Alabama Gifted Continuous Improvement Procedures

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTION

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Introduction

Gifted education was officially mandated in Alabama in August of 1976 through Act 1971, No. 106, the *"Alabama Exceptional Child Act."* From that time until July of 1999, intellectually gifted students were identified primarily through the use of an intelligence quotient (IQ) from an individually administered IQ test. This narrow identification system resulted in the gifted population being limited to students who tested well on such instruments. Teachers and parents expressed concern for the students who worked hard and made good grades but "missed being gifted by a few IQ points." The creatively gifted, underachieving gifted, and culturally diverse gifted were often overlooked. Child count data indicated an overwhelming number of Caucasian students being identified as gifted while African American students were noticeably lacking.

To correct the problems, the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSDE) adopted new rules for identifying gifted students in July of 1999. These rules called for three new elements: the use of a multiple criteria identification model to replace the inadequate single IQ test score approach, required referral procedures for second graders to ensure that all students are considered as potential referrals, and documentation that all parents and teachers are notified annually of how to access gifted services.

The purpose of this document is to provide school systems with suggestions for implementing the rules to ensure equity in access to gifted services for students of all races, cultures, and economic conditions.

I. Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan for Gifted

Each LEA will develop and submit a plan for implementation of gifted programming and the LEAs wishing to revise the plan after approval, must **NOT** implement any changes until the plan has been submitted and approved by the ALSDE.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement requires each LEA to review and submit a plan for implementation of the *Alabama Administrative Code*. The LEA plan must address all components of the gifted program, e.g., notice, referral, evaluation, etc.

Timeline: Each LEA will review its plan annually and re-submit if changes are needed. Changes must be approved before the implementation. If a new coordinator takes over in a LEA, the plan would need to be re-submitted with new signatures even if no changes to the plan are needed. The LEA's plan must be reviewed and re-submitted (if needed) annually in March.

II. Local Education Agency (LEA) Gifted Profile Needs Assessment

Each LEA will complete the LEA System Gifted Profile Needs Assessment as a means of self-monitoring the implementation of gifted programming.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement requires each LEA to self-monitor gifted programming. Technical assistance support may be determined via the LEA System Gifted Profile.

Timeline: Each LEA will complete the LEA System Gifted Profile Needs Assessment annually. The LEA System Gifted Profile Needs Assessment should be reviewed and submitted to the ALSDE Gifted Specialist annually by the end of March via email.

III. Professional Development for Gifted Specialists

The ALSDE Gifted Specialist will provide training on updates in gifted education, including, but not limited to, best practices for gifted learners, differentiation, concept-based curriculum, and affective needs of gifted.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement requires training be provided to appropriate local school personnel.

Timeline: The MEGA conference (annually in July), regional trainings (annually in Fall), Alabama Association for Gifted Children conference (annually in Fall) and Moodle site virtual training (ongoing).

IV. Second Grade Child Find Procedures

All second-grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals. During the first semester of the school year, second grade teachers (and other staff who might come in contact with second graders) will observe the students in their classrooms and note any gifted behaviors.

Justification: The referral section of the *Alabama Administrative Code* states that all second-grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist provided by the ALSDE.

Timeline: Child find activities occur annually from August 1 of the current year through August 31 of the following year.

The required Second Grade Child Final Procedures are carried out annually to ensure that every student is given an equal opportunity to be observed and considered as a potential gifted student. Second grade teachers are trained by the gifted specialist or knowledgeable school personnel. The training should include familiarizing teachers with the ten gifted behaviors listed on the observation checklist and with timelines and procedures to follow to complete the requirement.

Suggestions for Implementation

- A plan must be in place for training new teachers each year. The Gifted Specialist can conduct training and/or a veteran second-grade teacher could be assigned to mentor new teachers.
- The coordinator should notify schools immediately when the reporting forms and/or dates for reporting are announced each year.
- Teachers should not try to complete the process too early as some students will continue to "bloom" as the year progresses.
- Teachers should be reminded that they do not have to wait until the forms are due to actually refer a student in their class. They may refer students at any time.
- Although teachers are only required to participate in the initial training session, it is simply good practice to present the procedures and helpful hints for implementation in an abbreviated form, on an annual basis at a faculty or grade level meeting.
- Remind teachers that this procedure is designed to help them identify the students that we have missed in the past. They should try to step out of their preconceived ideas concerning what a gifted student looks like and focus on the ten behaviors.
- Explain to teachers that only a small percentage of the students in their class should be listed in the top two quadrants. Some teachers think that since there are four quadrants, the students should be evenly dispersed among the quadrants.
- Teachers should be told that they don't have to complete the summary sheet alone. They can solicit input from last year's teacher, art, music, or physical education teachers, or any other teacher or staff member who has knowledge of the student's abilities.

