

# **CHALLENGE**



**Pulaski County School  
System**

**Gifted Administrative Handbook**

**2021-2022**

# **CHALLENGE**

## **Pulaski County Schools Gifted and Talented Program**

The Pulaski County Board of Education recognizes the need to provide gifted education services to who have the potential for exceptional academic achievement. Gifted education programs are provided students who meet eligibility requirements.

Students, grades 2 through 12, in the Pulaski County School System who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, academic, and/or creative ability are provided with special instructional services provided by certified gifted teachers. Eligibility criteria for placement in this program are determined by the State Board of Education. Referrals for consideration for eligibility for gifted services may be made by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.

### **Definition**

The definition of a student eligible for gifted education services in Georgia may be found in the Official Georgia Annotated (120-2-152). This section defines services for students as intellectually gifted. The definition is expanded in GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students [Code IDDD]. This rule states in (1) Definitions (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."

### **Disclaimer**

In compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P. L. 88-352), no student will be excluded from the gifted referral process or denied the opportunity for gifted services based on race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality.

## **Program Description**

The Pulaski County School System provides gifted education services to eligible students through our Challenge program. Following Georgia Board of Education regulations, the Challenge program is designed to meet the unique needs of students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, exhibit an exceptionally high degree of motivation, excel in specific academic fields, and need special instruction and/or ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities. PCSS encourages, fosters, and supports differentiated educational efforts that meet provisions for the special needs of gifted learners through an array of service delivery options and educational opportunities. Activities for Challenge students include more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes than that addressed in the regular educational classroom. The successful attainment of these goals is dependent upon a collaborative effort among the educators, community members, parents, and students.

### **Goals**

Gifted students will:

- a. develop advanced research skills and methods.
- b. develop and practice creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills with a variety of complex topics within the area of study.
- c. develop and practice critical thinking and logical problem-solving skills in the pertinent academic area.
- d. develop advanced communication skills.
- e. develop an understanding of self and how their unique characteristics may influence their interactions with others.

## **Curriculum**

Pulaski County's Challenge Program is a county-wide program. The gifted students will be responsible for mastery of the content standards set by the Georgia Department of Education at their grade level, as well as some above grade level standards in English/Language Arts and Math. Teachers who hold the gifted education endorsement expose gifted students to a rigorous and challenging curriculum. 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.

Curriculum objectives shall focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and meta-cognitive skills at each grade using principles of differentiation in one or more of the following content areas: mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, and foreign language. Gifted curricula shall include more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes than would be ordinarily available in the regular classroom setting. Gifted curricula are more rigorous in pace, content, process skills, and student expectations than the general curricula.

## **Objectives**

Pulaski County's Challenge Program for students identified as gifted will:

- ensure that gifted education services are an integral part of the general education program,
- provide differentiated instruction and curriculum to continuously improve student achievement and performance,
- recognize and develop diverse abilities and talents, and
- provide comprehensive professional development for its teachers to help them meet the unique needs of advanced-level students.

## **Challenge Delivery Models**

Local systems are required to provide at least five segments a week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted education services for all eligible students whose parents have granted permission for participation in the gifted program. These services must be provided within the parameters of the state-approved delivery models. Descriptions of approved delivery models can be found in the Georgia Department of Education Gifted Manual.

Pulaski County Schools utilize a variety of different delivery models to meet the needs of eligible students. The services can be scheduled in one or a combination of scheduling formats listed below. All models must meet the suggested regulations and procedures of the Georgia Department of Education.

The Pulaski County School system has chosen to utilize the delivery models identified below:

### **Grades 2-8**

#### **Advanced Content Model:**

Students identified as gifted in grades 2-8 participate in Advanced Content classes in the area(s) of mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. The curriculum offered in Advanced Content courses is more rigorous in pace, content, process skills, and student expectations. Eighth grade students may be given the opportunity to participate in high school courses and earn units.

The Advanced Content classes are made up of students who are homogeneously grouped based on achievement and interest in a specific academic content area. When the number of gifted students served in a grade level is below funded class size, the district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area.

The local district has established criteria and guidelines that identify students who may be successful with the advanced curriculum to be offered in these classes.

The criteria are as follows:

- GPA (rank is considered)
- Reading Level
- EOG/EOC scores (raw scores may be used)
- Work ethic
- School Attendance

The guidelines for continuation are as follows:

- Continued placement in the Advanced Content classes is not guaranteed. Student data will be reviewed at the end of each school year to determine appropriate placement of each student for the next school year.

