

Fentress County

Plan for Gifted Education

Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted. The (LEA) School System shall prohibit discrimination against any student based on any of the premises listed above with respect to his/her participation in the gifted program.

I. Policy

The Fentress County Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide an effective program designed to meet the needs of the intellectually gifted students. It further recognizes the importance of developing the untapped potential of these exceptional students to the future of our community.

“Intellectually Gifted” means a child whose intellectual abilities and potential for achievement are so outstanding the child’s educational performance is adversely affected. “Adverse affect” means the general curriculum alone is inadequate to appropriately meet the student’s educational needs.

Nondiscriminatory Statement

Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted. The (LEA) School System shall prohibit discrimination against any student based on any of the premises listed above with respect to his/her participation in the gifted program.

II. Program Goals

Fentress County will expand and enhance services to *Intellectually Gifted* students. The following goals and action steps will be addressed:

Goal 1: Provide annual training for all staff on the referral process, identification procedures, and service delivery for students who may be gifted and talented.

Steps to Achieve Goal

- Provide training and materials for relevant staff (e.g., principals, teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, ELL staff, gifted liaisons) related to:
 - Procedures for identification and service options
 - Ongoing questions related to individual, grade level, and/or school-wide identification and referral procedures
 - Documentation of students outcomes on the Gifted Tracking Log
- Provide training to general education teachers related to differentiated instruction to meet the needs of gifted and talented students.
 - Plan countywide training event.
 - Publicize local and state training opportunities.

Goal 2: Develop a service delivery model for *Intellectually Gifted* students (age 3-21).

Steps to Achieve Goal

- Establish eligibility for Special Education services:
 - Develop eligibility services for preschool age children through an IEP for ages 3-5 (5year olds not meeting eligibility for entrance into kindergarten).
 - Provide services for school-age students through an IEP at their school of enrollment.
- If determined not eligible for Special Education services:
 - Provide enrichment opportunities through general education interventions (e.g. compacting, acceleration, grouping, guidance, independent study, advanced classes/honors, etc)

Goal 3: Establish an advisory team to assure that all persons involved within the community understand the *intellectually gifted* student.

Steps to Achieve Goal

- Provide training and materials for an advisory team (consisting of 2 local business leaders, 1pre-K through 8th grade principle, high school principal, 1 regular classroom teacher from each of the 4 elementary schools, 1 parent/guardian of a intellectually gifted student from each of the 4 elementary schools and 1 parent/guardian of a intellectually gifted student) related to:
 - Procedures for identification and service options
 - Ongoing questions related to individual, grade level, and/or school-wide identification and referral procedures

Goal 4: Refine existing programs for identifying and serving potentially *Intellectually Gifted* students among underrepresented populations.

Steps to Achieve Goal

- Train general education teachers to identify potentially gifted students with focus on early identification.
- Train general education teachers to implement programs with identified students addressing higher level thinking skills (e.g., critical, problem-solving, creativity).

- Assist general education teacher in identifying and selecting appropriate resources including technology-based instruction.

Goal 5: Develop an enhanced service delivery model in schools to provide enrichment opportunities for intellectually gifted students K-12.

Steps to Achieve Goal

- Provide information and support to enhance standards for students who have the potential to perform above grade level.
- Develop a web-based home page to address enrichment opportunities for those students who may not have access to enrichment classes.

III. Referrals

A. Informing the Public

Fentress County provides the same level of notice to parents and students, regarding information about gifted services as it does with respect to other significant school activities, policies, or procedures. The notice includes information on the definition of gifted, how to make a student referral, basic eligibility criteria (excluding test scores), and the person to contact when making a referral. Methods to inform parents and community members:

- Disseminate the State gifted Child-Find brochure.
- Provide principals information for parent handbook, registration, and local school parent meetings.
- Provide current information on the Fentress County web site.

B. School Screen Teams (SST)

Fentress County has a School Screening Team (SST) at each K-8 school to receive and review referrals for gifted services. The SST may consist of a parent, principal, guidance counselor, teacher, and school psychologist. Duties and responsibilities of this team are to:

- Receive all referrals.
- Review all information from grade level screening.
- Collect, maintain, and track all data from all referrals.

- Distribute and collect all required information for individual screening or comprehensive assessment.
- Schedule meetings in a timely manner to review referrals.
- Notify parents of the SST decisions and inform them of their rights.
- Obtain parental consent for individual screening or comprehensive assessment when appropriate.
- Base decisions on multiple criteria -- not exclude any student on the basis of a single test score
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences.
- Arrange for any further assessments.
- Provide the completed assessment information to the Eligibility Determination Team.

