Rationale

Extensive research by Rogers (1991, 1999, 2002) and Kulik and Kulik (1984, 1985, 1987, 1989) has shown that the grouping of gifted students in a curriculum designed especially for the gifted creates the most positive effects. Gifted children have special needs that, more often than not, are neglected in the regular classroom. Each gifted student is unique, with different interests and abilities. When a gifted child is given the opportunity to participate in a program geared toward his/her special uniqueness by implementing a variety of instructional strategies, differentiation in both teaching models and instruction, and interaction with intellectual peers, he/she will make strides in performance equal to his/her ability. A significant outcome of a gifted program and its differentiated curriculum is that it can positively affect the general educational experience of all students.

Mission

In recognition that an appropriate education is one in which each student is provided an opportunity to reach his/her greatest potential, Liberty County provides gifted education services that are tailored to the intellectual, academic, creative, social, emotional, and motivational needs of the gifted. As such, it is reasonably expected that student achievement, motivation, problem-solving capabilities, and creativity will increase exponentially.

Goals

Liberty County’s program for gifted students will:

• provide an environment that will cultivate and encourage intellectual and creative abilities;
• provide students with appropriate enrichment, acceleration, and in-depth study through rigorous and challenging curriculum;
• provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively in both small and large groups;
• provide opportunities for students to work with their intellectual peers and with their chronological peers;
• develop self-esteem, by allowing students to realize and acknowledge their own skills and talents as well as the skills and talents of others; and
• develop emergent, self-reliant learners who fully develop the skills of: analytical thinking, critical and creative thinking, and apply these skills to problem-solving situations.
Program Description

The Liberty County gifted program is a county-wide program. A differentiated curriculum is used to meet the needs and challenges of these students. Interdisciplinary units and differentiated instructional strategies are used to teach or refine skills of research, encourage higher levels of thinking, enhance creative/productive thinking, and extend the academic base of knowledge. Teachers who hold the gifted education endorsement expose gifted students to a rigorous and challenging curriculum. The students are offered many opportunities to participate in learning activities with peers who have similar capabilities and interests.

Elementary
All gifted students in the elementary schools in grades K-5 attend Gifted Resource and/or Cluster classes in their home base school (contingent upon FTE funding criteria) for a minimum of five segments per week. Students are grouped by grade level or instructional levels (e.g., primary grades, intermediate grades). These students are not expected to make up the regular classroom work assigned when the students are participating in the gifted resource class.

Middle School
All gifted students in grades 6-8 participate in Advanced Content, Cluster Grouping, Collaborative Teaching, and/or Resource models in the area(s) of mathematics, and/or language arts, and/or literature, and/or science, and/or social studies five days a week at their home base school (contingent upon FTE funding criteria). Recognizing that students have individual strengths and weaknesses in specific content areas, a team of educators at each local school reviews each student’s performance based on:

- gifted eligibility assessment
- teacher recommendation,
- standardized norm-referenced achievement scores,
- standardized norm-referenced ability test results, and
- the student’s grade point average in each discipline.

Based on a matrix scale of these four pieces of data, the student will participate in one of the above gifted models in each middle school. The curriculum offered in Advanced Content courses is significantly different and more rigorous in pace, content, process skills, and student expectations.

High School
Gifted students in grades 9-12 may be served through Advanced Content, Resource, Cluster Grouping, Collaborative Teaching, Mentorship/Internship, and/or Post Secondary Options (contingent upon FTE funding criteria).

Program Name

The name that has been given to the Liberty County gifted program is GATE. This stands for Gifted And Talented Education.
Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38
Education Program for Gifted Students

I. Introduction
In keeping with Georgia Code 20-2-152, the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Liberty County Schools will provide gifted education services to students who have the potential for exceptional academic ability in grades K-12. This legislation, supported by Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS which provides the following definitions to guide Local Education Agencies who provide programs for gifted students:

A. Gifted student – “a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.”

B. Differentiated curriculum – “courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students.”

II. NOTICE

A. Notice Requirements
Parents who enroll their child(ren) in Liberty County School System, will be notified in writing of:

1. the existence of the gifted program, its referral procedures and eligibility requirement.
2. initial consideration of their child(ren) for gifted education services,
3. the student’s eligibility status following the evaluation process. Parents will be given an opportunity to schedule a conference to discuss the eligibility criteria and the student’s assessment results and placement.
4. the type of services to be provided annually, the teaching methods to be used and the time allotted for the student to receive gifted education services. Parents shall also be informed of the objectives designed for students to meet and the manner in which evaluation of the mastery of these objectives will be conducted.
5. the notification at mid-term progress report that the student is in jeopardy of being placed on probation. The following documentation will take place: student will be placed on At-Risk Log. The At-Risk Log will detail the plan of action to keep student on track for high performance.
6. the notification of probationary status
7. the length of the probationary period (the student will start the RTI process while on probation) to begin on report card date in which the student is in jeopardy of being dismissed from gifted education services. This notice shall specify the criteria identified on the At-Risk Log which includes the
Plan For Improvement (during the RTI process) the student shall meet to continue receiving gifted education services.