Questions and Answers
Second Grade Child Find Procedures

1. **What if a teacher is reluctant to complete the summary sheet or wants to put everyone in the top two boxes because they fear parent reprisals?**

   Teachers do not have to complete the summary sheet alone. They can have a committee of school personnel contributing to the decision making. The teacher can then explain to the parents that it was a committee decision. They should also remember that this is not the ONLY opportunity for referral as students can be referred by anyone--including parents--as long as they are enrolled in public schools.

2. **What can I do if the same teacher puts most of his/her students in the top two boxes year after year?**

   The first step is to talk to the teacher and find out why he or she is continuing this practice. It may just be a miscommunication that needs to be cleared up. If it is not a miscommunication and the teacher simply believes that half or more of his or her students should be referred, and this is completely out of line with the other teachers, then perhaps the principal could speak with him or her about there being more than a fair share of advanced learners in his or her class. You could also ask for some documentation for each student since the sheet appears to be out of line with the others.

3. **What should I do if there are teachers who consistently refer no one?**

   The first step would be to speak with the teacher in an attempt to discern why he or she is not referring. It could be he or she needs literature on the nature and needs of gifted students. It could be that he or she is still unsure of what a gifted student looks like in the second grade and is expecting them to be at an Einstein level. If the schedule permits, the gifted specialist could offer to present several activities to the class and then point out the gifted behaviors displayed as the students complete the assignments. Additionally, the gifted specialist or anyone else with knowledge of these students could add names to the top two boxes.

4. **Is the gifted specialist required to complete a certain number of the lessons from the lesson plan packet?**

   Yes. The gifted specialist is required to teach the six lessons in each second-grade classroom. Additional activities may be completed, but only six are required. The six lessons include three transformations, two writing samples, and one figural analogy activity.

5. **When you say that students listed in the top two quadrants become referrals, what exactly does that mean?**

   It means that these students will go through the complete referral process just like any other referral. Parents must be notified and the Gifted Referral Screening Team (GRST) either collects screening information or eligibility information (depending on the system's policy for screening). The student information is entered into SETS and reported on the gifted referral tracking log when the process is completed.

V. Second Grade Gifted Child Find LEA Summary Report

Each school (with second graders) completes a Second Grade Gifted Child Find School Report. The LEA then compiles the individual school reports onto one Second Grade Gifted Child Find LEA Summary Report.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement states that LEAs develop and implement procedures for screening and referring potentially gifted students from traditionally underserved populations.

Timeline: The LEAs submit the report annually by the third week of April.

VI. Referral/Identification Criteria and Procedures

A. Providing Notice

The LEAs are required to provide written notice of gifted services to all students and parents/guardians annually. The notice must include a definition of gifted, who may refer a student, eligibility requirements, and a contact person for anyone wanting to make a referral. For non-English speaking families, notice must be provided in the home language or a language they can understand, whether written or oral.

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all students and parents/guardians are informed of the availability of gifted services. Students are not identified if they are not referred. Relying primarily on teacher referrals has not proven successful in identifying students from all racial and socio-economic groups. Parents and students must also have an opportunity to make referrals. The emphasis in this requirement is on ***annually*** providing notice to ***all*** parents/guardians and students.

Suggestions for Implementation

The best way to ensure that notice has been provided to all parents and students is through the student handbook. School systems that require parent signatures to show that the handbook was received have documentation on hand to show that every parent received notice.

The sample announcement below includes all the minimum required elements and is suitable for use in handbooks/brochures/articles/and so on:

> Gifted students are those who perform at or have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted.
>
> Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student. Additionally, all second-grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist.
>
> For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.
>
> To make a referral, contact the _____ at the student's school.

