

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

In compliance with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) gifted regulations and state mandate, the Jackson Public School District (JPSD) “Alpha” program for intellectually gifted students is an integral part of the school district’s overall educational offerings. The curriculum incorporates both group and individual strategies focusing on thinking skills, creativity, information literacy, communication skills, affective skills, and success skills. Services for intellectually gifted students in grades two through six are provided by a teacher with gifted endorsement.

In second through fifth grade, intellectually gifted students are served 270 minutes per week in a pull-out gifted program. In sixth grade, the intellectually gifted students are served 240 minutes per week in a “one-class period per day” gifted program aligned with the bell schedule. JPSD gifted students spend the rest of their school week in general education classes. At no time are the gifted education students denied the opportunity to attend activity or elective courses due to time spent in gifted classes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the gifted education program is to identify and serve intellectually gifted students a qualitatively differentiated curriculum and services that meet the unique cognitive, social, and emotional needs of gifted students not available in the regular classroom.

MDE DEFINITION

The State of Mississippi defines “*Intellectually Gifted Children*” and “*Gifted Education Programs*” as follows:

“Intellectually Gifted Children” shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process. The needs of these students should be addressed based on the program options provided in the Outcomes for Intellectually Gifted Education Programs Grades 2-8 in Mississippi.

“Gifted Education Programs” (GEP) shall mean special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2-12, ... in the public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.”

Although the State of Mississippi recognizes permissive programming for academically gifted students in grades 9-12; artistically gifted children in grades 2-12; and creatively gifted children in grades 2-12, only intellectually gifted programs in grades 2-6 are mandated by law. Jackson Public School District offers the program for intellectually gifted children in the mandated grades 2-6.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION PROCESS FOR GIFTED ELIGIBILITY

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students who may be at a disadvantage for identification.

All data collected as part of the identification process shall be recorded on the Gifted Eligibility Form (GEF) in documenting relevant data inclusive of demographic information for the purpose of enrollment and registration and will be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Access to this information is restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or that have a documented need to access. Parents of gifted students shall be notified in writing about their rights under FERPA.

Gifted student files shall be required to contain the following information:

1. Gifted Eligibility Form (GEF) include:
 - a. Parent Signature
 - b. Eligibility/Ineligibility Mark
 - c. Signed by LSC (minimum 2 signatures)
 - d. Eligibility Date
2. Permission for Gifted Service Form include:
 - a. Parent Signature
3. Assessment Report
4. Referral Documentation
5. Original Protocols INCLUDE:
 - a. Objective Measure(s)
 - b. Subjective Measure(s)
 - c. Individual Assessment(s)

Once the referral process begins, parents may request access to their child's data and an explanation of results at any point in the process by contacting the Gifted Manager.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL

Referral for the gifted education program is based on consideration of potential ability, test performance, maturity, creativity, leadership, and performance in the regular classroom. While grades and/or achievement test scores might be an indicator of giftedness, by MDE Regulations, neither classroom behavior, grades, or achievement test scores may be used to eliminate a student from the identification process.

JPSD follows the MDE established procedures and criteria on all referral measures for identification.

Process 1: Mass Screening is conducted in first grade annually.

Process 2: Individual referrals for students in second through sixth grade are accepted throughout the school year.

All students in grades served by the program comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients for gifted education services. A student may be referred for consideration, pending documentation of the referral criteria by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. A referral must be initiated by written request to the teacher of the gifted. Once a referral process has been initiated with a dated and signed referral form, only the Gifted Local Survey Committee (LSC) or parents can stop the identification process. The 90-school day assessment timeline begins on the date that a signed and dated student referral is submitted by anyone believing that the student may be intellectually gifted.

Referral must include documentation of three of the following:

1. A group measure of intelligence administered within the past twelve (12) months with a minimum score at or above the 90th percentile;
2. Published measure of characteristics of giftedness at the superior range;
3. Published measure of creativity at the superior range;
4. Published measure of leadership at the superior range;
5. A score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies or the composite on a normed achievement test;
6. A score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive abilities;
7. A score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence administered within the past twelve (12) months; and/or
8. Other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students and approved by the MDE on the Jackson Public School District Gifted Education Program Proposal.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

If a student meets criteria for referral, the Gifted LSC will recommend individual assessment to determine eligibility for an “Intellectually Gifted” ruling. Written parental permission for testing must be obtained before any individual testing is initiated. The individual test of intelligence shall be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested.

The student must meet identification criteria as approved by the MDE at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) to satisfy eligibility criteria. If a student meets criteria, the Gifted LSC will grant an “Intellectually Gifted” eligibility ruling. Students who have been assessed by licensed examiners outside of the school district shall have their results considered for referral criteria and reviewed for gifted eligibility.

INDEPENDENT OR PRIVATE TESTING

Parents may have their child independently assessed by a licensed psychometrist or examiner. The student shall satisfy minimally acceptable criteria on the measures used. In addition, the child must satisfy at least THREE of the following to be considered for the Gifted Education Program:

- A score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published characteristics of giftedness checklist
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published measure of creativity
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed, published measure of leadership
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months

- Other measures that are documented in the research on the identification of intellectually gifted students

Students referred with an existing IDEA ruling may qualify for additional consideration for a “Twice Exceptional” one-year provisional gifted eligibility as established in MDE Gifted Education Regulations. If by the end of the provisional year the student has been successful in the program, the LSC shall grant regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked by the LSC.