8. the termination of gifted education services( will occur after the RTI process) in the event the student fails to meet continuation criteria(student will be placed in Advanced Content Status) and the goals of the At-Risk Log Plan of Improvement( and RTI process) developed for him/her. This notice shall contain a statement that the student shall become eligible to receive gifted education services upon meeting the criteria adopted by the Liberty County Board of Education regarding continuation of services.

B. Means of Notice
Written notice for the requirements listed above shall be made through various forms that are a part of this Procedures Manual. Additionally, the Liberty County School System web site will have a page devoted to information about the gifted program. Gifted Education is also summarized in the Liberty County School System Student Information and Code of Conduct Booklet.

III. Referral Procedures
A. Introduction
A comprehensive screening process will be used to assure that all students, regardless of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or sex, will have the opportunity to be considered for gifted education services. Reported referrals will be initiated by the classroom teacher and forwarded to the Eligibility Team for review.

Data from system-wide norm-referenced testing will be reviewed to assist the Eligibility Team in determining potential candidates for automatic referral to the gifted program. Data from other testing will also be considered when applicable. Parents, teachers and others may also make individual requests for consideration for the program.

B. Screening - Referral and Evaluation Process
1. Training
In order to provide regular education classroom teachers with appropriate information regarding characteristics of gifted learners and the referral process, professional development must be provided each school staff about the characteristics of gifted learners, the referral procedures, and the evaluation process.

Gifted education teachers or designees will conduct professional development with each school’s staff as needed on the characteristics of gifted, the referral procedures, and the evaluation process. Gifted education teachers will present special activities that classroom teachers can use to assist in observing exemplary student responses. The Kingore Observation Inventory, by Bertie Kingore, Professional Associates, Inc., has many suggested activities that can be used for this purpose.
2. **Reported Referral** of Potentially Gifted Students
A student may be referred for consideration for gifted educational services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. A system approved screening instrument may be used.

3. **Automatic Referral** of Potentially Gifted Students
A gifted education teacher at each local school will review system-wide norm-referenced test results to determine those students who meet locally established criteria for referral for gifted education services. Locally established criteria include any of the following:
   - Performance at the 90th percentile on a standardized, norm-referenced achievement test in the area of:
     - Total Reading Score, or
     - Total Math Score, or
     - Composite Score

*Students who meet the above criteria will automatically be referred to the Eligibility Team for review for gifted education services.*

4. **Eligibility Team**
An Eligibility Team will be established to oversee the referral and eligibility process for the gifted program. The Eligibility Team may include, but is not limited to:
   - Gifted Endorsed Teacher
   - Regular Education Teacher
   - School Administrator
   - School Counselor
   - *Others deemed necessary to assist in reviewing a student referral or reviewing student assessment data for program eligibility may be included.*

The eligibility team is responsible for:
   a. reviewing referrals submitted for gifted education services,
   b. reviewing all data collected on students referred for assessment for gifted education services,
   c. determining whether referred and assessed students meet program eligibility criteria, and
   d. determining what type of gifted education services will meet the academic needs of eligible students,
   e. reviewing academic/behavior probation referrals and creating a plan of improvement,
   f. reviewing re-entry requests.
The eligibility team will meet to discuss supporting documentation and reach one of three conclusions. They may decide that:

- no action is needed at this time
- more documentation is needed, or
- the student needs to be referred for an evaluation

Parents will be notified when a student has been referred for assessment for gifted education services. This may be done by way of a letter sent home from the Eligibility Team.

5. **Student Assessment for Gifted Education services**
   
   Once the local school Eligibility Team makes the decision to refer a student for assessment for the gifted program, parents must be notified. A letter requesting parent permission to do further assessments must be obtained before assessment in the four categories (mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation) is begun. Once permission is received, the gifted education teacher at the local school will begin collecting data in all four categories.

6. **Referral Limitations**
   
   A student referred (reported or automatic) and found ineligible should not be referred again except for once in the primary grades, once in the intermediate grades, once in the middle grades, and once in secondary grades. Should new performance data become available during any of these instructional levels that indicates high academic performance, a referral may be initiated.

NOTE: Refer to Referral Flowchart found on page 7

IV. **Assessment Procedures**

A. **Evaluator**
   
   All students referred for gifted education services, regardless of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex, will be assessed by a gifted endorsed individual(s) or a designee trained in assessment.

B. **Evaluation Instruments**
   
   Forms of assessment and the instruments used for each category are listed in the chart on page 8. Evaluation instruments used in the assessment of students referred for gifted education services must meet GADOE requirements of currency, available scores, bias, norming sample, and content. Assessment data must be no more than two years old at the time the eligibility decision is made.
**REFERRAL PROCESS**

**STEP I**

Referral: Gather Information
- Automatic Referral – review test data
- Reported Referral

**STEP II**

Eligibility Team: Review Referrals and Supporting Information
- No action needed at this time
- Refer for Evaluation
- Gather More Information

**STEP III**

Formal Evaluation: Administer Assessment Measures and Compile Results

**Data Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Ability</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Eligibility Committee: Evaluate Assessment Results, determine eligibility of services

- Eligible
  - Parents notified, consent obtained
  - Recommend Service Options

- Ineligible
  - Parents notified

Annual Review

Modified Designed created by Ruth S. Cowan

Liberty County School System
Gifted Program – Administrative Procedures – March 2015