Questions and Answers
Providing Notice

1. Is providing notice through student handbooks the only acceptable way to meet this requirement?

No, it is not the only way. We suggest it because most LEAs have a system already in place requiring parent signatures as documentation that they received a copy of the student handbook. By putting the notice in the handbook there is no need to create another system of distributing a document and requiring parent signatures upon receipt. Newspaper articles, radio spots, brochures, newsletters, and Web page announcements are additional ways to provide notice. While these additional ways are encouraged, any combination of them is not enough to truly meet the intent of the requirement because there is no way to document that every parent has been informed with these methods.

2. What elements must be included in the notice?

The notice must include a definition of gifted, who may refer a student, general statements about eligibility requirements, and whom to contact to make a referral.

3. Should notice be provided to private schools?

It is not recommended since LEA's are not required to identify and serve students in private schools (including home-schooled students). If an LEA does provide notice to private schools this statement should be added: Students must be enrolled in public schools to be identified and served in the gifted program.

B. <u>Training and Guidance for Staff</u>

Initially, all second-grade teachers were provided training in recognizing the characteristics of gifted students so that teachers could participate in the required second grade screening procedures. Similar training must be provided to all teachers and other district staff at Grades K-8 because any teacher or staff member can refer a student for gifted services any time during the student's school career. Additionally, all teachers should be aware of the nature and needs of gifted students because these students generally spend 80 percent of their time in the regular classroom.

Suggestions for Implementation

The Alabama Technology in Motion Moodle site contains online modules for virtual professional development.

Other topics for professional development opportunities that would benefit all teachers who serve gifted students include curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, differentiation, and affective needs.

Questions and Answers
Training and Guidance for Staff

1. Is it a requirement that all teachers now go through the second-grade training?

No. The requirement is that teachers and other district staff involved in the screening and referral processes are provided training/guidance regarding the characteristics of intellectual giftedness in general and special populations. The use of the second-grade material is a suggestion for a way of meeting this requirement.

2. Who can we contact to provide training in some of the other topics mentioned, like compacting, clustering, differentiated curriculum?

Professors in gifted education at The University of Alabama, Samford University, and Troy University may be available for training. You could also contact your local in-service center to see if they can find speakers on these topics. Ask other coordinators in your area if they have a gifted teacher who could do professional development on any of these topics.

3. Are there any other topics we should be covering with regular classroom teachers?

It is always important to remind them that gifted students should not be required to make up all classwork missed when they are out of the classroom. Gifted students are generally working ahead of grade level material and can afford to miss a few hours a week. Also, remind teachers not to plan the new and interesting things while gifted students are out of the classroom. They could use that time to assist students who are struggling. The gifted specialist should also have the general education teachers sign the *GEP Attachment: Accommodations for Gifted Students in the General Education Classroom* form and provide a signed copy to those teachers to document responsibility of accommodations.

C. Screening

Screening is an optional process that LEAs may utilize to pre-assess students referred for gifted services to determine which students are likely to qualify. Systems that choose to screen must be extremely careful not to establish screening procedures that have a disparate impact on underrepresented populations. Until the percentage of students referred from underrepresented populations approximates their respective representation in the general school population, systems should make every effort not to screen these students out. It will be extremely difficult to increase minority representation if they are screened out before having had the opportunity for a full array of assessments. Also, any screening criteria must be applied fairly so that students who would benefit from a full array of assessments are not treated differently by being screened out on the basis of race or national origin.

Suggestions for Implementation

If a system feels that it must establish screening criteria, the *Title VI Resolution Agreement* provides the following guidelines that must be followed:

- Screening criteria should be nondiscriminatory and directly related to the purpose of the gifted program, i.e., identifying all students with **potential** for high **academic** or **creative** performance as well as those who have demonstrated such performance.
- Screening criteria should be a multi-step, multi-standard process that does not utilize the eligibility criteria (score or standard) as a threshold for referral for evaluation.
- No single assessment should preclude a student from passing screening.
- To the extent that a standardized test is used as a part of an LEA's screening process, both the test and the cut-off score will be validated with respect to the purpose for which they are being used (i.e., as a screening test and screening score) and the populations for whom they are used.
- If administering the Naglieri Nonverbal Aptitude Test (NNAT) (current version), as a screener, students should be provided with instruction and practice in completing figural analogies. A good source is **Building Thinking Skills Level 1**, available from Critical Thinking Books & Software, 1-800-485-4849

Questions and Answers
Screening

1. **Can we require a particular aptitude score to be obtained before a student passes screening?**

   No, it is not acceptable to require a certain aptitude score to pass screening.

