

Criteria for Excellence: Gifted & Talented Education
Maryland State Department of Education
and the
Maryland Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education
(Updated 2019)

2018 - 2019 Criteria for Excellence - COMAR language for school level GTAC Subcommittee

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I. FOREWORD

All students in Maryland's schools must be provided educational opportunities appropriate to their individual abilities to enable them to reach their maximum potential. Gifted and talented students are one group, which has unique abilities and needs. Gifted and talented students are found in youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (Maryland Annotated Code, §8-202).

The original Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines (1983) was developed as a collaborative effort by the staff of the Maryland State Department of Education and personnel having responsibilities for gifted and talented programs and services in the LSSs. This document was updated in 2015 and 2018-2019.

Educators in Maryland will find this document of value in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services to meet the needs and challenge the abilities of gifted and talented students.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Maryland State Department of Education recognizes the importance of providing educational programs that provide all children and youth with opportunities to develop their abilities to the maximum. Gifted and talented students, like students in many other student groups, possess unique abilities, interests, and needs, which can be addressed only through differentiating the regular curriculum and designing specialized programs and services.

This publication sets forth the criteria for excellence in programs and services for gifted and talented students. Six major program components have been addressed:

1. Identification of Students
2. Instructional Program
3. Professionally Qualified Teachers
4. Professional Learning
5. Program Management

6. Evaluation

The criteria which establish optimal practices are listed for each program component. They define "what should be" in excellent programs and services for gifted and talented students. The criteria provide direction to school systems and individual schools as they plan, develop, and implement new programs and services. They are also intended as a tool for schools to use in assessing and improving their current offerings.

The Annotated Code of Maryland §8-201 defines a gifted and talented student as "an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience or environment." A gifted and talented student is one who

- Exhibits high-performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas;
- Possesses an unusual leadership capacity; or
- Excels in specific academic fields.

A gifted and talented student needs different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program to develop the student's potential (Annotated Code of Maryland §8-202). By this definition, Maryland subscribes to the multidimensionality of giftedness, seeking to develop programs and services that serve students who are intellectually gifted or excel in specific academic fields and also those students who excel in creativity, the arts, or leadership.

COMAR 13A.04.07 Gifted and Talented Education requires all Maryland school systems to "...establish a process for identifying gifted and talented students as they are defined in Educational Article Paragraph §8-201..." "...to provide different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program to develop the gifted and talented student's potential and to review the effectiveness of its programs and services." COMAR 13A.04.07 also states that "teachers and other personnel assigned specifically to work with students who have been identified as gifted and talented shall engage in professional learning aligned with the competencies specified by the Gifted and Talented Education Specialist endorsement, COMAR 13A.12.03.12.

The goal of gifted education in Maryland is to identify and serve gifted and talented students and youth "from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (§8-202)." While the number of gifted and talented students who need a differentiated program will vary, they exist in every school setting.

III. CRITERIA

1.0 Identification of Students

An identification process ensures that all gifted and talented students are recognized so that they can be appropriately served. The process identifies students performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment as well as those showing the potential for performing at remarkably high levels when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment. (§8-201)

Multiple measures are used for screening and identification and include a measure of cognitive ability given to every student. Additional measures used to confirm placement in services include achievement tests, behavioral checklists, and/or supplemental measures as appropriate. There are appropriate procedures and criteria for giftedness developed for each of the various areas: general intellectual capability, creative, or artistic areas, outstanding leadership capacity, and specific academic fields. Information about a student's specific abilities and program needs obtained through the identification process serves as a basis for planning the student's instructional program. In this way, the identification process is an integral part of the overall instructional program and should enhance the responsiveness of the school to the needs of all students.

Students must be identified early in their academic careers, which is particularly important for the identification of students from historically underrepresented populations. The identification process shall use universal screening and multiple indicators of potential, aptitude, ability, and achievement from an annually reviewed Maryland State Department of Education approved list of assessments and checklists.

A universal screening process shall be used to identify a significant number of students in every school and at least 10 percent in each LSS, as early as possible, but no later than Grade 3. Additional identification shall occur at the 3 – 5 and 6 – 9 grade bands for participation in the programs and services described in Regulation .03 of the regulation.