C. Screening Criteria

All students referred by teachers and/or parents will follow the guidelines set forth by the State of Tennessee in screening students for possible identification as *Intellectually Gifted*.

- Achievement—information may be obtained through the following: individual and/or group achievement test scores (TCAP, SAGES), grades, work samples, Stanford-9, ITBS, PLAN, Explore, PSAT, WIAT-II, WJIII).
- Characteristics—use of State and/or nationally recognized gifted characteristics lists (see Gifted Manual--Gifted Characteristics), and those listed on the School Screening Summary.

Grade Level Screening

Fentress County implements an annual system-wide screening, which provides an equitable opportunity for *Intellectually Gifted* identification.

- *Classroom Screening Summary* and *TCAP Class Summary* will be completed utilizing scores from earliest grade level in which the Group Achievement Test. Fentress County will screen students 4th grade students using 3rd grade group achievement scores.
- School Screening Team will evaluate all students' scores from group achievement test of grade level to be screened and determine candidates for individual screening. At least five students who obtained the highest percentile conversion scores in each classroom on the TCAP assessment in each of the following academic areas: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The School Screening Team will also complete the *TN Assessment Team Instrument Selection Form (TnATISF)* for each student considering the strengths

and weaknesses of each student, the student's educational history, and the school and home environment.

- **Note:** The *TN Assessment Team Instrument Selection Form (TnATISF)* will be used for both the individual screening and comprehensive phases of assessment.
- *Referral for Individual Screening* and *TN Parent Information Form (TnPIF)* is sent home. All at-risk students and any other student sensitive to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences will be contacted directly.
- Regular Education Teacher will complete the *TN Teacher Observation Checklist (TnTOC)* and the *TN Creative Thinking Rating Scale (TnCREAT)* and/or any additional or alternative forms.
- School Screening Team will complete the *Response to Individual Screening* and determine students who meet the requirements in any area that the student's needs cannot be met in the general education class.
- For students selected by the School Screening Team for Comprehensive Assessment, the appropriate forms and information will be sent to the parents.
- At any time at which the screening process is stopped the *Tracking Log* will be completed.

All persons determined to be part of the School Screening Team will meet to review the information gathered. No single item reviewed is used to exclude a student at any point and any cut-off scores used will be lower than scores required for eligibility. *Alternative Assessment Instruments* will be utilized as well as consideration for any student as described under Section III—Evaluation.

IV. Eligibility

Students from different cultural or language backgrounds, the economically disadvantaged, environmental disadvantaged, and students with sensory impairments or other disabilities who are often underrepresented in programs for the gifted and/or any student who is determined to be at risk which might cause the student's true abilities to be masked, and therefore affect performance in the areas evaluated will be recommended for an alternative assessment to be administered by the SST. To ensure that the abilities of students from traditionally underrepresented groups are accurately assessed, they should be evaluated with an instrument that is sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and economic differences; appropriateness for students with sensory or physical disabilities. The Team shall utilize the *TN Assessment Team Instrument Selection Form (TnATISF)* for making determination on alternative assessment instruments. The Team must use professional

judgment to determine the extent of these concerns so that tests/evaluative materials selected and administered and be sensitive to these issues.

The School Psychologist and Support Team persons will be included in the process of selecting appropriate tests of evaluation based on, but not limited to: 1) their knowledge of the student, 2) their knowledge of the subjects or target populations for which the test is intended, 3) considering cultural, economic, environmental, linguistic or disability differences.

Fentress County has established an Eligibility Determination Team to implement procedures to determine eligibility of student for gifted services. Whether a student receives services through General Education or Special Education program, member will include, but not limited to, someone knowledgeable about the student being assessed present (last year's regular education teacher(s), parent/guardian); someone knowledgeable about gifted student in general (gifted education teacher/coordinator, special education teacher, regular education teacher, administrator(s); and someone able to interpret the assessment information gathered (gifted education teacher/coordinator, school psychologist, administrator(s).

The duties and responsibilities of the IEP Team:

- Determine if all assessment information has been gathered; vision/hearing screening, documentation of need (*General Education Interventions*--direct observation by the classroom teacher), group or individual achievement test scores, and data collected from menu selections included in the Academic Performance, Creative Thinking, and Cognition components for gifted evaluation.
- Review assessment results with parents.
- Determine eligibility and need for special education services. If documented need is present, develop an IEP to address specific needs.
- Complete Eligibility Report form.
- Attach the *Gifted Documentation* form to the Eligibility Report Form.
- Inform parents of the decision (including *Rights of Children with Disabilities and Parent Responsibility and Prior Written Notice*).
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences.