2. **Can we use the Slosson or OLSAT score for screening?**

   You may use the Slosson or OLSAT scores for screening in conjunction with other assessments. You should never use a Slosson or OLSAT or any single test score to screen a student out. Also, remember that research indicates that these tests may not be good screeners for certain populations. A nonverbal assessment like the NNAT may be a more appropriate instrument.

3. **We seem to have difficulty with students who are referred on the basis of creativity passing screening. What can we do?**

   You may have to alter your screening criteria for these referrals. If aptitude and achievement test scores are a large part of your screening process, highly creative students may have a difficult time passing screening. They should be screened using products and behavior rating scales since their score on the *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* will be their aptitude score for eligibility, not an I.Q. test score.

4. **What paperwork is involved for students who are screened?**

   A referral form (including the Aptitude Test Selection Form) would be filled out and parents would be notified that the student was being screened. Rights in Gifted Education would be sent at this time. Parents would again be notified of the Gifted Referral Screening Team's (GRST) decision. If the student does not pass screening, all of the screening data is reported to the data entry person for the Gifted Referral Tracking Log. Remember to report all of the information used for screening and not just the aptitude test score. It is a requirement that you look at multiple criteria.

5. **What about a form for recording the screening data on? Is there one that you recommend?**

   Screening should not become a burdensome process involving additional tests and paperwork. Since multiple criteria are required for screening in the same areas as for eligibility, it is more efficient to go directly to the *Eligibility Determination Form*. If the student obtains 17 points, then you are finished. Then consider students that fall within a range of points—for example, those between 13 and 16—as having "passed screening." You can look to the matrix to determine in which areas you will need to do further assessment.

VII. Evaluations and Eligibility Procedures

The purpose of ensuring appropriate assessment is to afford every student the opportunity for his/her strengths to be assessed. Alabama's multiple-criteria identification model includes the use of a variety of administered assessments and existing information to cover these three areas: Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance.

Systems must use assessment instruments that are validated with respect to the population for whom they are being used. In addition, the instruments chosen should accurately assess the abilities/skills intended to be measured and these abilities/skills should be consistent with the definition of "gifted". Please check with the ALSDE before adding any tests to make sure they are approved assessments.

A. Aptitude

The *Aptitude Test Selection Form* (ATSF), which is part of the *Referral Form for Gifted Services,* is the first step in ensuring that an appropriate aptitude assessment instrument is chosen for a particular student. The ATSF is a **required** document for **every** referral. The ATSF lists a number of research-based characteristics that can impact performance on traditional assessments. Some statements are objective, e.g., *Low family income at a subsistence level.* If the student qualifies for free or reduced lunch, income is definitely at subsistence level. Some statements are subjective, e.g., *Family unable to afford enrichment materials or experiences.* One statement, *Member of a group that is underrepresented in the gifted program,* applies to all African American and Hispanic students. For these two groups, "Yes" should be checked in the decision box. This

does not mean that they should be given only a nonverbal assessment. It means that an alternate assessment will always be considered even if the student does not qualify on a standard assessment. The Gifted Referral Screening Team (GRST) should carefully consider each statement on the ATSF. There is no required number of checks needed for the GRST to decide that an alternate assessment needs to be administered. One check may be sufficient to determine that a student may be at a disadvantage on a standard assessment.

Questions and Answers
Aptitude

1. Is a nonverbal assessment the most appropriate aptitude assessment for every student from an underrepresented group?

Since aptitude was the only measure used in the past to determine gifted eligibility, it can be assumed that traditional aptitude assessments have not been successful in identifying qualified students from underrepresented groups. This is the justification for the statement concerning membership in an underrepresented group on the ATSF. The goal in aptitude assessment is to obtain a measure of the student's strengths. Sometimes their area of strength cannot be identified before testing so both avenues, verbal and nonverbal assessment, should be explored. In short, a nonverbal assessment is not always the most appropriate assessment instrument, but students from underrepresented populations should be evaluated with alternate assessments if eligibility cannot be determined with the use of traditional assessments. The *WISC-V* is an example of a traditional assessment. Assessments referred to as "alternate" would be non-verbal intelligence tests (e.g., *UNIT-2, C-TONI, TONI-3, Leiter, Ravens, N-NAT-I)* or the *K-ABC* or *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking*. The *Stanford-Binet: Fifth Edition* can be considered as an alternate assessment because if the appropriate sub-tests are administered, a nonverbal factor score can be computed. (See Sattler, 2000)