As of August 2019, Johns Hopkins University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Towson University, and McDaniel College each offer State-approved graduate programs leading to endorsement as a Gifted and Talented Education Specialist. Educators with this endorsement can be a resource to schools and school districts developing programs for their gifted and talented students.

1.1 The Process of Identification

Identification procedures and criteria are specific to the different areas of giftedness being assessed and are directly related to the specific programs and services provided to the student.

Instruments and procedures used in the identification process are as unbiased as possible with respect to race, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, national origin, gender, or exceptionality. No single assessment shall prevent a student from being identified. The process of identifying students with demonstrated or potential giftedness includes

- 1.1.1 An early broad-based screening for cognitive ability of the total school population to ensure that all potentially gifted students have an opportunity to be considered.
- 1.1.2 Achievement data must be used to further screen for giftedness.
- 1.1.3 Alternate assessments should be used as appropriate to ensure equitable identification, particularly among historically underserved populations.
- 1.1.4 A universal screening process shall be used to identify students in every school as early as possible, but no later than Grade 3. Additional identification shall occur at the 3 – 5 and 6 – 9 grade bands for participation in the programs and services

MSDE Approved Assessments and Checklists

Cognitive Ability Assessments	Aptitude and Achievement Assessments	Alternate Assessments
<p>Group Administered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) • Naglieri Nonverbal Assessment (NNAT) • Otis-Lennon School Ability Assessment (OLSAT) • Terra Nova InView of Cognitive Skills <p>Individually Administered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanford/Binet • Wechsler Preschool Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) • Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability • Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT • PSAT/SAT • School and College Ability (SCAT) Test • i-Ready Mathematics and Reading Achievement Assessments • Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) Reading or Mathematics • State Achievement Assessments • Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College Careers (PARCC) Exam • Performance Series: Reading and Mathematics • Stanford Achievement Test Series • Test of Mathematical Giftedness • Woodcock-Johnson Individual Achievement Tests • Maryland Comprehensive Achievement Program (MCAP) • Amplify ELA • mCLASS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) • mCLASS: Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) • Electronic Ready Inventory (ERI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torrance Test of Creativity • ACCESS for ELs • Clarks Drawing Ability Test (CDAT) • Profile of Creative Abilities (PCA) • Cebeci Test of Creativity (CTC)

- 1.1.5 Behavioral checklists and other supplemental information, as listed in the following chart of MSDE approved, valid, and reliable qualitative and quantitative assessment methods should be used as appropriate to ensure equitable identification, particularly among historically underserved populations.

Behavioral Checklists	Supplemental Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES -3) ● Slocomb Payne Teacher Perception Inventory ● Renzulli Scales ● Screen Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students (SAGES) ● HOPE Teacher Rating Scale ● Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Interviews ● Student portfolios (including rough drafts, planning sketches, to record idea development) ● Primary Talent Development (PTD) portfolios ● Student auditions, exhibits, shows for media, and the fine and performing arts ● Nominations ● Districtwide Local Performance Assessments

1.2 The LSS process for screening and identification is clearly stated and consistently implemented throughout the school system and annually reported to all stakeholders.

1.2.1 Using disaggregated data, each district should evaluate and monitor, year-to-year, its identified gifted population as a reflection of the demographics of its student population.

1.2.2 Part of this evaluation must include an investigation of proportionality of student representation (at a minimum: race, ethnicity, gender, SES, and EL).

1.2.3 Twice-exceptional students must be identified in each LEA.

1.2.4 Gifted students must be flagged in the LEA student data system.

1.3 Implementation of the identification process includes training for all school staff in characteristics of gifted and talented students, including underserved populations and twice-exceptional learners, the identification procedures and criteria, and the instruments and techniques used to identify gifted and talented students.

1.4 Schools are encouraged to create a school-based committee consisting of teachers, the principal or assistant principal, and other professional staff members who collect and analyze student identification data to support formal identification by the district.

1.5 In addition to universal identification procedures, additional nominations may be referred by parents, teachers, peers, self, or others. Information about students is obtained from multiple sources who have first-hand knowledge of the student's performance or potential.

1.6 Identification of gifted and talented students is an ongoing process extending from school entry through grade 12. Opportunities are provided for students to be considered for gifted and talented education programs and services throughout their school experience.

