noted in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the IEP Safeguards will apply. The following expectations still apply to gifted goals and services specified in the IEP.)

**(1) Role of parents. The role of parents in developing EPs includes:**

Expectation stated in rule	Satisfactory	Exemplary
a) Providing critical information regarding the strengths of their child; b) Expressing their concerns for enhancing the education of their child so that they receive a free appropriate public education c) Participating in discussions about the child's need for specially designed instruction; d) Participating in deciding how the child will be involved and progress in the general curriculum; e) Participating in the determination of what services the school district will provide to the child and in what setting.	Notation such as "Parent indicates student likes to read" Or "Parent wants child to do well in school" Or District developed form	Obvious reflection of parent input regarding student's hobbies and outside interests as well as favorite subjects – enjoying a challenging class. Or Documentation of discussion reflects specifics such as concern that child is doing more in math at home than in school; reading higher level books independently, etc. or parents note child is being challenged in a particular class.

**(2) Parent participation. Each school board shall establish procedures which shall provide for parents to participate in decisions concerning the EP. Such procedures shall include the following:**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<p>a) Each district shall take the following steps to ensure that one (1) or both of the parents of a student who is gifted is present or is afforded the opportunity to participate at each EP meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and</li> <li>2. Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.</li> </ol>	<p>Insufficient notification of time but parent still attends Or Parent called day before meeting to confirm Or Parent requests alternate time and no response is indicated</p>	<p>Copy of original letter with response from parent indicated and notation of a follow-up reminder(s) or phone call(s) to parent.</p>
<p>b) A written notice to the parents must indicate the purpose, time, location of the meeting, and who, by title and or position, will be attending. The notice must also include a statement informing the parents that they have the right to invite an individual with special knowledge or expertise about their child.</p> <p>c) If neither parent can attend, the school district shall use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls.</p> <p>d) A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the school district is unable to obtain the attendance of the parents. In this case, the district must have a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;</li> <li>2. Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; or</li> <li>3. Detailed records of visits made to the parents' home or place of employment and the results of those visits.</li> </ol>	<p>An interpreter must be provided if the parent requested an interpreter.</p>	<p>Letter includes required information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Purpose of meeting</li> <li>▪ Time for meeting</li> <li>▪ Specific location for meeting</li> <li>▪ Name – and title – of each person who will attend</li> <li>▪ Statement informing parent of right to invite others</li> </ul> <p>Documentation that parent was asked if interpreter is requested; with documentation interpreter attended meeting.</p> <p>Clear indication that a copy of the EP is provided to parent at the time of the meeting.</p>

<p>e) The district shall take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parents understand the proceedings at an EP meeting, which may include arranging for an interpreter for parents and students who are deaf or whose native language is a language other than English.</p> <p>f) The district shall give the parents a copy of the EP at no cost to the parents.</p>		
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**(3) Educational plan (EP) team participants. The EP team shall include the following participants:**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<p>a) The parents of the student in accordance with subsection (2) of this rule;</p> <p>b) One regular education teacher of the student who, to the extent appropriate, is involved in the development and review of a student's EP. Involvement may be the provision of written documentation of a student's strengths and needs.</p> <p>c) At least one teacher of the gifted program;</p> <p>d) 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 students who are gifted, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district. At the discretion of the school district, one of the student's teachers may be designated to also serve as the representative of the school district;</p> <p>e) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results who may be a member of the team as described in paragraphs (3) (b)-(d) of this rule;</p> <p>f) At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student. The determination of</p>	<p>Parent(s) attended and signed</p> <p>Parent letter indicates regular education teacher is invited and attends or notation that teacher submitted written report.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Teacher of the gifted serves as the regular education teacher for full-time service model.</p> <p>Teacher of the gifted invited and attends.</p> <p>Indication of an LEA representative attending.</p> <p>At initial EP meeting, psychologist is present to appropriately interpret instructional implications of eligibility (IQ) evaluation results</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <p>Indication of LEA representative or teacher attending to interpret</p>	<p>Parent(s) attended and signed</p> <p>Regular education teacher invited, attends, provides documentation of present levels of performance, primarily in the curriculum area indicated as one of the student's areas of strength.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Regular education teacher's report is attached or referenced to document student's present levels of performance and special needs.</p> <p>Teacher of the gifted invited and attends.</p> <p>Indication that the LEA representative attending is one with authority to describe and offer appropriate service at alternate sites in the district to assure a continuum of service.</p> <p>At initial EP meeting, psychologist is present to appropriately interpret instructional implications of eligibility (IQ) evaluation results.</p>

