Screening, Identification and Placement of Students for Gifted Services

Recognizing and identifying students who may need differentiated services is a multi-stepped process. Gaston County Schools is committed to thoroughly following proper procedures to ensure that all students in need of gifted services are identified and appropriately served.

I. Student Screening, Referral, and Data Collection

In Gaston County Schools, screening is an ongoing process. Information collected will become a part of the AIG teacher’s screening pool. This information will be used throughout the process to determine eligibility for special services.

System wide, the AIG teachers will review multiple criteria to create a broad base screening pool at the school level beginning in kindergarten. A research-based rating scale and/or nomination form (from parent, student, teacher, or counselor) will be included in this screening process. Data gathered will determine which students are eligible for placement and/or which students may need further assessment. General information collected in this initial phase is available for all students. The student screening includes but is not limited to the following:

- All third graders are administered a standardized aptitude test and all third through eighth graders are administered End-of-Grade (EOG) tests in both reading and mathematics.
- Teachers of AIG students at each elementary school will conduct an annual review of the K-2 assessment data for students in kindergarten through second grades and the standardized aptitude and achievement scores for individual students in third through fifth grades. In middle schools, teachers on each grade level will conduct an annual review of the standardized achievement scores for individual students in sixth through eighth grades. This collected data will be given to the AIG contact person at each middle school. In high school, counselors will review test data and notify the AIG department of any students who are eligible for services or for whom additional testing is warranted.
- In addition, teachers (or in some cases, parents) will be asked to complete inventories that acknowledge the cognitive abilities, talents, interests and preferred learning styles of the students who are being referred for possible placement.
- Teachers, parents, students (self nominations or nominations of peers) and/or other school personnel have the opportunity to nominate any student. All of these students will become a part of the screening pool and will be considered as possible candidates for AIG services.
- Teacher nominations of minority students who do not meet the criteria due to language barriers will be reviewed by the AIG department for possible individualized testing.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to give consent for additional testing when it is warranted.
- Students below grade two who were admitted to kindergarten early or who demonstrate exceptional achievement in reading or mathematics (at least two grade levels above their current placement) will be referred for further assessment.
Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements for receiving special services may be referred for re-evaluation when new information is available that might indicate a need for differentiated services.

Students from minority populations and other diverse cultural and economic groups who demonstrate a high interest or performance potential in a specific academic area will be included in each school’s screening pool.

Records for transfer students entering kindergarten through eighth grade will be screened for possible placement. Guidance counselors will oversee this process in grades nine through twelve.

Identified students in grades nine through twelve will have an opportunity to self-select either honors or advanced placement courses.

All forms, including the parent/teacher/student nomination form, are available in Spanish. Forms in other languages will be printed as the need is warranted.

These same procedures are followed by every school in Gaston County. The AIG teams are trained to ensure the same considerations will be given to all students regardless of which school they attend in the district. The AIG Director oversees the consistency of procedures throughout the county.

II. AIG Team Review and Recognition of Needs

The AIG Team at each school consists of representatives from the faculty who have been trained in identification and placement procedures. At the elementary level, the AIG teacher will be chairperson. At the middle school level, the AIG contact person will be the chairperson. Responsibilities of the AIG Team include initiating the search for students who demonstrate a need for differentiated education, receiving referrals for evaluation and reviewing student data to determine academic needs and placement. The review process will result in one of three decisions regarding a student's referral:

- **Non-placement** - Recommendation that services are not required at this time because data collected does not indicate a need for gifted services. These students may be screened again once new testing data becomes available.
- **Further Evaluation** - A request for additional evaluation prior to making a decision.
- **Placement** - Recommendation that services are required because data collected indicates a need for gifted services.

The AIG Team maintains a roster of all referrals, referral information and decisions reached. Referred students remain in the pool of potential candidates, even if placement in a service option is not recommended.

III. Placement in Appropriate Service Delivery Options

This step focuses on matching the student with the appropriate service delivery option(s). Multiple criteria including student aptitude, student achievement in reading and/or math, classroom performance and teacher/parent recommendations determine which option is most appropriate. Recommendations for the student-to-service match will be documented using a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or, if deemed necessary, an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP).
**Elementary K-5 Program**

Teacher, parent or student referrals will be used to create a screening pool at the school level beginning in kindergarten. The AIG teacher and AIG Team will review multiple criteria to determine whether or not the student should be tested for the AIG program and, if placed, which pathway(s) are most appropriate for that student. The use of multiple criteria includes the student’s aptitude, achievement, classroom performance and teacher recommendation.

