

# **INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED PROGRAM BOARD POLICY**

## **SOUTH TIPPAAH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The South Tippah School District (STSD) provides quality gifted education for students who meet the criteria for intellectually gifted services on each elementary school campus and the middle school campus. These services are provided by a properly endorsed teacher of gifted in a resource classroom. Intellectually Gifted (IG) services are provided in grades 2-6 at Blue Mountain School; grades 2-6 at Pine Grove School; grades 2-4 at Ripley Elementary School; and grades 5-8 at Ripley Middle School. Students receive a minimum of 240 minutes of intellectual gifted instruction per week through a "one-class period per day" schedule. At no time are gifted education students denied the opportunity to attend their scheduled time for gifted instruction.

The activities in the gifted class shall develop and enhance the process skills in the outcomes document, the teaching strategies notebook, and the required components of the gifted program standards document. Some of the activities shall be short-term exploratory activities that introduce students to ideas and concepts not normally covered in the regular education classroom. 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 relation exercises, leadership skills, and creative expression. Activities shall also create an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community.

STSD shall electronically submit schedules of all gifted education program teachers to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) by February 1 and September 1 of each year. STSD will aim to keep IG class sizes limited to 15 students per period to preserve the integrity of the program. If at any time this threshold is exceeded, written justification must be submitted to the MDE.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the STSD gifted education program is to ensure that intellectually gifted students, as defined by the MDE, are offered appropriate educational experiences that are qualitatively different from those available in the general education classroom in order to provide opportunities for them to realize their abilities and full potential.

### **STUDENT IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES**

The student identification process is separated into six stages: the referral, review of the referral data by the Local Survey Committee (LSC), parental permission to conduct an assessment, assessment conduction, assessment report, and the LSC eligibility determination stage.

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 are considered high-achieving, culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD, as well as students who exhibit classroom behavior such as extreme shyness, short

attention spans, disruptiveness, continual questioning, and anxiety. Throughout the identification process, district personnel are careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects all data collected as part of the identification process. 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 will be informed of the information/data collected and may gain access to their children's records by written request to the school's gifted education personnel at any time. Upon completion of the identification process, results of the Assessment Team Report will be explained to the parents, and a copy of the assessment report will be provided to the parents.

### **PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

All data collected as part of the identification process are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents must be notified of their rights under FERPA. It is the obligation of the local district to ensure that parents understand these rights. All information/data collected as part of the identification process shall be placed in an individual eligibility file for each student. These files and the information contained therein shall not be placed in the student's cumulative record folder. The files shall be maintained in a separate locked storage facility/file cabinet, and access to the information shall be restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or that have a documented need to know.

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 of 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 South Tippah School District Gifted Coordinator at (662) 837-7630.

## LOCAL SURVEY COMMITTEE (LSC)

Each district shall establish an LSC for the Intellectually Gifted Education Program. The LSC shall be involved in determining a student's eligibility for an intellectually gifted program. The LSC shall include, but is not limited to, gifted education teachers and administrators. It may include regular education teachers, school psychologists or psychometrists, and parents. It should include a special education teacher when a student is being considered for eligibility under the twice-exceptional criteria. The LSC may be a building level committee which is responsible for students enrolled at that school, a district level committee which is responsible for students enrolled in the entire district, or a combination of the two.

## STAGES OF IDENTIFYING INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

### **STAGE 1: REFERRAL**

-There are two types of gifted referral processes:

- 1) **Mass Screening Referral Process**- students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
- 2) **Individual Referral Process**- individually referred for gifted eligibility.

#### *Mass Screening Referral Process*

This process requires all Mississippi districts to screen all students in at least one grade level each year. The STSD will mass screen all first grade students at all school locations annually. Districts should use a normed group measure of intelligence in the Mass Screening Referral Process. This process should assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations. Students who obtain a full-scale score at or above the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall move forward in the referral process. Students who scored at or above the 85th percentile but lower than the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall be subjected to a Special Considerations for Gifted Identification. If these students meet the criteria on the checklist, they shall move forward in the referral process. The next step in the process will consist of the collection of substantiated student data obtained through the use of other objective and subjective measures. District personnel shall make decisions as to which measures will be used during this step of the Mass Screening Referral Process. A student shall satisfy **two** of the following additional criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
4. 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,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,

6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
7. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

### ***Individual Referral Process***

This process involves students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility. A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. The person initiating the referral shall sign the referral form and date it. Once the student is referred, the district personnel shall collect the data required to satisfy the referral criteria. Once a referral form has been initiated, signed, and dated, only the LSC or parents can stop the identification process. Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy **three** of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
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 ability,
7. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve month, and/or,
8. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students and approved by the MDE.

**NOTE:** Any student who does not meet the minimum acceptable criteria (score in the 90th percentile) on the normed group measure of intelligence during the Mass Screening Referral Process and does not qualify for the Special Considerations for Gifted Identification criteria, can be referred for the Individual Referral for Screening Process by anyone. The individually referred student shall not be excluded from the referral process by their performance on the normed group measure of intelligence.