Special Education Eligibility Determination:

The IEP Team determines eligibility and access to special education services. The IEP Team may consist of parent, principal, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, special

education teacher, and school psychologist. Students are assessed for suspected giftedness according to the State Department of Tennessee *Intellectually Gifted* eligibility standards and procedures.

The duties and responsibilities of the Eligibility Determination Team:

- Determine if all assessment information has been gathered by the SST; vision/hearing screening, documentation of need (*General Education Interventions*--direct observation by the classroom teacher), group or individual achievement test scores, and data collected from menu selections included in the Academic Performance, Creative Thinking, and Cognition components for gifted evaluation.
- Review assessment results with parents.
- Determine eligibility and need for special education services. If documented need is present, develop an IEP to address specific needs.
- Complete Eligibility Report form.
- Attach the *Gifted Documentation* form to the Eligibility Report Form.
- Inform parents of the decision (including *Rights of Children with Disabilities and Parent Responsibility and Prior Written Notice*).
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, economic, and/or linguistic differences.

V. Service Delivery Options

Services for *Intellectually Gifted* students are available K-12. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) describes, through goals and objectives, what services will be provided for the gifted student. These plans may include group goals/program descriptions, and must include individual goals determined based on the student's needs.

As with any other area of Special Education, a student's eligibility for services should be reviewed at a minimum of every three years, or as needed if circumstances change. Services should be determined bas on student need, not on availability of services. Fentress County will be diligent in assuring all students are provided with equal opportunities in child find, screening, and assessment for eligibility. Equitable and appropriate access to services for ALL students who have been identified as *Intellectually Gifted* (in special education or general education programs for the gifted) will be provided system-wide.

Enrichment means that the pupil's education will be broader in scope, explore topics in greater depth and at higher cognitive levels, and involve many activities that modify, supplement, and extend achievement beyond the expectations set forth in the general education curriculum.

Enrichment may occur horizontally or vertically and should focus on the development of the particular intellectual skills of the student. These might include but should not be limited to:

1. Making associations and conceptualizing interrelationships,
2. Evaluating facts and points of view critically,
3. Creating new ideas and avenues of thought,
4. Identifying as well as analyzing complex problems,
5. Determining an array of solutions to problems and possible concomitant outcomes, and
6. Understanding others without personal bias.

Enrichment in the academic areas should not be considered a substitute for meeting a student's affective, intuitive/creative or social needs.

Compacting allows the student accelerated mastery of curriculum materials typically presented to grade-level peers. With compacting, students who demonstrate previous mastery in the subject area spend less time with the regular curriculum and more time with extension and enrichment activities.

Acceleration takes advantage of the student's ability to learn at a rapid rate and advances the student in some way in order to present materials and activities beyond the grade level. It should be noted that acceleration and grade skipping are not synonymous terms. Grade skipping is considered one of the least desirable methods of accomplishing acceleration for the student who is intellectually gifted. While acceleration may be desirable for many students, it is by no means appropriate for all. Each student's strengths and weaknesses must be carefully analyzed. Factors, which should be considered in making the determination whether and/or in which area(s) to accelerate a student, include, but should not be limited to:

1. Level of language development: — Does the student have a vocabulary level and the language skills necessary for advanced content?
2. Motivation: — Is the student excited by the challenge of non-mastery material/skills or does he/she find intellectual risk-taking a threat?
3. Cooperativeness: — What is the student's present level of cooperation with teachers regarding assigned tasks? Refusal or reluctance to complete routine work while maintaining high test and achievement scores in a subject is a definite signal that content should be modified.
4. Willingness and/or ability to produce at the student's present level of placement: — Students at either extreme of a performance continuum may be candidates for acceleration. As with

“cooperativeness”, non-production may signal that a student needs more challenging content. On the opposite end, the student who produces consistently may find it difficult to maintain this production level while mastering material that is more challenging.

5. Skill mastery in the area(s) considered for acceleration: — Subject area tests or curriculum pre/post tests should be administered for the purpose of determining whether or not the student has mastered skills necessary to move to the next level. If students who are intellectually gifted perform well in their current levels of placement, then it is appropriate to consider acceleration. Subject area tests should be administered for determining whether the student has mastered the skills necessary to move to the next level. Any areas of exceptionality should be addressed as well as mastered, and the student should be allowed to progress to the next level. Acceleration in academic area should not be considered a substitute for meeting any student’s needs in the affective, intuitive/creative, or social domains. As it relates to any one or all of

- The aforementioned areas of need, the specific areas should be analyzed and
- Integrated into the student’s program.