<p>knowledge or special expertise of any individual shall be made by the party who invites the individual to be a member of the EP team; and</p> <p>g) The student, as appropriate.</p>	<p>classroom, district and state assessments.</p> <p>Documentation of notice to parent that others may be invited.</p> <p>Documents student was invited.</p>	<p>And</p> <p>Indication of LEA representative or teacher attending to interpret classroom, district and state assessments.</p> <p>Documentation of notice that others may be invited (Guidance counselor, private therapist, tutor, coach, etc.)</p> <p>Student invited and/or attended meeting.</p>
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**(4) Contents of Educational Plans (EPs). EPs for students who are gifted must include:**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<p>a) A statement of the 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 district assessments, and evaluation results;</p>	<p>Indication of the most recent standardized test scores and other classroom or district assessments</p>	<p>Present levels of performance may include strengths/ interests in academic areas, needs beyond the general curriculum as documented by tests or evaluations, student's performance on state and/or district assessments, any other evaluation results; indications of where student is performing above grade level peers or finishing more quickly than others.</p>
<p>b) A statement of goals, including benchmarks or short term objectives;</p>	<p>Minimum of two goals are included with minimum of two benchmarks per goal with nominal alignment to needs of the student as indicated by (4)(a)</p>	<p>At least two goals included which clearly align to the indicated special needs of the student. At least two benchmarks per goal which clearly describe the necessary skills the student will need to evidence mastery to accomplish the stated goals. At least one of the goals focuses on the social-emotional needs related to the characteristics and needs of the gifted student.</p>
<p>c) A statement of the specially designed instruction to be provided to the student;</p>	<p>A statement indicating student will have access to a differentiated curriculum and/or compacted curriculum</p>	<p>Statement of a specific specially designed instruction aligned to the goals for the student. Alternate class placement; integrated interdisciplinary units; synectics; simulations, problem-based learning;</p>

		curriculum compacting, etc. The Parallel Curriculum Model provides further information.
d) A statement of how the student's progress toward the goals will be measured and reported to parents; and	Statement that progress will be reported annually. Or Specific rubric or criteria chart completed by teacher Or Checklist indicating student's progress toward mastery	Progress is charted as indicated in the goals and benchmarks. The EP indicates student's progress toward the goals will be reported at least each grading period to ensure parent is informed about student's progress.
e) The projected date for the beginning of services, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Projected date for beginning of services (example: 3/7/10)</li> <li>▪ Anticipated frequency (example: 1 – 4 times weekly)</li> <li>▪ Location (example: classroom)</li> <li>▪ Duration of services (example: this year)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Projected date for the beginning of services (example: 3/7/2010)</li> <li>▪ Anticipated frequency (example: 250 minutes per week Monday through Friday)</li> <li>▪ Location (example: resource classroom at name of school)</li> <li>▪ Duration of services (example: resource room daily prior to 6/7/2011)</li> </ul>

**(5) Considerations in EP development, review and revision. The EP team shall consider the following:**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
a) The strengths of the student and needs resulting from the student's giftedness.	Student needs logical thinking activities and problem solving activities to learn new information	The need for service – and the service to be provided is based on current levels of performance and specific goals to be provided - Example: Current and ongoing class projects and work reveal that student is at the Know level of Goal Three of Frameworks. Goals indicate student will be working toward the Perform level and benchmarks indicate skills to be taught to ensure success at this goal.