2. **What tests are most systems using for assessing members of underrepresented groups or other students who have items checked on the ATSF?**

Systems have several options in terms of aptitude assessments. Some systems routinely administer the *WISC-V* to all students who have been referred. This is an acceptable procedure as long as a nonverbal assessment is administered to a student who has concerns checked on the ATSF if they have not qualified with the *WISC-V* scores.

Some systems routinely administer alternate assessments such as the *C-TONI* or the *Ravens Progressive Matrices* to members of these students. If the student does not qualify, the systems then administer the verbal section of the *WISC-V* or the *Stanford-Binet: Fifth Edition*. This ensures that every consideration has been given to identify and assess the student's strengths. To determine whether the *WISC* or the *Stanford-Binet* would be best for assessing verbal strengths, achievement test scores can be helpful. If the student has a strength in arithmetic, the verbal section of the *WISC* would be best since arithmetic is one of the sub-tests in this section. If arithmetic is not a strength, then the *Stanford-Binet* would be the better choice since it is not a part of the verbal section.

Some systems administer the *Naglieri Nonverbal Assessment Test* to all their second-grade referrals. The *NNAT* is a group test and will satisfy the requirement of a nonverbal assessment.

Some systems routinely administer the *Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC),* which is an aptitude assessment that was designed to eliminate cultural bias. It is therefore an appropriate alternate assessment for culturally diverse students. A nonverbal factor can be computed with this test. If a student from an underrepresented group does not qualify with his/her *K-ABC* score, it is recommended that the verbal section of the *WISC* or *Stanford-Binet* be administered. Although the *K-ABC* can be administered to students as old as 12 it is not recommended that it be used to test for gifted services much beyond the third grade because of the low ceiling for this test.

The *UNIT-2* is another nonverbal assessment. It requires the psychometrist to communicate with nonverbal cues. This test is recommended when language is a barrier and should be seriously considered for students who speak English as a second language.

3. Is it a problem to accept private test results?

No, as long as the number of private tests submitted to the LEA remains insignificant.

4. Is there anything we should know about establishing rapport with culturally diverse students?

The most important thing to remember about establishing rapport is that each student is different. Some students are extroverts and like to please adults. These students usually come to the testing situation best suited to demonstrate their abilities. Some students may be extroverts but are suspicious of authority figures and more effort may be required to establish rapport. Being in a one-on-one testing situation with an adult that they do not know may be overwhelming for any student. For some students it will be necessary to go beyond the routine procedures for establishing rapport. One may need to think in terms of making a connection with that student. The student needs to trust the adult and believe that the information gained from the session will be used to help, not hurt the student. For students who have been raised to mistrust authority figures it may take a little more time and some out-of-the-box thinking, but one cannot be sure that an accurate assessment has occurred unless proper rapport has been established.

B. Characteristics

The second component involved in the evaluation of students to determine eligibility for gifted services is in the area of characteristics. The four behavior rating scales that have been approved for use are as follows: (1) *The Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale (GATES),* (2) The *Hawthorne* or *Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES),* (3*) Scales for Rating the Behavior Characteristics of Superior*

*Students (*usually referred to as *Renzulli/Hartman),* and (4) *Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors (TABs).*

The *GATES* and the *GES* provide scores that can be taken directly to the matrix. Systems are required to develop local norms for both the *Renzulli/Hartman* and the *TABs*. *The Renzulli/Hartman* manual provides directions for establishing local norms. The benefit of establishing local norms is that, since students are being compared only to others from similar backgrounds and circumstances, the scores may be more valid.

An important thing to remember is that teachers do require training on how to complete the forms and specifically how to observe students for gifted behaviors. Training should be done on an annual basis to remind teachers to look for atypical as well as typical signs of giftedness. Teachers should be provided training in regard to what types of activities are most likely to generate gifted behaviors. Open-ended, project oriented, or activities that require higher-order thinking are most effective in eliciting gifted behaviors.

Questions and Answers
Characteristics

1. How can we help teachers who are not comfortable completing behavior rating scales because they feel that they lack information to complete it appropriately?