1.7 Each LEA must develop and implement procedures for notifying parents/guardians of the results of the identification process, including an appeals process, and an explanation of services available to gifted learners.

2.0 Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction must challenge the advanced academic needs of gifted and talented students. The regular instructional program must be differentiated to meet the unique learning styles, learning rates, interests, abilities, and needs of gifted and talented students during the instructional day. The differentiated instructional program includes both elements that are

different from and elements that are similar to those in the regular program for their chronological peers. While some aspects of the regular curriculum can be adapted, others will need to be added which may be unique to the gifted and talented students.

Appropriate programs and services for gifted and talented students reflect the differentiation of content (what is taught and when - sequence and pacing), instructional strategies (how content is delivered), products (opportunities to demonstrate and apply learning) and the learning environment (the context in which learning occurs). Both enrichment, diving deeper into content using interdisciplinary approaches, and acceleration, providing content above chronological grade level, can be utilized as differentiation approaches.

CONTENT

2.1 The instructional program provides opportunities for gifted and talented students to demonstrate proficiency in the concepts and skills of the regular curriculum.

2.1.1 A pre-assessment is made to determine what students already know, and provisions are made for rapid, efficient learning of concepts and skills not yet acquired. These may include:

- Diagnostic Assessments
- End-of-year Assessments
- Unit Assessments
- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)/Running Records
- Most Difficult First
- Standardized Testing
- Teacher prepared pretests
- Writing prompts
- Student Learning Objective (SLO) Data
- MAP-R Data
- MAP-M Data
- Planning Sketches, Product Proposals
- Professional Level Participation (internships, performing arts)

Informal pre-assessments may include:

- KWL
- Entrance Tickets
- Exit Tickets
- Anticipation Guides
- Concept Maps
- Information Surveys
- Interest Inventories

- Picture Interpretation
- Visual Thinking Representations
- Questionnaires
- Student Interviews
- Student demonstrations
- Parent interviews or checklists

2.1.2 Extended learning experiences are provided for a more in-depth examination of topics present in the regular curriculum and the examination of topics related to, but not included in the regular curriculum. Extended learning experiences may include:

- National History Day
- Original Research Investigation/Research Practicum
- Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM)
- Debate
- TED X Clubs/Presentation
- Independent Studies/Passion Projects/Resident Experts
- Shared Inquiry/Socratic Seminar Discussions
- Guest experts (live or virtual)
- Field trips (live or virtual)
- STEM/STEAM Fair
- Invention Conventions
- Internships
- Mentorships
- Robotics/Coding
- Creative Problem Solving Competitions

2.2 Content of the curriculum focuses on the universal concepts which remain constant over time and across all disciplines and cultures. Universal concepts may include but are not limited to:

- Change
- Systems
- Justice
- Relationships
- Conflict
- Ethics
- Patterns
- Force

- Power
- Exploration
- Order vs. Chaos
- Community
- Structure
- Adaptations

2.3 Place greater emphasis on the development and application of creative- and critical-thinking skills. Creative-thinking models or frameworks may include:

- E. Paul Torrance's Creativity Framework
- Williams' Taxonomy of Creativity
- Creative Problem-Solving

Creative thinking strategies may include:

- SCAMPER
- Divergent Questioning
- Morphological Matrices

Critical-thinking models or frameworks may include:

- Paul's Reasoning Model
- Kaplan's Depth and Complexity Model
- De Bono's Six Hats

Critical-thinking strategies may include:

- Analogies
- Synectics/Forced Association

2.4 Curriculum design includes interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary studies requiring the integration of both concepts and methodologies from different disciplines, including:

- Concept-based Instruction
- Problem Based Learning
- Integrated Curriculum Model
- Kaplan's Depth and Complexity Model
- Inquiry-Based Instruction
- Universal Design for Learning

2.5 Opportunities are provided to explore, develop, or research students' areas of interest and/or talent for the acquisition of a broad base of knowledge through a study of a wide range of subjects that the general education curriculum may not include. A wide range of subjects may include:

- Emerging technologies
- World languages/cultures

- Exploration of the arts
- Global issues
- Leadership
- Environmental Issues/Topics
- Bias/Propaganda