b) The results of recent evaluations, including class work and state or district assessments.	One form of evaluation cited: example: FSA scores are 4s in math	Specific examples provided evidencing student evaluations, example: Student samples in portfolio indicate fluency in writing. FSA writing scores are stable at level 3. One goal for student then states that student will work from the Know level of Evaluation in Goal 6 toward the Understand level to use evaluation of previous tasks to improve performance in personal writing.
c) In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as they relate to the EP.	Notation that student is not fluent in English  Or Indicating ESOL level and the types of modifications/adaptations that will be made to the instruction.	Specifics provided to indicate the ELL level of student and requirements to meet the needs of the student

**(6) Timelines. Timelines for EP meetings for students who are gifted shall include the following:**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<p>a) An EP must be in effect at the beginning of each school year.</p> <p>b) An EP shall be developed within thirty (30) calendar days following the determination of eligibility for specially designed instruction and shall be in effect before the provision of these services.</p> <p>c) Meetings shall be held to develop and revise the EP at least every three (3) years for students in grades K-8 and at least every four (4) years for students in grades 9-12. EPs may be reviewed more frequently as needed, such as when the student transitions from elementary to middle school and middle to high school or if the student's parent or teacher requests a review.</p>	<p>Initial EP written for maximum period.</p> <p>EP is developed within a couple of weeks following determination of eligibility for special instruction</p> <p>EP is written to align with the minimum periods stated.</p>	<p>Team determines goals may be accomplished in one year, so will reconvene.</p> <p>Upon determination of eligibility, notification is sent to parent to set up meeting for initial placement and EP development.</p> <p>The EP team documents when they feel they will need to meet to review the EP. The time and type of service the student is to receive is considered. Due to the goals and projections of how long it might take for the student to accomplish those goals,</p>

		team sets a date to reconvene to review student's progress.
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**(7) EP Implementation. An EP must be in effect before specially designed instruction is provided to an eligible student and must be implemented as soon as possible following the EP meeting.**

<b>Expectation stated in rule</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
a) The EP shall be accessible to each of the student's teachers who are responsible for the implementation. b) Each teacher of the student shall be informed of specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's EP.	Notation that EP is in school files  Notation that EP is in school files	Indication that teachers who will provide service are provided with a copy of the EP to enable tracking progress. Indication that each teacher who impacts the learning of the student is provided with a copy of the EP to enable tracking/reporting progress.



## Appendix 3

### Florida School District Gifted Program Self-Assessment Tool

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to assist local school districts in examining the quality of their programming and services for gifted learners. These standards represent professional consensus on critical practice and serve as guidelines for (1) basic requirements for high-quality programming for gifted learners, (2) program development and (3) measuring the effectiveness of programming.

#### **Structure of the Document**

The standards are divided according to the following aspects of gifted programming and service delivery:

- 1) Identification
- 2) Placement and Development of the Educational Plan (EP)
- 3) Program Design and Management
- 4) Personnel Preparation
- 5) Parent and Community Involvement.

The self-assessment is designed to guide school districts in judging their current program status in relation to the research-based standards. A guide for programs in Florida is available listing the core research-based themes extracted from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Policy Guide which includes guidance for a continuum of services model to be implemented K-12 with relevant research references supporting the nature of interventions based on general intellectual ability and specific aptitudes.

The intent is to provide the most appropriate educational experience possible for gifted learners in Florida.

Part I is a survey of the district to present a profile of the current status and infrastructure of the program.

Part II is an assessment instrument for addressing each of the aspects of the standards of the current program.