Students potentially at a disadvantage for gifted assessment criteria as established in Gifted Regulations may qualify for additional consideration with an individual intelligence score at the 84th percentile and one of the following:

1. A test of cognitive abilities with a minimal score at the 90th percentile;
2. A group intelligence measure with a minimal score at the 90th percentile; or
3. A district-developed matrix approved by the MDE.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GIFTED IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

Formerly Emerging Potential Checklist, makes provisions for certain factors that exist that may require special considerations when inappropriate instruments are used during the assessment process. All students should be considered when using the Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist. These students shall be given special consideration(s) during the gifted identification process.

IN-STATE GIFTED TRANSFER STUDENTS

In compliance with MS Department of Education Gifted Regulations, students who have a valid Mississippi gifted eligibility ruling do not have to be re-evaluated. A Mississippi eligibility determination in any of the four areas shall be accepted by all school districts within the state provided the district has a program in the area for which the student has eligibility. Gifted services are provided for intellectually gifted students in the mandated grade levels, second through sixth. Prior to providing services for in-state gifted transfer student, JPSPD shall collect a copy of the student’s Gifted Eligibility Form, and Assessment Report, and obtain Parental Permission for Placement.

OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED TRANSFER STUDENTS

Intellectually gifted students from out of state will be accepted into Mississippi Gifted Education Programs if they have met the 91st percentile on an IQ test. As per gifted regulations, if this criterion is met, reassessment of out-of-state transfers will not be required for gifted services. This includes students from military families based on the Military Interstate Children’s Compact.

PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Once a student is ruled eligible for placement in the gifted program, the parent has the right to agree to or withhold placement of the child. Written parental permission must be obtained before the child can be placed in the program. Once a student is ruled eligible for gifted education services, participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181.

GIFTED STUDENTS IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTINGS

Jackson Public School District is responsible for ensuring that intellectually gifted services continue for students who are placed in an alternative school setting. The amount of time and the way services are provided shall be determined by JPS.

MDE MANDATED GIFTED OUTCOMES AND STANDARDS

In compliance with MDE Gifted Regulations, activities in gifted education classes shall develop and enhance the skills established in the Gifted Outcomes document, the Gifted Teaching Strategies notebook, and required components of the Gifted Education Program Standards document. The activities shall enhance the integration of advanced content and individual student interests by utilizing higher-level thinking skills, creative problem-solving, critical thinking skills, research skills, personal growth, human relations exercises, leadership skills, and creative expression. Activities shall also create an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community. As gifted students work under specific gifted outcomes, process skills, and standards, withholding permission to attend gifted classes shall not be used as a disciplinary measure.

As per gifted regulations, JPS is responsible for ensuring that intellectually gifted students are being serviced during the administration of state and district assessments. A modified or alternate schedule is permitted and must be made available to the MDE upon request.

CLASS SIZE

The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989 requires teachers of the gifted to provide a gifted program that meets the individual needs of the gifted students being served. To maintain the integrity of the program, Jackson Public School District follows the recommended class size of 8-12 students in each class in grades 2-6. JPSD shall electronically submit schedules of all gifted education program teachers to the MDE by February 1 and September 1 each year. To preserve the integrity of the program, JPSD will aim to keep gifted class sizes limited to 15 students. If at any time this threshold is exceeded, written justification must be submitted to the MDE.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

As outlined in MDE Gifted Regulations, gifted students may not be required to make up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. Homework assigned to students by the general education teacher for the evening of the gifted class pull-out day must be completed.

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT

A committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the gifted program. The committee must include, at a minimum, the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative. Since participation in the gifted education program is an entitlement under the law, students shall remain in the gifted program if they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the general education program are the responsibility of the general education teacher and shall not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program. In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's continued

placement. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress, the student may be placed on probation for the next 9-weeks term. Parents shall be included in the process and notified in writing of all actions taken by the committee. Documentation of all decisions and actions will be collected and maintained in LSC minutes.

If the student's performance in the gifted program does not improve within a designated period, the student may be removed from the program. If the parents are not in agreement with the school-based committee decision to remove the student from the gifted program, they may present their concerns, orally or in writing, to the principal of the school. The principal and parents will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

PARENT APPEALS AND HEARINGS

Should the parents of a student in the gifted program not agree to the removal of the student from the program, JPSD shall grant the parents a hearing in accordance with the Student Complaint Policy JCQ which prescribes the procedure for how this hearing will be conducted and how the lack of agreement will be resolved. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate further procedures to implement this policy.

REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES

Students will be considered for reinstatement in gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of classroom teachers. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the Local Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the student. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

MAINTENANCE AND DESTRUCTION OF GIFTED STUDENT FILES

In alignment with JPSD procedures for maintenance and destruction of special education files, intellectually gifted student files shall be held for five (5) years after high school graduation. Prior to shredding, notice will be posted that these records are available to parents or students eighteen (18) years of age or older with proper identification. These records may include information on referral, assessment, placement, and participation in the gifted education program including authorizations and evidence of eligibility.

SOURCE:	Jackson Public School District
LEGAL SOURCE:	Miss. Code Ann. §§37-23-171 through 181 Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2024)
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