2.6 Challenging and diverse resources representing a variety of cultures should be used, including:

- primary sources
- specialized reference materials
- technology
- experts in the field

2.7 A variety of acceleration opportunities are available and can be found in *A Nation Empowered*

- Early admission to kindergarten
- Early admission to first grade
- Grade-skipping (or whole-grade acceleration)
- Continuous progress
- Self-paced instruction
- Subject-matter acceleration/partial acceleration (Or content-based acceleration)
- Combined classes
- Curriculum compacting
- Telescoping curriculum
- Mentoring
- Extracurricular programs Distance learning or online learning courses
- Concurrent/Dual enrollment
- Advanced Placement™
- International Baccalaureate programme
- Accelerated/honors high school or residential high school on a college campus
- Credit by examination
- Early entrance into middle school or high school
- Early graduation from high school or college

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

2.8 Instructional strategies for gifted and talented students provide greater learner involvement in educational decision-making. These include:

- Choice of materials, activities, products and/or content;
- Development of criteria for self-assessment;

- Self-evaluation of products and processes;
- Diverse opportunities to create and invent in areas of individual interest;
- Exposure to alternative educational accelerated options, including goal setting and processes and empowerment to develop a unique program;
- Choice of strategies and modalities to approach content; and
- Choice of outcomes and /or forms of products.

2.9 Instructional strategies for gifted and talented students are selected to promote an earlier development as an independent learner. These include involving the student in:

- Kaplan's Disciplinary Thinking
- Methodology for primary and secondary research;
- Problem-solving;
- Use of predetermined evaluation criteria by student and teacher;
- Use of productivity expectations in the assignment of tasks; and
- Creation of original products that demonstrate and apply understanding at an advanced level.
- Use of Primary Talent Development thinking behaviors
 - Resourceful
 - Creative
 - Communicative
 - Leadership
 - Persistent
 - Perceptive
 - Inquisitive
 - Logic
 - Spatial Reasoning
 - Visual Reasoning
 - Advanced observation skills
 - Memory

2.10 Instructional strategies for gifted and talented students are selected to elicit the students' use of higher-level critical and creative-thinking skills at an earlier age and in greater depth. These strategies include involving the student in:

- Convergent and divergent production;
- Questioning strategies which focus on analyzing, synthesizing and creating
- Problem seeking as well as problem-solving;
- Open-end problems;
- Paul's Reasoning Model

- All reasoning has a purpose
- All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, settle a question, solve a problem
- All reasoning is based on assumptions
- All reasoning is done from some point of view
- All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence
- All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas
- All reasoning contains inferences by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data
- All reasoning leads somewhere, has implications and consequences
- Kaplan's Depth and Complexity
 - Big Idea
 - Tools of the Discipline
 - Details
 - Rules
 - Patterns
 - Trends
 - Ethics
 - Multiple Perspectives
 - Relate Over Time
 - Across Disciplines
- Predicting, hypothesizing, collecting and verifying data, and forming supportable conclusions; and
- Complex and abstract reasoning.

2.11 Instructional strategies for gifted and talented students require the teacher to become a facilitator of learning and a manager of resources. Teachers should:

- Provide a structure in which students are active participants;
- Implement interventions to address the unique academic, social, emotional and asynchronous needs of gifted and talented students;
- Use a balance of expository and inquiry approaches;
- Demonstrate a continuing development of their knowledge base;
- Provide a climate encouraging creativity and appropriate intellectual risk-taking;
- Monitor academic progress to ensure that students make commensurate growth based on pre- and post-assessment data;
- Provide access for students to use technology as appropriate.