## **STAGE 2: LSC REVIEW OF REFERRAL DATA**

Once the referral data have been collected, the LSC shall review all data and make one of the following recommendations:

1. the student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage, or
2. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however, the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time, or
3. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

## **STAGE 3: PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING**

Parents of students who have met the criteria for Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be notified in writing, and permission for further testing will be requested at this time.

## **STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT**

The assessment stage is the individual test of intelligence, which shall be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner shall review all available data on the student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use that information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures should be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner's manuals. The examiner shall provide a signed and dated report of the test administration to include testing conditions, scores on all subtests or subscales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the student. A student must score at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

The district will pay for one administration of an intelligence test, unless there is adequate evidence that the child could satisfy the minimum criteria. Payment of subsequent evaluations will be the responsibility of the parent, unless qualified personnel deem a previous administration to be inappropriate or invalid.

### **PRIVATE ASSESSMENTS:**

If a student is assessed privately, the STSD will consider assessment results on the following conditions:

- A. The assessment was conducted by a licensed examiner within the last 12 months.
- B. The student must also satisfy the district's other referral and assessment criteria as

Outlined in the Mississippi Department of Education Regulations for Gifted Programming.

### **Special Considerations for Gifted Identification**

The STSD will follow procedure as outlined in the *Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2023)* for students who have satisfied criteria on the Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist who did not also satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence.

### ***Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students***

Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria but did meet at least one referral criterion shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence (composite score or approved subtest score) or in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

### **STAGE 5: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

District personnel shall write an Assessment Report, which must contain the following components:

1. Student's name
2. Name of at least three measures from Stage 1: Referral that were used to determine the need to administer an individual test of intelligence,
3. Results of each measure
4. Name of individual who administered or completed each measure and the date administered or completed
5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s)
6. Interpretation of the results of each individually administered test(s)
7. Name of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence and date test was administered
8. Qualifications of the individual who administered the individual test of intelligence
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and identified strengths and weaknesses,
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position, and
11. Date of the Assessment Report.

## **STAGE 6: LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

Once the Assessment Report is finished, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program.

### ***Parental Notification***

District personnel shall notify in writing the parents of each student tested for the intellectually gifted program about the assessment results. District personnel shall offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. District personnel shall also notify parents in writing about their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

### **OUT-OF-STATE ELIGIBILITIES:**

Intellectually gifted students from out of state will be accepted into the Mississippi Gifted Education Program if they have met the 91st percentile on an IQ test. This includes students from military families based on the Military Interstate Children's Compact. This provision is for those students who have been identified as intellectually gifted only.

### **ASSESSMENT TIMELINE:**

Referrals shall begin on the day that a signed and dated student referral is received. The student should be assessed within 90 days of the receipt of the signed parental permission to screen.

### **HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK/MAKE-UP WORK:**

As outlined in the Regulations for Gifted Programs in Mississippi (2023), gifted students in grades 2-6 shall not be required to make up classwork 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.

### **GIFTED STUDENTS IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL SETTINGS:**

The STSD is responsible for ensuring that intellectual 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 the STSD.

### **TEMPORARY REMOVAL:**

If a student is removed from the gifted program for any reason, he/she shall remain out of the gifted program for a period of time agreed upon by the parent and the student's gifted education teacher. Parent requests to remove from and return to the gifted program must be in writing and sent to the Gifted Coordinator and school-level Gifted teacher.

## **ANNUAL REASSESSMENT:**

A committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the program. The committee must include at least the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative.

Since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under law, the student should remain in the program as long as they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular classroom should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program.

In the event a student has difficulty keeping up with the regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, teacher of the gifted, and the student to discuss the problem and to determine an appropriate course of action. The conference plan of action will be documented and follow-up conferences will be held as needed.

Should a committee determine that a student exit the program due to lack of progress in the program and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents must be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed.

## **HEARING PROCESS FOR THE INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED PROGRAM:**

Parents who are not in agreement with the school based committee decision to remove a student from the gifted program will present their concerns, orally or in writing, to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

If the parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parents shall, within five (5) school days after meeting with the principal, submit their concerns in writing to the South Tippah School District Gifted Coordinator. The Gifted Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the principal, the gifted teacher, counselor, and gifted contact person within five (5) school days or a timeframe agreed upon by the parents. The parents will be extended an invitation to attend the meeting. The team assembled will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting. The decision of the hearing committee is final. If the student is removed from the program, written documentation will be given to the gifted teacher within three (3) school days. The teacher will provide the counselor with a copy of the documentation within three (3) school days of receipt. The student shall be removed from the gifted program within five (5) school days of the decision or as indicated on the documentation form.

## **GIFTED STUDENT FILES:**

A file will be created for each student referred for possible gifted placement. The files of all referred students, both eligible and ineligible for gifted services, will be maintained and located at the Oscar Shannon Building until five years after the student's graduation from high school at which time those files will be destroyed.