
LONG BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted Education Program Board Policy

Approved July, 2007-Revised July, 2008

LONG BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Long Beach School District provides a program of enrichment for intellectually gifted students in second through sixth grade. The classes at the elementary level are called “Discovery” and serve second through fifth grade students at each elementary school. The program at the middle school level is called “Excel” and serves students in sixth grade. Students at the elementary and middle school levels spend one day per week in the gifted “pull-out” program and the rest of the week in their general education classrooms.

Mississippi Department of Education gifted regulations and state mandate require that intellectually gifted students in grades two through six be provided services by a teacher with gifted endorsement for a minimum of five hours per week.

MISSION

The mission of the Long Beach School District gifted program is to insure that intellectually gifted children, as defined by the Mississippi Department of Education, are offered appropriate educational experiences that are qualitatively different from those available in the regular classroom in order to provide opportunities for them to realize their abilities and potential.

MDE DEFINITION

The State of Mississippi defines “Intellectually Gifted Children” and “Gifted Education Programs” as follows:

“Intellectually Gifted Children” shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process.

“Gifted Education Programs” (GEP) shall mean special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2-12, ... in the public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.

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. At this time, the Long Beach School District offers the program for intellectually gifted children in the mandated grades, 2-6.

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 ADD/ADHD.

All data collected as part of the identification process are 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 gifted education program, or that have 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 performance in the regular classroom, potential ability, test performance, maturity, creativity, and leadership potential. 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.

Referral must include documentation of two or more of the following:

- A group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve (12) months with a minimum score at or above the 90th percentile;
- Grades from the current or past school years with at least a "B" average;
- Published characteristics of giftedness measure at the superior range;
- Published measure of creativity at the superior range;
- Published measure of leadership at the superior range;
- Achievement test scores at the 90th percentile;
- Existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve (12) months, and/or;
- Other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

With parent permission, a group measure of cognitive abilities assessment will be administered to all first grade students in a blanket preliminary screening for referral.

All students in grades served by the program comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients for gifted education services. A student may be referred for consideration, pending documentation of the above 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.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

If a student meets the criteria for referral, the Gifted Local Survey Committee 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.

PHASE I OF ASSESSMENT

If parent permission is granted for testing, a student must meet the stated criteria for at least three of the following measures prior to the administration of an individual intelligence test:

- A full scale score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed group measure of intelligence;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed characteristics of giftedness checklist;
- A score at or above the superior range on a normed measure of creativity;
- A score in the superior range on a normed measure of leadership;
- A score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive abilities;

- 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;
- Other measures as approved by the State Board of Education on the district's Gifted Education Program Proposal.

PHASE II OF ASSESSMENT

If the stated minimal acceptable criteria have been met on at least three of the above measures, an individual intelligence test will be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested.

The student must score at or above the 90th percentile composite/full scale in order to satisfy eligibility criteria. If a student meets criteria, the Gifted Local Survey Committee will grant an "Intellectually Gifted" eligibility ruling.

POTENTIALLY TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

In compliance with MDE gifted regulations, students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy the minimal acceptable criteria on the individual test of intelligence shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 90th percentile on the nonverbal scale, or who 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 a provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

POTENTIALLY DISADVANTAGED GIFTED STUDENTS

Potentially disadvantaged students who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but did score at least the 85th percentile, may be administered additional measures to determine eligibility as established by MDE gifted regulations.

OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED ELIGIBILITIES

As each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program, a student moving to Mississippi with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy Mississippi eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi.

There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the district.

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 placement or withhold placement of the child in the program. Written parental permission must be obtained before the child can be placed in the program.

Participation in the Gifted Education Program is NOT a reward. It is an Entitlement under State Law (Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181).

Once a student is determined eligible for a gifted program in Mississippi, no reevaluation testing is required to remain in the program. Although criteria may vary from district to district, an eligible determination is accepted by all school districts within the State of Mississippi.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

As Discovery and Excel student work under specific Instructional Management Plan objectives and time frames, withholding permission to attend gifted classes shall not be used as a disciplinary measure. Failure to complete enrichment class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

As outlined in MDE Gifted Regulations, gifted students may not be required to make up class work 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. Homework assigned to the regular classroom students for the evening of the Discovery/Excel day must be completed.

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUED PLACEMENT

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

As stated in the MDE Gifted Education Regulations, "since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the law, the student should remain in the gifted program as long as they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular education program are the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program."

In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's performance. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress in the program, the student will be placed on probation in the gifted program for the next 9-weeks term. The parents will be notified and given an opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the decision and develop a plan of action. During this time, the student will continue to participate in the gifted program. If at the end of the period of probation, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level, the student will be removed from probation and recommended for continued placement. If at the end of the 9-weeks term the student has failed to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained.

If the committee determines that the student should exit Discovery/Excel due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents will be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the district shall grant the parents a hearing.

HEARING PROCESS

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 the meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the Long Beach gifted contact person. The gifted contact person will schedule a meeting of the District Student Assistance Team (D-SAT) within five (5) school days or a timeframe agreed upon by the parents. Parents will be extended an invitation to attend the D-SAT meeting. The D-SAT will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES

Students 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 Local Gifted Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the students. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

PERFORMANCE IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

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

As the academic progress and welfare of the students are always of prime consideration, special situations will be handled on an individual basis.

VISITORS

Parents and interested parties are always welcome to visit the Discovery and Excel classes. Please contact the school office or teachers of the gifted to make arrangements.

For additional information or questions about the Long Beach School District Gifted Education Program please contact Deborah Holt, Gifted Contact Person at 228-864-3370 or the Long Beach School District Department of Student Services at 228-864-8085.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

- Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181
- Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2006)