2.12 Instructional strategies selected promote gifted and talented students' in-depth understanding of self and society. These include:

- Analyzing the self as an individual and as a member of a group;
- Learning how to work constructively and cooperatively with others;
- Learning how to modify personal and group behavior;
- Learning how to make productive contributions to society, and
- Learning how to use metacognitive strategies may include but not limited to
 - Self-reflection
 - Goal setting (cognitive and affective)
- Learning how to address affective needs, may include but not limited to
 - Cooperation
 - Respect
 - Self-Image
 - Responsibility
 - Self-Regulation
 - Self-Esteem
 - Empathy
 - Grit / Resilience
 - Intrinsic Motivation
 - Curiosity
 - Divergent Thinking
 - Self-Efficacy
 - Growth from Failure
 - Acceptance of Ambiguity
 - Goal Attainment

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

2.13 A variety of instructional groupings based upon individual program components and their objectives, number, and needs of gifted and talented students, and available resources are used to facilitate differentiated instruction, which may include:

- Homogeneous grouping of identified gifted and talented students for a
- specific content area;
- Flexible homogeneous grouping based on pre-assessment (readiness);
- Homogeneous cluster grouping within heterogeneous classes;
- Cross grade-level grouping;
- Independent study; and
- Flexible grouping based on interest or learning profile

2.14 Various administrative arrangements are used to promote interaction among gifted and talented students and their chronological-aged peers as well as among their intellectual or artistic/creative peers.

2.15 Resources beyond the school setting are used to provide appropriate educational experiences for gifted and talented students, which may include collaboration with:

- Community agencies;
- Cultural institutions;
- Businesses;
- Colleges and universities;
- Maryland Mentorships Initiative; and
- Experts in various fields.

Appropriate services for gifted and talented students may include:

- Mentorships;
- Community service;
- Summer learning experiences;
- Internships;
- Distance learning courses;
- Dual enrollment; and
- Contests and competitions, which may include:
 - Science/STEM/STEAM Fairs
 - Battle of the Books
 - Coding Clubs
 - Destination Imagination
 - Letters About Literature
 - Math 24 Game
 - Math Olympiads
 - Math Counts
 - Maryland Math Engineering, & Science Achievement (MESA)
 - National History Day
 - Odyssey of the Mind
 - Robotics Competitions
 - Science Olympiads
 - STEM competitions
 - SEAPerch (underwater robotics)
 - Art Exhibitions
 - Theatre Performances

3.0 Professionally Qualified Teachers

As of August 2019, Johns Hopkins University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Towson University, and McDaniel College offer State-approved graduate programs leading to endorsement as a Gifted and Talented Education Specialist (COMAR 13A.12.03.12). Educators with this endorsement can be a resource to schools and school districts developing programs for their gifted and talented students.

3.1 A process to ensure the selection of professionally qualified teachers for gifted and talented students is established and clearly articulated. Qualifications may include:

- Evidence of specific training in gifted education;
- Successful teaching experience;
- Genuine interest in and desire to work with gifted and talented students;
- Demonstrated evidence of advanced content competence.
- Demonstrated evidence of culturally responsive teaching.

3.2 Criteria for the selection of teachers is based on a set of competencies and characteristics supported by research as being important to effective teaching of gifted and talented students. Included in this set are:

- An awareness of the cognitive and affective needs of gifted and talented students and a desire to teach them, “including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and identify their related academic and social-emotional needs”
- Expertise in content and evidenced-based instructional methods;
- Expertise in the use of technology to support instruction;
- Ability to impart intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for learning to students;
- High level of energy, enthusiasm, confidence, and resourcefulness;
- Ability to organize and manage instruction to provide for a balance of structure and flexibility;
- Openness to innovation and acceptance of divergent, creative thinking;
- Security in dealing with intellectual precocity;
- Ability to facilitate students' independence and development of personal responsibility for their learning;
- Willingness to pursue training for needed professional understanding and competencies; and
- Expertise in the collection, management, and analysis of assessment data.

4.0 Professional Learning

Rapidly increasing knowledge about the developmental patterns and learning styles of gifted and talented students and appropriate programs and services necessitate ongoing, high-quality professional learning and professional learning as components of a successful program.

4.1 Professional learning opportunities in gifted and talented education are provided for all school, and central office staff involved in the education of gifted and talented students, which includes, but is not limited to, teachers of gifted and talented students, special education teachers, professional school counselors, school specialists, EL teachers, school administrators, student services personnel, supervisors, content specialists, and other office staff for which it is appropriate.