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**Florida School District Gifted Self-Assessment Tool**  
**Part I: Profile of the District**

**1. Number of schools with students identified as eligible for gifted service.**

Elementary: # \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ schools  
 Middle: # \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ schools  
 Combination # \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ schools (example: Elementary/Middle)  
 High schools: # \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ schools  
 Total schools: # \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ x 100 = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Some evidence (SE): 1 – 33% of total schools  
 Nearly complete (NC): 34 – 66% of total schools  
 In place (IP): 67 – 100% of total schools

**2. Identify the number of eligible students in the district currently being provided with gifted services (to include full-time, part-time or consultation services).**

Number of students:

K-2: \_\_\_\_\_ receiving service of \_\_\_\_\_ total identified as eligible  
 Grades 3-5: \_\_\_\_\_ receiving service of \_\_\_\_\_ total identified as eligible  
 Grades 6-8: \_\_\_\_\_ receiving service of \_\_\_\_\_ total identified as eligible  
 Grades 9-12: \_\_\_\_\_ receiving service of \_\_\_\_\_ total identified as eligible

Total students currently being served: \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ total identified as eligible \_\_\_\_\_ %

SE: 1 – 33% of total schools  
 NC: 34 – 66% of total schools  
 IP: 67 – 100% of total schools

**3. How often is the school board provided with information about gifted programs and services?**

Not evident (NE): Not briefed

SE: Once per year Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 NC: Twice per year Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
 IP: More than twice per year Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. The district has adopted a policy for screening to ensure equal access.**

NE: Not yet in place.

SE: Random screening is done.

NC: Screening is done at select schools where representation is historically low.

IP: District-wide screening is the standard policy.

**5. The district has a specific policy for development of the educational plans.**

SE: EP development is conducted at group meetings or with small groups of students with similar strengths.

NC: EP development meetings are standardized and focused on meeting the needs of the student.

IP: EP development is individualized specifically to ensure measurable academic gains for the student.

**6. Does your district website include a direct link to gifted education?**

NE: Not sure

SE: Gifted is posted at the ESE link.

NC: Gifted is an independent link.

IP: Gifted is an independent link with resources for parents and educators.

**7. The district conducts awareness training related to the characteristics and special needs of gifted learners.**

NE: It is a school decision and may or may not take place.

SE: It is a district session and attendance is optional.

IP: A session takes place at every school.

**8. The district supports a gifted advisory group.**

NE: Not yet in place

SE: There is a district group outside of the school system.

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for this person \_\_\_\_\_

IP: There is a group supported by the school district, and a district person is a liaison for the group.

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for this person \_\_\_\_\_

Name of district liaison \_\_\_\_\_

**9. How often does the group meet?**

NE: Not yet in place

SE: Once a year

NC: Twice a year

IP: At least quarterly

**10. Identify the membership of the district advisory group.**

<b>Membership Representation</b>	<b>% age of total group</b>
Parents	
Teachers	
Administrators	
Students	
School board	
Community groups	
Other (indicate)	

**11. The district monitors progress of gifted learners.**

SE: As part of a review of all students' progress

NC: Regularly as an isolated data piece

IP: Regularly as an isolated data piece AND results of gifted achievement are shared with the public

Means of determining student gains \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Transition EPs are monitored by the district.**

NC: Elementary site develops EPs for students going to middle school, and middle schools write EPs for students transitioning to high school.

IP: Transition EPs are written in collaboration between the two sites.

Indicate how that is accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**13. The district provides guidelines on measurable academic learning opportunities for gifted curriculum. The district plan identifies placement and courses and indicates how progress shall be measured.**

NE: No current guidelines in place – determination is left to EP team.

NC: Gifted service options are available at all grade levels.

IP: Gifted service options are available at all grade levels AND the district monitors and measures progress of gifted learners to ensure academic gains K-12.

**14. Acceleration is a tool that can be utilized for all students who are ready for increased challenges, and it can be an essential element of gifted curriculum and instruction. A flexible instructional pace allows for accelerated learning as appropriate.**

NE: There is no written district plan addressing acceleration.

