

**Nettleton School District
Instructional Program
Gifted Education Program**

Gifted Education Policy- Intellectually Gifted

The Nettleton School District provides Gifted Education for the intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6. The mission of the NSD gifted education program is to ensure that intellectually gifted children, 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 potential.

Programming is offered through a pull out resource program. Mississippi regulations require that intellectually gifted students be provided services by a properly endorsed teacher in a resource room for a minimum of 240 minutes/ 4 hours per week. NSD 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, NSD 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.

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. Currently, the NSD offers the program for intellectually gifted children in the mandated grades 2-6.

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 are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under IDEA guidelines, physically handicapped, or OHI. Throughout the identification process, district personnel are careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

All data collected as part of the identification process is 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 field education program, or has a documented need to access. Parents have the right to view their children's records at any time.

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.

The NSD follows the MDE established procedures and criteria on all referral measures for identification:

- Process 1: Mass Screening with parental permission is conducted in first grade using a group measure of cognitive ability assessment.

- Process 2: Individual referrals for students in second through sixth grade are accepted throughout the school year. 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 or parents can stop the identification process. **The 90-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 the following:

- Cognitive Ability- local minimal acceptance criteria of 90th percentile (A group measure of cognitive ability or individual cognitive ability assessment)
- Published Characteristics Checklist- Local minimal acceptance criteria of the 91st percentile on the gifted rating scale, which assesses intellectual ability, creativity, and social/leadership capabilities

Once referral data is collected, the Local Survey Committee (LSC) shall review and make one of the following recommendations:

- Move forward to the Assessment Process.
- There is a need to collect additional data.
- Identification process should stop if the criteria is not met. A letter will be sent home to parents along with formal documentation of the decision. Parents may schedule a conference should they wish to review test results.

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. The examiner shall review all available data on the student and use this information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. The examiner will provide a signed and dated report of the test administration. 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.

Once the Assessment Report is finished, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria has or has not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program. If a student meets criteria, the Gifted LSC will grant an “Intellectually Gifted” eligibility ruling, and parents shall be notified in writing as to the assessment results.

Special Considerations for Assessment Process

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students- The District will follow procedure as outlined by the *Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi* (2023) for students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility.

Special Considerations for Gifted Identification Checklist- The District will follow procedures 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.

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.

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. Currently the NSD 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 students, the NSD shall collect a copy of the student's Gifted Eligibility Form and assessment report and obtain parental permission for placement.

Independent or Private Testing- If a student is assessed privately, the District will consider assessment results on the following conditions:

- The assessment is conducted by a licensed examiner within the last twelve months and is mailed by the licensed examiner directly to the Central Office Coordinator for Gifted Education.
- 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.

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 31-23-181.

As per gifted regulations, the NSD 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.

Gifted Program: Outcomes, Standards, Classwork/Homework/Make-Up Work

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 established in MDE Gifted Regulations, intellectually gifted students 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.

The NSD 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 the NSD.

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 should 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.

Appeals Process/ Hearing

Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the parents have the right to a hearing to appeal the decision and determine how the lack of agreement will be resolved. Within five (5) school days of the meeting with the principal, the parents may put their concerns in writing and present them to the NSD Gifted Contact Person. A hearing committee, composed of the parents, Gifted Contact Person, administrator, counselor, and teacher of the gifted, will convene within five (5) days or a timeframe agreed upon by the parent. The hearing committee will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting. Documentation of all decisions and actions will be collected and maintained in LSC minutes.

Students removed from the gifted program will be considered for reinstatement in the 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 LSC 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.

Gifted Student Files

A file will be created for each student referred for possible gifted placement. Gifted student files shall be required to contain the following information:

1. Gifted Eligibility Form (GEF)- document used to collect all relevant data used in the identification of gifted students, inclusive of the student's demographic information for the purpose of enrollment and registration. Includes parent signature, eligibility/ineligibility mark, signed by LSC, and eligibility date.
2. Permission for Gifted Service Form, including parent signature
3. Assessment Report
4. Referral Documentation
5. Original Protocols, including objective measures, subjective measures, and individual assessments

The files of all referred students, both eligible and ineligible for gifted services, will be maintained and located at the District Office until five years after the student's graduation from high school at which time those files will be destroyed.