Grouping is an arrangement whereby students identified as intellectually gifted are placed in groups, which bring them in contact with others of similar abilities and interests. It should be noted that simply grouping students identified as intellectually gifted together without changing the curriculum or the manner in which these students are taught cannot be expected to produce any substantial changes. Coupled with differentiated curriculum and methodology, grouping affords students identified as intellectually gifted opportunities to relate and to be challenged by their intellectual peers. Formats for grouping may include the following:

1. Cluster grouping within a class
2. Alternative classes or schools
3. Seminars
4. Resource programs or centers
5. Mini-studies

Guidance should be an integral part of the program for students who are intellectually gifted and provide experiences, which promote realistic self-appraisal, better understanding of self and peers, greater sensitivity and awareness, and personal and career goals. The most effective means of including guidance-type issues is through the integration of the goals and processes of guidance into the instructional program. When necessary, individual conferences may be utilized.

Education Options in Special Education and General Education Programming

Educational services suitable for the intellectually gifted may be offered singularly or in combination with other alternatives. In all instances, students should be placed in the least restrictive environments available. Services may be categorized into those that take place within the general education classroom setting (intra-classroom) and those that are provided outside the general education classroom (extra-classroom).

Intra-Classroom services require that the classroom teacher assume the responsibility for working with the student who is intellectually gifted within the regular school day and provide instruction designed to meet the individual needs of the student. In many instances, intra-classroom services require the teacher to compact the curriculum for the student. Compacting involves pre-testing the student to determine content he/she knows, removing what is mastered from the curriculum, and teaching only the content not mastered by the student. The time gained through compacting is one means to provide time during which the student may be involved in the options chosen during the IEP Team meeting. Sample intra-classroom options educational services might access include:

1. Independent Study (Flexible Scheduling)
2. Team Teaching:
3. Advanced Classes/Honors
4. Supplemental Learning Materials
5. Classroom
6. Cluster Grouping
7. Multi-Age Grouping

NOTE: Advanced and honors classes are typically provided through general education curriculum. If these courses meet the educational needs of the student who has been identified as Intellectually Gifted, that student would not require or show need for special education services

Extra-Classroom services are learning opportunities that exist as a supplement to the general education classroom program within the regular school day. A specially trained teacher who works with students who are identified as intellectually gifted and whose responsibilities include designing and implementing the extra-classroom aspects of the Individual Education Program should provide these options. Extra classroom options may necessitate the removal of the student from the general education classroom for a portion of the school day. Extra-classroom educational options include:

1. Resource/Interest Development Centers

2. Itinerant Teachers
3. Mentorship (Tutorial)
4. Student Internships

VI. Grievance Procedures

The Fentress County Board of Education follows IDEA federal law with respect to Parent Responsibility and Childs Rights. However, we encourage parents who have concerns to contact the principal at the respective school and/or the Special Education Supervisor. If concerns are expressed, a meeting will be scheduled to try and resolve the concerns. If this meeting does not yield “workable” results, then the parent will be advised on how to file a formal complaint with the State Department of Education, Special Education. The Fentress County Board of Education will, at this point, request mediation to try and resolve the conflict/concern.

As the parent of a child who is suspected to need or identified as needing special education, the parent has certain rights, which are guaranteed by the state and federal law. These rights are listed in “*Rights of Children with Disabilities and Parent Responsibilities.*”

If the grievance is not resolved, the appropriate supervisor is contacted. The IEP Team should be convened to address concerns related to students with disabilities. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, refer to the State of Tennessee grievance procedures and forms are included in this document.

VII. Tracking System

Fentress County tracks activity on each student referred for gifted services. Tracking is used to document screening, identification, and services provided through general education or special education. The tracking system includes the following:

- Student's name
- Date of birth
- Race
- Sex
- School
- Grade

- Date of referral
- Source of referral (parent, teacher, self, grade level screening)
- Results of the referral (referred for Individual Screening and referred for a Comprehensive Evaluation)
- Alternative assessment strategies or instruments used
- Eligibility determination (eligible or not eligible)

Information is gathered by each school in the local LEA and will be submitted for aggregation at the end of the school year. The information will be reported to State Department on the *Gifted End-of-Year Report*.

VIII. Forms

Forms relevant to this plan are on file with the state and are found in the *Intellectually Gifted Assessment Resource Packet*.

Website: <http://tennessee.gov/education/speced/seassessment.shtml#DISABILITY>

IX. Alternative/Enrichment Programs

Fentress County School System serves four elementary schools and one high school. The county comprises of 99% white and 1% minority. Each school community along with the Parent/Teacher Organizations, volunteers and other personnel determine any alternative/enrichment program of the students in that school.