**Kindergarten – 1st Grade Pathways**

- The first pathway is consultative services for curriculum differentiation in reading and/or math.
- The second pathway is direct services from the AIG teacher.
- The third pathway is grade acceleration and requires observation, extensive testing, AIG team recommendation and site-based administrative decision for the student to be advanced to a higher grade level.

**2nd-5th Grade Pathways**

- The first pathway is nurturing program services. These students are not formally identified as AIG students.
- The second pathway is direct services from the AIG teacher.
- The third pathway is grade acceleration and requires observation, extensive testing, AIG team recommendation and site-based administrative decision for the student to be advanced to a higher grade level.

Identification and placement of students should be based on individual student need for a differentiated education. The emphasis for identification and placement should be to match students with particular services that will afford them the opportunity to receive instruction on an appropriate level so they will experience and demonstrate growth in an academic subject(s) or enrichment program.

**Middle School Program**

The middle school offers a collaborative model which is implemented with the assistance of a team of AIG specialists. These specialists work with advanced classroom teachers by providing resources and strategies on an on-going basis and by team teaching or modeling effective teaching techniques when requested. Classes are taught primarily by certified AIG teachers and a differentiated curriculum is followed that emphasizes content depth and breadth.

- The first pathway is advanced classes in English/language arts and/or mathematics to students who meet the composite score criteria of aptitude, achievement, classroom performance and/or teacher recommendation.
- The second pathway offers qualified students the opportunity to take Algebra in the eighth grade.
- The third pathway is grade acceleration and requires observation, extensive testing, AIG Team recommendation and site-based administrative decision for the student to be advanced to a higher grade level.
High School Program

The high school offers opportunities for students to self-select honors and advanced placement courses in core subject areas, foreign languages and fine arts. Each area has specific criteria for placement. Classes are primarily taught by teachers who have obtained gifted education and/or advanced placement training.

- The first pathway offers honors classes.
  - Honors classes are offered in core areas, foreign languages and fine arts.
- The second pathway offers advanced placement preparation classes.
  - Advanced placement preparation classes are offered in English 9, English 10 and Calculus.
- The third pathway offers advanced placement classes.
  - Advanced placement classes are offered in core areas, foreign languages and fine arts during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades.
  - These courses may be taught on site or through the North Carolina Virtual Public School.
- The fourth pathway offers the College Gateway Program.
  - Classes are taught in cooperation with Gaston College.
  - Students must take the ASSET and/or Compass Placement Test.
- The fifth pathway offers dual enrollment at an accredited institution.
  - Students must take the Compass Placement Test.

Eligibility for receiving gifted services is determined using the criteria listed for each service delivery option. The criteria for each service option reflect multiple indicators of giftedness.

IV. Nurturing Differentiated Education Plan (NDEP), Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP), Career Development Plan (CDP)

Parents and referring teachers are notified of the AIG Team's decision and are invited to participate in a conference to complete the DEP or IDEP. The purpose of the conference is to explain the goals and objectives of the service option(s), the manner in which progress will be assessed and to obtain parental permission for placement. Differentiated services begin immediately after parental permission has been obtained for the student.

Nurturing Differentiated Education Plan (NDEP): A Nurturing Differentiated Education Plan will be developed for students who have qualified for the Composer Program. This plan states the program service option(s) appropriate for this group of students.

Differentiated Education Plan (DEP): A Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be written for each student demonstrating a need for differentiation beyond that which is normally provided by regular education. The DEP outlines the program service option(s) appropriate for an individual student at specific grade configurations (elementary K-1 and 2-5, middle school 6-8 and high school 9-12). The DEP lists the learning environment, content modifications and may indicate special programs available to the student during those grade configurations. A Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) will be completed for each student during each school year.
**Individual Differentiated Plan (IDEP):** An Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) will be developed for each student who requires modifications or specific accommodations not included in a regular DEP. Parents, classroom teachers and other school personnel who have knowledge of the student’s individual needs will help develop the IDEP.

**9-12 Career Development Plan (CDP):** During the second semester of the eighth grade year, a Career Development Plan (CDP) is completed for each student. An AIG Team representative, the middle school counselor and the high school counselor assigned to assist gifted students will meet with parents of eighth grade gifted students at each middle school to discuss the high school gifted education options. The CDP will take into account the goals of the student (i.e., college, technical or specialty school). The CDP plan does not take the place of the DEP or the IDEP but it does help students organize their high school course selections.

