

GIFTED CURRICULUM

Gifted services must meet Georgia Performance Standards while providing differentiated curriculum based on the needs of gifted students. This gifted curriculum includes more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes than would ordinarily be available in the regular classroom. The curriculum blends instructions in math, science, social studies, language arts, reading and fine arts into units that examine central themes, issues, problems, and topics.

Fundamental to curricula development for gifted students are learning experiences that develop the use of higher level thinking skills and processes. This instruction enables the students to apply these skills and make informed decisions, to understand and apply concepts, to make judgments, and to define, create, and implement strategies for solving problems.

DELIVERY MODELS

A combination of delivery models is used in the Newton County School District to meet the needs of the gifted students.

Elementary students in grades K-3 participate in a resource program for five segments each week (approximately 250 minutes) taught by a certified gifted program teacher. Students in grades 4 and 5 receive gifted services via a cluster model provided during the language arts block each day. In addition, the gifted program teachers meet with the gifted identified fourth and fifth grade students approximately two hours per week. Students' achievement is recorded at the end of every nine-week grading period and disseminated via the Quest Report Card.

The middle school gifted student is served daily in language arts and science and in some schools mathematics. These classes take the place of the child's regular language arts, science and math classes.

In high school, gifted students have a variety of options for daily service. The primary options include Honors/Advanced Placement (AP) courses and post secondary options.

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Newton County School System is to provide educational excellence for all students.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GIFTED STUDENT

Gifted students typically display some, but not all of the following characteristics:

- Uses an enriched vocabulary
- Asks many thought-provoking questions
- Expresses unusual ideas
- Has a wide range of interests
- Uses complex sentences
- Acts independently
- Displays curiosity
- Possesses leadership qualities
- Functions at a high energy level
- Has long attention span in areas of interest
- Began reading at an early age
- Understands concept of time
- Engages in self-directed activities
- Is sensitive to feelings of others
- Has a keen sense of humor
- Is able to conceptualize
- Learns skills rapidly and with repetition
- Retains and uses information effectively
- Wants to know what makes things "tick"
- Enjoys learning
- Reasons well
- Is perfectionistic
- Prefers older companions or adults
- Has facility with numbers

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Gifted Program Services



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The Georgia State Board of Education defines a gifted student as “...a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or exceeds in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his/her abilities.”

Newton County provides services for identified gifted students at all grade levels. The gifted program is designed to meet the specific needs of these students and extend competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, collaboration, problem solving, creativity, reference skills, and communication skills beyond the experience of the regular classroom.

The Quest program in Newton County is state funded. The procedures for identifying and placing students in the gifted program are governed by the Georgia Department of Education.

EVALUATION FOR GIFTED ELIGIBILITY

Students in Newton County are evaluated periodically for gifted eligibility.

- Teacher, parent, peer and self-referrals are accepted throughout the academic year.
- Eligibility team meetings and formal testing continue until May.
- During the first semester of some grades, all students are evaluated on the basis of scores from administration of the ITBS or CoGAT tests. These tests are administered district wide according to Georgia State Department of Education guidelines.

IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Referrals

Students may be referred by teachers, parents, peers, themselves or as a result of district-wide testing. Referrals may be reviewed by the gifted eligibility team. This team may determine which students will be formally evaluated or, based on evaluation data, eligible for gifted program placement.

Evaluation

Following parental consent, the gifted program teacher and selected teachers evaluate the student’s mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation through the use of nationally-normed tests, instruments, performances, and standardized rating scales, as outlined by the Georgia Department of Education.

Eligibility

The eligibility team at the district level may review relevant information about a referred student. A decision is made by the team according to state eligibility regulations regarding eligibility or the need for further assessment.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for gifted services, a student must either (a) score at the 96th on the composite or full scale score of a standardized test of mental ability AND at the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section of a standardized achievement test OR (b) qualify through the multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas:

1. **Mental Ability**—99th percentile (for grades K-2) or 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on a composite or appropriate component score on a standardized test of mental ability. Note: The mental ability score is 96th percentile for grades K-2 when multiple criteria eligibility is used.
2. **Achievement**—90th percentile on a Total Battery, Total Reading or Total Math section of a standardized achievement test.

3. **Creativity**—90th percentile on the total battery of a standardized test or Superior rating (90%) on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale.
4. **Motivation**—Superior rating (90%) on a standardized motivation scale. In grades 10-12 a student may also qualify by obtaining a certain grade point average in courses taking in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language over the past two years.

Additional Important Eligibility Criteria:

- A qualifying score on a nationally-normed test is required to meet the criteria in at least two areas.
- Any data used to establish eligibility in one area cannot be used to establish eligibility in another area.
- Any test score, evaluation instrument, or product/performance used to establish eligibility must be current within two years. Students that are tested and determined ineligible for gifted services cannot be tested until at least two years have elapsed from the initial gifted screening date.
- Outside data may be accepted and considered but cannot be substituted for school generated data to determine eligibility.
- Students that transfer into the district from another Georgia school district where they were identified and placed into a gifted program, are automatically eligible for gifted services. Students from gifted programs outside the state of Georgia are not automatically placed in the gifted program. Testing procedures and eligibility screening must be reviewed to determine alignment with Georgia guidelines. The eligibility team will review records and determine if additional testing is required. Parents are then notified and consent secured before additional screening is conducted.