NC: Policies exist that include at least 5 of the following:

IP: Policies exist that include at least 9 of the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade skipping – whole grade acceleration ahead of chronological peers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continuous progress – as student evidences mastery of content, progress exceeds chronological peers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-paced instruction – student proceeds at a self-selected pace
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject-matter acceleration – student is placed with older peers for one or more content areas
- \_\_\_\_\_ Combined classes – multi-grade classes with specially designed curriculum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Curriculum compacting – students have reduced amounts of introduction, drill and practice to allow time for advanced instruction or enrichment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telescoping curriculum – instruction in less time than usual (e.g., one year course in a semester or three years of middle school in two years)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring (or externships) mentor or expert in the field provides advanced instruction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extracurricular programs: coursework outside of school that provides advanced instruction for credit (e.g., the Governor’s Summer Program)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Correspondence courses – includes virtual or televised instruction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early graduation – student graduates in three and a half years
- \_\_\_\_\_ Concurrent/dual enrollment – taking a course at one level and receiving credit at a higher level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced Placement (AP) courses requiring a standardized examination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Credit by exam – student takes a test to evidence mastery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acceleration in college – student is awarded advanced levels of instruction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early entrance into middle, high school or college

**15. The district has made progress toward equitable access to gifted services.**

NE: The district is not meeting the equity index for racial diversity of their gifted services and has not made any progress in the last year and/or has not tracked the district's equity index progress.

SE: The district has reviewed their equity data but has not made any progress towards being within the equity index for racial diversity of their gifted services in the past year.

NC: The district reviews their diversity data regularly and is showing improved access for diverse student populations in the last year.

IP: The district reviews their diversity data regularly, and their gifted membership numbers are within the equity index for all of their diverse student populations.

**Florida School District Gifted Program Self-Assessment Tool**  
**Part II: Standards for Gifted Education**

**Checklist directions: Place a checkmark in one of the four columns according to the degree of evidence of the program component. The first column from the left is Not Evident (NE), the second column is Some Evidence (SE), the third column is Nearly Complete (NC), and the fourth column is In Place (IP). Measurement points for each indicator are shown.**

**Standard: Identification**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	<b>Components of a Program for Gifted Education</b>
				<b><u>Identification</u></b>
				All parents and staff receive information and training annually about the nomination process, including the characteristics of gifted students.
				Assessments are responsive to students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, handicapping conditions and other factors that mitigate against fair assessment practices.
				A committee, including the gifted coordinator or designee, makes final determinations on individual student eligibility for services.
				Personnel trained in gifted education meet at regular intervals to determine eligibility, identification and placement of individual candidates.
				An individual assessment profile is developed for each identified child to evaluate appropriate placement in the gifted program. The individual assessment profile reflects the learning characteristics, potential and performance levels, interests, learning style and educational needs of the student.
				Policy and procedures exist for consideration for a student exiting the program, interventions are implemented and a meeting is held with the parents and student.
				The nomination/referral process is ongoing and includes all students K-12.
				A universal assessment/identification process (screening) is in place to ensure that all potential students with high abilities are appropriately assessed for identification as gifted. All children are eligible for the nomination process regardless of socio-economic, linguistic/cultural background and/or disabilities.
				Teachers completing checklists are instructed in general intellectual and specific aptitudes/characteristics of gifted students that serve as "look fors" in the classroom.



**Standard: Placement and Development of the Educational Plan**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	<b>Component of a Program for Gifted Education</b>
				<b><u>Placement and Development of the Educational Plan (EP)</u></b>
				Programs for gifted learners provide services that are an integral part of the school day.
				Services for gifted students are designed to supplement and build on the basic academic standards and the knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade levels.
				Gifted students are provided with multiple service delivery options and curricular experiences at all grade levels to ensure continual student progress and learning as no single service meets the needs of all gifted students.
				There is a match of student strengths and ability to academic placement/teacher expertise.
				Teachers differentiate, replace, supplement and/or modify curricula to facilitate higher level learning goals for the gifted as documented in lesson plans. The differentiated curriculum provides for balanced development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, research skills, advanced content and authentic and appropriate products.
				The academic instruction available to gifted learners consists of advanced content and appropriately differentiated teaching strategies to reflect the potential needs of accelerated learning pace for students with advanced intellectual processes.
				Social emotional skills are included in the EP and at least one goal relates to supporting the student's social emotional gifted characteristics and needs.