### Collaborative Model

The collaborative model may be used when a content teacher is not gifted certified. Direct instruction may be provided by a regular classroom teacher; but there must be substantial, regularly-scheduled, collaborative planning between the content area teacher and the gifted specialist (the teacher with the gifted endorsement who is serving as the instructional facilitator). The gifted specialist, the regular classroom teacher, and the gifted student (when appropriate) collaborate in the development of challenging assignments which substitute for or extend the core curriculum objectives which the identified gifted student has already mastered.

### Cluster Grouping

Identified gifted students are placed as a group into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom rather than being dispersed among all the rooms/courses at that grade level. The regular classroom teacher must have the gifted endorsement to count any student at the gifted weight. One or two segments per day provided in this setting may be counted at the gifted weight if the teacher documents the curriculum modifications he/she has made for the gifted students by way of separate lesson plans and individual student contracts.

## **High School**

Students identified as gifted in grades 9-12 may be served through Honors and/or Advanced Placement Courses (AP) when available. The curriculum offered in Honors and Advanced Placement courses is more rigorous in pace, content, process skills, and student expectations.

Identified gifted students may also participate in the Move On When Ready Program. Meetings are held at the high school to discuss the options offered through this program. The high school counselor has information on the requirements for participating in this program.

In each of the delivery models utilized by Pulaski County, there may be opportunities to include students who are not identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation. Criteria have been set to identify students who will be successful with the advanced curriculum offered in these classes, as well as the guidelines for continued participation in the advance content classes. (see criteria listed under Advanced Content)

# **Teacher Certification Requirements**

## **Gifted Endorsement**

Teachers of gifted students must meet the training requirements described in the Gifted Education Regulations. The Gifted Education Endorsement may be added to a professional teaching certificate by successfully completing a program of study that has been approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). Georgia PSC Rule 505-2-.107 describes the Gifted In-Field Endorsement. Approved endorsement programs are also listed on the PSC website.

## **Advanced Placement Courses**

The teacher must have the appropriate content area certification. In addition, the teacher must (a) have been trained by the College Board in that specific AP course and have had at least 10 clock hours of staff development in characteristics of gifted learners and curriculum differentiation for gifted students; or (b) have the gifted endorsement.

## **Communication with Parents and the Community**

Information regarding the Challenge Program in Pulaski County is shared with students, parents, community members, teachers, and school administrators through a variety of methods including, but not limited to:

- The District website <http://www.pulaski.k12.ga.us/>
- The Gifted Program Administrative procedures manual-available on district website and schools

Parents of gifted students or students who are being considered for the gifted program are provided communication via the official Pulaski County Schools Gifted forms. Forms have been created to notify parents of a student's initial consideration for gifted education services and to request permission for evaluation, a student's eligibility status after an evaluation, the type of services to be offered (initially and annually), the continuation of gifted education services, the possible discontinuation of gifted education services (including the length of probationary periods and the specific criteria a student must meet to continue receiving gifted education services), and the termination of gifted program services.

## Identification and Referral Process

Students who may need gifted education services are referred to a Search/Eligibility Team (SET). At each school, this is a team comprised of gifted-certified teachers, counselors, administrators, and/or gifted director. SET reviews student information and available test data to determine the next step for the student.

Automatic referrals:

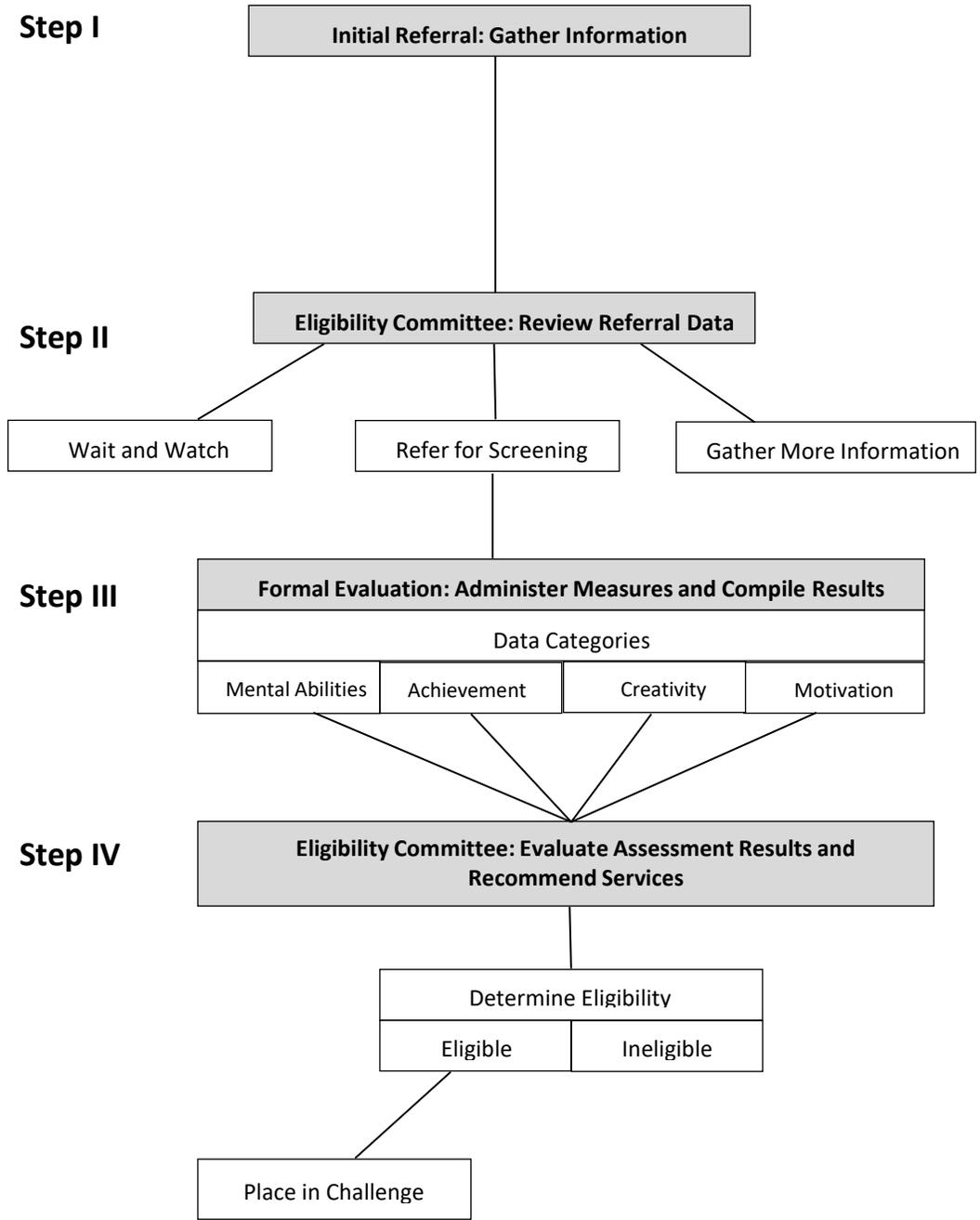
- Students who receive a scale score of 600 or above on the End of Grade Assessment in ELA or Math at the end of the previous year.
- Students who score 90% or above on the reading OR math portion of the NWEA MAP benchmark assessment given during the previous school year or the fall or winter assessment period during the present school year.

Teachers, counselors, parents or guardians, peers, administrators, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities, may refer a student for consideration to the gifted program. Required documentation must be completed and returned to the gifted director by the specified time to be considered. The documents to be completed can be found on the district website or at the schools. Please refer to the timeline for this process below:

### Referral Timeline Summary

<b>December- mid January</b>	<p>System-wide referral process begins. Each school reviews current test data for automatic referrals and the referral window is opened for all stakeholders to nominate students for referral.</p> <p>Parents may also refer their child using the referral documents.</p> <p>Required documents for referral will be available on the district website and at each school.</p> <p>Student referrals are due to the Gifted Director <b>mid-January</b>. Once teams have met and made recommendations, referrals will not be accepted for this school year.</p>
<b>Mid- January- February</b>	<p>The director and/or school administrator will meet with the Search/Eligibility Team at each school to review data and other evidence collected through the referral process. The Search/Eligibility Team will make recommendations based on data gathered.</p> <p>If referred for evaluation, parents will be sent a letter requesting permission to evaluate the student.</p> <p>Evaluation process may begin once all permission letters are received.</p>
<b>March- April</b>	<p>Evaluation process continues—as needed.</p>
<b>May – Mid-June</b>	<p>Upon receipt of all assessment results, eligibility will be determined. Parents will be notified of eligibility and given assessment results.</p>

# FLOW CHART OF THE REFERRAL PROCESS



## **Evaluations**

If the Search/Eligibility Team recommends further evaluation, parents are notified in writing to request permission to do additional testing. Georgia requires evaluations in the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

Once all evaluations are completed, the Search/Eligibility Team reviews the new test data and determines if the student meets the Georgia eligibility rule. Parents are then notified in writing as to the results. If the student is determined to be eligible for gifted education services, parents must consent to placement in the program.

Evaluations outside of school system (assessment data which have been gathered and analyzed by a source outside the Pulaski County School System) may be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process. However, these outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process and may not be the sole source of assessment data. The Pulaski County School System shall never rely on them exclusively for determination of eligibility for gifted program services. Instead, outside test data may be used as part of a comprehensive profile of test and non-test evidence of advanced instructional needs.