4.2 Professional learning opportunities in gifted and talented education are provided, including a background of general knowledge about the characteristics of giftedness and implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Specific content includes:

- Characteristics and identification of gifted and talented students;
 - Twice-exceptional
 - Gifted students from low socio-economic backgrounds
 - Gifted English Learners
 - Gifted learners from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds
- Developmental, social, and emotional needs;
 - Asynchronous development
 - Dual and misdiagnoses
 - Relationship building
 - Overexcitabilities
 - Advocating
 - Cooperation
 - Respect
 - Self-Image
 - Responsibility
 - Self-Regulation
 - Self-Esteem
 - Empathy
 - Grit / Resilience
 - Intrinsic Motivation
 - Curiosity
 - Divergent Thinking
 - Self-Efficacy
 - Growth from Failure
 - Acceptance of Ambiguity
 - Goal Attainment
 - Passion

- Development of advanced and accelerated curricula using evidenced-based models, such as
 - Integrated Curriculum Model
 - Concept-based Model
 - Parallel Curriculum Model
 - Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- Differentiated teaching strategies, resources, and assessments for gifted and talented students;
- Acceleration strategies
 - Early admission to kindergarten.
 - Early admission to first grade
 - Grade-skipping (or whole-grade acceleration)
 - Continuous progress
 - Self-paced instruction.
 - Subject-matter acceleration/partial acceleration (or content-based acceleration)
 - Combined classes
 - Curriculum compacting
 - Telescoping curriculum
 - Mentoring
 - Extracurricular programs, distance learning, or online learning courses
 - Concurrent/Dual enrollment
 - Advanced Placement™
 - International Baccalaureate programme
 - Accelerated/honors high school or residential high school on a college campus
 - Credit by examination
- Strategies for grouping gifted learners for differentiated instruction
 - Cluster grouping
 - Flexible groupings
 - Dedicated gifted classes
 - Ability grouping based on readiness
 - Interest-based grouping
 - Learning profiles grouping
 - Multi-grade grouping
 - Pull-out grouping
- Strategies for serving historically underrepresented gifted students
 - Strength-based instruction

- Interest-based opportunities (independent study, passion projects, self-paced)
- Alternative demonstration of mastery
- Project-Based Learning
- Problem Based Learning
- Bibliotherapy
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Credit-bearing native language accelerated courses
- Mentoring
- Programming options to support acceleration and enrichment instruction;
 - Pull-out/Plug-in programs
 - Cluster programs
 - Homogeneous/dedicated gifted classrooms
 - Magnet/dedicated schools or programs
 - Distance learning opportunity
 - Virtual learning
 - Dual enrollment
- Program evaluation and improvement options
 - Self-evaluation of gifted programs and/or services implementation
 - Peer-evaluation of gifted programs and/or services implementation
 - School evaluation of gifted programs and/or services implementation
 - Formal Local School System (LSS) evaluation of gifted programs and/or services implementation
 - Formal outside evaluation of the gifted program and/or services implementation

4.3 Professional learning is differentiated based on the participants' levels of expertise in gifted education, current assignments and professional responsibilities, content area specializations, and system-wide goals. Professional learning opportunities need to be based on the needs expressed by the staff member with guidance provided by the administration and Central Office Supervisor.

4.3.1 All teaching staff, school administrators, central office staff, and pupil service personnel should receive training in the characteristics and needs of gifted and talented students, the procedures and criteria used to identify students, the meaning of differentiation, the design of the school system's program and services, the criteria for professionally qualified teachers of gifted and talented students, and the resources available for professional learning in the area of gifted and talented education.

4.3.2 Teachers, school administrators, and supervisory staff with direct responsibility for the development and delivery of instructional programs and services for gifted and talented should receive additional training, which addresses specific ways to differentiate instruction and to develop and deliver curriculum appropriate for gifted and talented students.

4.3.3 Teachers working directly with gifted and talented students require intensive and ongoing professional development and professional learning in the educational implications of giftedness and appropriate teaching/learning strategies for gifted and talented students.

4.3.4 School-level administrators and central office staff responsible for the management and administration of gifted and talented programs and services should be prepared to develop goals, objectives, and strategies regarding the performance of gifted and talented students, effective program alternatives and options, and a system for ongoing program evaluation.