**V. Yearly Performance Review**

The AIG Team will ensure that an annual review of the progress of each K-8 student participating in differentiated service options is conducted by teachers who are providing the services. The purpose of the review is to determine the student’s performance and the appropriateness of his/her continuing to receive gifted services. The AIG Team will oversee the following:

- Ongoing communication from the teacher delivering each option via progress reports, report cards, and North Carolina End-of-Grade or End-of-Course test scores.
- Alternative assessment data pertaining to the student’s progress provided to parents by the teacher or mentor, such as evaluations of special projects/units of study, presentations, etc.

If a student is progressing satisfactorily in his/her service option(s), no changes are required. If other service options are needed, the AIG Team may amend the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP). Parents will be invited to a conference to discuss the changes.

If the yearly performance review indicates that a student is not performing satisfactorily, the team will invite the parent(s) to a conference to discuss the following:

- Change in the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP), Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP), or the development of an Intervention Plan.
- Decision that gifted services are no longer appropriate for the student, thus requiring exit from the program.

During the year a teacher or parent may become concerned about the performance of a gifted student, especially underachieving or gifted students with learning disabilities. The student’s current level of performance and areas of concern should be reviewed. A change in the Differentiated Education Plan or an Intervention Plan may be needed in order for the student’s individual needs to be met. If an Intervention Plan is written, strategies such as counseling sessions, a student-teacher contract, or study guides may be included. The AIG Team will
monitor the student’s progress and review eligibility for AIG services. Parents will be involved in the intervention process.

The counselor assigned to assist gifted students in grades 9-12 will annually review course grades, End-of-Course and/or Advanced Placement scores, teacher or mentor evaluation of independent studies, and course selection for each student. Satisfactory progress, determined by grades, test scores and the teacher or mentor’s evaluation of independent studies, will serve as evidence of student progress. Unsatisfactory grades, test scores, or teacher/mentor’s evaluation of independent students will require parent notification/invitation to a conference. Parents will be invited to a conference or may request a conference at any time a student appears to be having difficulties or chooses not to take the courses outlined in the Career Development Plan.

VI. Process for Placing a Transfer Student

Transfers from schools outside the system

- Elementary students
  - Students will be placed in appropriate grade-level classrooms.
  - If a student transfers during the school year, school personnel will notify the AIG teacher assigned to that school and appropriate placement will be determined after reviewing the student’s most current testing data and classroom performance.
  - Additional testing will be administered if warranted.
  - AIG Team will take appropriate action.
- Middle school students
  - Summer testing is offered if student records show need for AIG identification.
  - If a student transfers during the school year, school personnel will notify the AIG department and appropriate placement will be determined after reviewing the student’s most current testing data and classroom performance.
  - Additional testing will be administered if warranted.
  - AIG Middle School Support Team will notify the student’s school to insure appropriate class placement.
- High school students
  - Students may self-select classes using criteria for honors and advanced placement course offerings.

Transfers from schools within the system

- Elementary AIG students
  - AIG teacher uses the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Director and transfer school.
  - AIG folder is sent to transfer school.
- Middle school students
  - AIG contact person and/or counselor use the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Director and the transfer school.
  - AIG folder is sent to transfer school.
• High school students
  • AIG contact person and/or the NC Wise facilitator use the AIG 11 to notify the AIG Director and the transfer school.
  • AIG folder is sent to transfer school.

VII. Windows for Testing

Kindergarten - First Grade
• Screening of those students who show strong documentation of extreme need for gifted services by scoring at least two years above grade level in reading and/or math
• Evaluation of students for AIG placement after first grading period

Second Grade
• Screening pool for potential AIG students
• Evaluation of students for AIG and Composer programs after first grading period

Third Grade
• After county-approved aptitude test scores are released
• Screening of those students who show strong documentation of extreme need for gifted services

Fourth - Fifth Grade
• Screening of those students who show strong documentation of extreme need for gifted services
• March/April (5th grade), September (4th grade)

Sixth – Eighth Grade
• Screening of those students who show strong documentation of extreme need for gifted services
• Summer of each year, or during the first six weeks of the school year

New Students (during school year)
• Screening of those students who show strong documentation of extreme need for gifted services
• Testing as needed