**Standard: Service Delivery**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	<b>Component of a Program for Gifted Education</b>
				<b><u>Program Design and Management</u></b>
				A comprehensive K-12 Gifted Plan includes policies and procedures for identification and assessment of students, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, evaluation, support services and parent involvement.
				Acceleration is provided as needed, utilizing the district's ACCEL Plan (s. 1002.3105, Florida Statute). A flexible instructional pace allows for accelerated learning as appropriate. Policies exist for grade skipping, ability grouping, early matriculation and dual enrollment.
				Academic courses that students who are gifted may access include non-core areas of the curriculum such as foreign language and the arts, independent study, competitions and one-to-one professional apprenticeships.
				Time to work with intellectual peers for portions of the school day is required.

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	<b>Component of a Program for Gifted Education</b>
				<b><u>Program Design and Management</u></b>
				A gifted-endorsed coordinator is designated responsible for ensuring gifted students have access to comprehensive academic and social-emotional services as needed.
				Appropriate instructional materials are available to support the gifted program, extend the content standards and provide opportunities for studying topics in depth.
				Guidance and counseling services to meet the socio-emotional needs of gifted students are ongoing, K-12. Counselors and others with specific training in the socio-emotional needs of gifted students provide counseling and guidance services at all levels of schooling.
				Curriculum that outlines services in academic development, career development and personal/social development for gifted students is developed and implemented. Gifted students receive college/career exploration throughout grades 6-12.
				Gifted students who are at risk, twice exceptional or who do not display satisfactory performance in regular or gifted classes are monitored and provided with appropriate intervention services. Teachers, administrators, school services personnel and parents/guardians collaborate in implementing intervention strategies for at-risk students.

**Standard: Personnel Preparation**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	<b>Component of a Program for Gifted Education</b>
				<b><u>Personnel Preparation</u></b>
				The district seeks and hires teachers and administrators endorsed in gifted education.
				All teachers working with gifted learners have met the requirements for the grade and content of the course/grade being taught <u>and</u> have the gifted endorsement.
				The district sponsors professional development in gifted education (e.g., workshops, conferences and courses) with knowledgeable and credentialed consultants and trainers.
				The district has established a policy for released time for professional staff and other personnel to allow for attendance at professional development programs dealing with gifted education.
				The district provides specific training for counselors, administrators and other personnel involved in the decision-making related to their roles and responsibilities in the program of services for gifted students. Administrators, counselors and support staff participate with teachers in the on-going professional development program dealing with gifted learners.
				Teacher competencies for working successfully with gifted students (i.e., CEC-NAGC Teacher Standards) are correlated with the professional development program.

				Classrooms containing gifted learners are periodically monitored for use of appropriate differentiation.
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**Standard: Parent and Community Involvement**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	Component of a Program for Gifted Education
				<b><u>Parent and Community Involvement</u></b>
				A broad-based planning committee representing educators, parents and community members meets regularly to assess and support the program.
				Open meetings are scheduled as recommended by the committee to maintain connections and provide information to parents about gifted programs and services.
				Community partnerships have been established to work with gifted programs.

**Standard: Program Evaluation**

(NE)	(SE)	(NC)	(IP)	Component of a Program for Gifted Education
				<b><u>Program Evaluation</u></b>
				The district provides ongoing student and program assessment consistent with the program's philosophy, goals and standards.
				All components of the program are periodically reviewed by individuals knowledgeable about gifted learners and who have competence in the evaluation process. The results are used for continuing program development.
				The district plan contains a clear description of performance expectations for gifted students at each grade level, and the plan is tied to the district's multi-tiered system of support.
				The district uses multiple, traditional and non-traditional strategies to assess gifted student performance. These include standardized and criterion-referenced achievement tests, questionnaires, checklists, observation scales, interviews and performance-based measures.
				The results of the program evaluation are presented to the local Board of Education and are accessible to all constituencies of the program.
				The gifted program evaluation report for all educational services involving gifted students includes both strengths and weaknesses of the program and is accompanied by a plan with implications for improvement and renewal over time.