4.4 Professional learning in gifted and talented education provides a variety of professional learning opportunities. These might include:

- Workshops, institutes, or academies;
- University and graduate courses;
- Conferences and professional meetings;
- Job-embedded activities such as study groups, peer coaching, structured observation with feedback and follow-up, and action research; and book studies
- Accredited teacher preparation programs in gifted and talented education.

4.5 Procedures are established for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the professional development and professional learning programs.

4.6 Local school systems should include talent identification, development, pedagogy, gifted education strategies, and twice-exceptionality topics as part of both pre-service and in-service training for all staff.

4.7 Planning of professional development and learning should follow the accepted tenets outlined in the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) standards and other relevant standards documents.

5.0 Program Management

5.1 A management structure exists which clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities for gifted and talented programs and services at the system and school levels to ensure the development and maintenance of program excellence, which can be accomplished by:

- Developing a long-term action plan outlining identification procedures, professional development and learning efforts, guidelines for program design and

delivery, allocation of fiscal and human resources, and evaluation processes for K-12 gifted and talented students in content areas;

- Establishing an advisory council that reflects the diversity of the school system's population;
- Establishing a full-time position to oversee Gifted and Talented Education;
- Providing for a range of educational options for gifted and talented students, including twice-exceptional students at each grade level;
- Coordinating the development of challenging curriculum and instruction to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students; and
- Collecting and analyzing disaggregated enrollment and performance data for gifted and talented students as a special population.

5.2 The LSS provides general program direction, which includes:

- A statement of program mission and goals;
- Definition of the target population to include students from all student groups and across all strata;
- Criteria and procedures for student identification;
- Administrative design;
- Guidelines for program implementation in the schools;
- Ongoing parent communication including the dissemination of policies and practices in gifted education;
- Coordination to ensure continuity of and access to programs and services for gifted students as they progress through school;
- Ongoing professional development and learning opportunities for all staff;
- Development of accurate student data collection procedures; and
- Design for program evaluation that is implemented regularly, the data from which is used in designing professional development, professional learning, and school improvement.

5.3 Building-level administrators support program implementation within the school system's guidelines. They are responsible for:

- Setting goals and objectives for gifted and talented students in the school improvement plan;
- Coordinating services for gifted and talented students in the school;
- Developing staff expertise;
- Allocating resources; and
- Providing effective communication with staff, students, parents, and community.

6.0 Evaluation

6.1 The evaluation process is based on data and provides accurate, timely, and

relevant information to decision-makers and stakeholders for program, staff, and school improvement. Data may include:

- Identification data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culturally and linguistically diverse student groups, and twice-exceptional
- Participation data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culturally and linguistically diverse student groups, and twice-exceptional
- Assessment data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culturally and linguistically diverse student groups, and twice-exceptional
- Gifted student achievement data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culturally and linguistically diverse student groups, and twice-exceptionality
- Gifted program models and services implemented

Value-added program and services, such as

- Earning high school or college credit at earlier grade levels
- Credit-bearing native language accelerated courses
- Mentoring
- Scholarships and awards
- Internships
- Participation and recognition in academic and/or artistic competitions
- Participation and recognition in community and cultural programs

6.2 A systematic plan for ongoing evaluation is part of program planning and implementation.

A systematic plan may include:

- Gifted Education Action Plan
- Gifted Education Improvement Plan
- School Improvement Plan

6.3 Evaluation should have expertise in gifted and talented education and should assess the processes and products of each component of the gifted and talented program. These include:

- Identification, participation, and retention;
- Instructional program;
- Professional learning;
- Teacher qualifications;
- Program management;
- Community outreach; and
- The evaluation process.

- 6.4** The evaluation process focuses on whether the goals, objectives, and strategies for gifted and talented students have been reached. The quantity, quality, and appropriateness of the programs and services provided for gifted and talented students are assessed, and data are disaggregated and made public.
- 6.5** Attention is given to the assessment of student progress using multiple indicators that measure mastery of content, demonstration of higher-level thinking skills, achievement in the specific program area(s), and affective growth.
- 6.6** Data for evaluation is obtained from a variety of valid and reliable instruments, procedures, and information sources as appropriate.
- 6.7** Evaluation results are communicated in a timely and meaningful way to program decision-makers at the system and/or school level and as appropriate, to students, parents, and the public.