**Georgia Department of Education**  
**Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Programs for Gifted Students**  
**Evaluation and Eligibility Chart**

- In option A and B, information shall be gathered in each of the four categories.
- At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a GaDOE approved nationally normed reference test.
  - Any data used to establish eligibility in one category shall not be used to establish eligibility in another category.
- If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.
- Any piece of information used to establish eligibility shall be current within two years.
  - Local school systems must establish policies in regards to the use of data gathered and analyzed by private entities.

Category	Option A	Option B
	<b>Student must have a qualifying score in the mental ability AND achievement categories.</b>	<b>Student must qualify in <u>three of the four</u> categories.</b>
<b>Mental Ability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades K-2 99<sup>th</sup> percentile composite score on a nationally age normed mental ability test</li> <li>➤ Grades 3-12 ≥96<sup>th</sup> percentile composite score on a nationally age normed mental ability test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades K- 12 ≥ 96<sup>th</sup> percentile composite on a nationally age normed mental ability tests OR 96<sup>th</sup> percentile on a component score on a nationally age normed mental ability tests</li> </ul>
<b>Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades K-12 ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades K-12 ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test</li> <li>➤ Grades K – 12 Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluation data required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades K-12 ≥ 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on composite score on a nationally normed creativity test</li> <li>➤ Grades K-12 Rating scales used to qualify student creativity must equate to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> <li>➤ Grades K-12 Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluation data required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grades 6-12 Two-year average of a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale in regular core subject of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, science, and full year world languages</li> <li>➤ Grades K-12 Rating scales used to qualify student motivation must equate to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> <li>➤ Grades K – 12 Superior product/performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators</li> </ul>

Georgia Department of Education  
 Dr. John D. Barge State School  
 Superintendent  
 July 8, 2013

## Continuation/Probation Procedures

Probation procedures are necessary when a student fails to meet the Pulaski County School Continuation Policy for Gifted Services. The following reflects the continuation criteria by grade level to be evaluated at the end of each school year:

Grades 2-5	Maintain a minimum average grade of 80% in gifted education classes.
Grades 6-8	Maintain a minimum average grade of 80% in gifted education classes.
Grades 9-12	Maintain satisfactory performance in individual subject areas.

Continuing criteria for all grades:

Maintain attendance in accordance with Pulaski County policy.
Maintain appropriate student behavior, performance, interest, motivation, etc. which will be deemed acceptable by the gifted teacher, regular education teacher, and administrative personnel of the respective school.

Students who fail to meet the continuation criteria are in jeopardy of losing gifted services and shall be placed on probationary status for one grading period. Such students will continue receiving gifted services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status. Parents will be notified of probationary status as to specific difficulties. A parent/teacher conference will be held if requested by either the parent or school personnel.

If satisfactory progress is made and continuation criteria are met, the student will be removed from probation. However, failure to meet continuation criteria after the probationary time frame will result in the student being withdrawn from the program.

## **Gifted Records**

Gifted records are maintained by the Gifted Director and should be requested separately from other school records when students are withdrawing or transferring.

## **Transfer Students**

### Students transferring from other systems within the State of Georgia:

Placement of students in gifted programs within the State of Georgia is reciprocal. Students served in the gifted program at the time of withdrawal may be placed in the gifted program after the gifted coordinator has had an opportunity to review eligibility documentation and participation history.

If eligibility documentation does not meet the criteria for GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 or if the student was not actively enrolled in the gifted program at the time of withdrawal and test data for initial placement were more than two years old at the time the student's eligibility was reviewed, the student may be referred for evaluation.

### Students transferring from systems outside the State of Georgia:

Students from outside the State of Georgia may or may not meet eligibility criteria for gifted program placement. Students served in the gifted program at the time of withdrawal may be placed into the gifted program after the gifted coordinator has had an opportunity to review eligibility documentation, current status, and participation history. The gifted coordinator will determine whether each student meets the Georgia eligibility requirements, make a placement recommendation, and determine how the student might best be served from the service options available at the school. The student will be treated as a new referral if eligibility documentation does not meet the criteria for GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38. The referral process will be followed as it is for other students. The assessment process will also be applied as it is for other students.

## **Program Evaluation**

Pulaski County Schools Gifted Program will be evaluated yearly to assess the effectiveness of the following issues:

- Referral process
- Eligibility determination
- Curriculum effectiveness
- Delivery Models/Scheduling
- Strengths/Weakness of Gifted Services

The following statistical data is compiled yearly and submitted to the State Department of Education at the conclusion of school year:

- Number of Total Student Referrals
- Number of Student Referrals Eligible for Gifted Services
- Number of Students Receiving Gifted Services