## Appendix 4

### NAGC- CEC Teacher Knowledge and Skill Standards for Gifted and Talented Education

#### **Standard 1: Foundations**

Educators of the gifted understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues. These perspectives continue to influence the field of gifted education and the education and treatment of individuals with gifts and talents both in school and society. They recognize how foundational influences affect professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, delivery, and program evaluation. They further understand how issues of human diversity impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact in the delivery of gifted and talented education services.

#### **Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**

Educators of the gifted know and demonstrate respect for their students as unique human beings. They understand variations in characteristics and development between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs and capacities. Educators of the gifted can express how different characteristics interact with the domains of human development and use this knowledge to describe the varying abilities and behaviors of individuals with gifts and talents. Educators of the gifted also understand how families and communities contribute to the development of individuals with gifts and talents.

#### **Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences**

Educators of the gifted understand the effects that gifts and talents can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Moreover, educators of the gifted are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how language, culture, and family background interact with an individual's predispositions to impact academic and social behavior, attitudes, values, and interests. The understanding of these learning differences and their interactions provides the foundation upon which educators of the gifted plan instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.

#### **Standard 4: Instructional Strategies**

Educators of the gifted possess a repertoire of evidence-based curriculum and instructional strategies to differentiate for individuals with gifts and talents. They select, adapt, and use these strategies to promote challenging learning opportunities in general and special curricula and to modify learning environments to enhance self-awareness and self-efficacy for individuals with gifts and talents. They enhance the learning of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills in specific domains. Moreover, educators of the gifted emphasize the development, practice, and transfer of advanced knowledge and skills across environments throughout the lifespan leading to creative, productive careers in society for individuals with gifts and talents.

**Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Educators of the gifted actively create learning environments for individuals with gifts and talents that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement. In addition, educators of the gifted foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Educators of the gifted shape environments to encourage independence, motivation, and self-advocacy of individuals with gifts and talents.

**Standard 6: Language and Communication**

Educators of the gifted understand the role of language and communication in talent development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can hinder or facilitate such development. They use relevant strategies to teach oral and written communication skills to individuals with gifts and talents. Educators of the gifted are familiar with assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. They match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Educators of the gifted use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with gifts and talents who are English learners.

**Standard 7: Instructional Planning**

Curriculum and instructional planning is at the center of gifted and talented education. Educators of the gifted develop long-range plans anchored in both general and special curricula. They systematically translate shorter-range goals and objectives that take into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and cultural and linguistic factors. Understanding of these factors, as well as the implications of being gifted and talented, guides the educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and use of differentiated instructional strategies. Learning plans are modified based on ongoing assessment of the individual's progress. Moreover, educators of the gifted facilitate these actions in a collaborative context that includes individuals with gifts and talents, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Educators of the gifted are comfortable using technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

**Standard 8: Assessment**

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of educators of the gifted as multiple types of assessment information are required for both identification and learning progress decisions. Educators of the gifted use the results of such assessments to adjust instruction and to enhance ongoing learning progress. Educators of the gifted understand the process of identification, legal policies, and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with gifts and talents, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. They understand measurement theory and practices for addressing the interpretation of assessment results. In addition, educators of the gifted understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. To ensure the use of nonbiased and equitable identification and learning progress models, educators of the gifted employ alternative assessments such as performance-based assessment, portfolios, and computer simulations.

**Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice**

Educators of the gifted are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. They practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to professional and ethical considerations. They engage in professional activities that promote growth in individuals with gifts and talents and update themselves on evidence-based best practices. Educators of the gifted view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflection and adjust their practice. They are aware of how attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Educators of the gifted understand that culture and language interact with gifts and talents and are sensitive to the many aspects of the diversity of individuals with gifts and talent sand their families.

**Standard 10: Collaboration**

Educators of the gifted effectively collaborate with families, other educators, and related service providers. This collaboration enhances comprehensive articulated program options across educational levels and engagement of individuals with gifts and talents in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Moreover, educators of the gifted embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with gifts and talents. They promote and advocate for the learning and well-being of individuals with gifts and talents across settings and diverse learning experiences.