All behavior-rating scales allow input from multiple sources. The general education teacher can solicit input from last year's teacher, the art, music or physical education teachers, or any other teacher or staff member who has knowledge of the student. Some systems have even solicited input from sources outside the school when appropriate such as a Scout leader, piano teacher, church officials, etc.

2. **What do we do about behavior rating scales that are either all high scores or all low scores? In other words, what can we do if we suspect the behavior rating scale is not a true reflection of the student in question*?***

If the scores are all high, the teacher could be asked to provide artifacts that document the score. For instance, products or a narrative could be used to substantiate the high score. If the teacher cannot provide such documentation, he or she will probably realize that his/her scoring may have been a little inflated. Some systems ask teachers to attend the referral or eligibility meeting and give oral explanations of how the ratings were determined.

If the scores are consistently low and other data indicate that they should be higher, the system could ask another teacher to complete a rating scale. A previous teacher or anyone else with knowledge of the student can be asked for input. See question 1 above.

3. Do you recommend one behavior rating scale over the others?

All of the scales listed on the matrix are appropriate and each one has strengths. However, the *TABs* was specifically designed to be a culturally fair instrument. It is less cumbersome than the others in that it is a single page document. Teachers are more likely to give more thoughtful responses to fewer areas than to the pages of responses required on the other scales.

4. Which scores from the behavior rating scale do we use on the matrix in the Characteristics area?

The Total TABs score must be used in the *Characteristics* area. For behavior rating scales other than the TABs, you may use sub-scales. You are limited to certain scores in the *Performance* area so it is important to study all scores before selecting one for the *Characteristics* area because you cannot use the same sub-scale twice.

C. Performance Indicators

Performance is the third area of evaluation. This section should provide documentation of demonstrated abilities. Performance indicators can come from any of the following three areas:

Achievement Test Scores (use no more than one)	Behavior Rating Scale Scores	Other (use any number)
Total Reading	Motivation	Product
Total Language	Leadership	Portfolio
Total Math	Creativity	Work Sample
Total Science	Visual/Performing Arts	Grades
Total Social Studies		Other

There are several important things to remember in terms of Performance Indicators.

1. If you feel that your system may be identifying students for the program that do not need gifted services, look carefully at what you are using for performance indicators. For instance, grades may be used in Grades 4-12. Do not use grades for students in Grades K-3. Many bright but not necessarily gifted students make all A's or A's and B's. Many systems have chosen not to use grades as an indicator. Another problem has occurred when systems use the behavior rating scale scores more than once. It is used once in the Characteristics section. If the behavior rating scale is a true picture of the student, then you should be able to collect work samples or products from the teacher that demonstrate this trait. Do not use subscales from the TABs in the Performance area of the matrix.

2. Aptitude and achievement tests are simply a proxy or estimate of what a student might be able to do. Products are examples of what the student actually does when given a meaningful opportunity. Open-ended, project-oriented, and higher order thinking activities are the types of learning opportunities that will most likely result in a gifted-type product. Bertie Kingore's book, *Recognizing Gifted Potential: Planned Experiences with the KOI, 2nd Edition,* would be a great source for performance tasks.

3. Work samples can be used as a performance indicator only if they display problem-solving, writing abilities, or some other higher-order thinking ability. A fill-in-the-blank worksheet or chapter test is NOT an acceptable work sample unless it involves above grade level work.

4. Achievement test scores can come from any standardized achievement, group or individually administered test (i.e., Scantron, *STAR Reading, STAR Math*). For example, the *STAR Reading Assessment* provides a national percentile total reading score that can be used for eligibility.

5. When trying to decide what types of products to collect from students, you can look at their achievement test results or ask the teacher (or students) where their strengths lie. If the strength is in math, provide students with opportunities to show their abilities in this area. A problem-solving sheet, a logic problem, a Tangram activity, or any calculation activity that is above grade level might be appropriate.

6. If students rate high in Creativity on their behavior-rating scale, ask the teacher for a product that demonstrates creativity. If the teacher does not have anything, provide a squiggle sheet (transformation activity) for students who show their creativity in drawing or a story starter if the students are creative writers.

Questions and Answers
Performance Indicators

1. Should we use the same performance indicators for all referrals?

Performance indicators should be chosen that document the student's strength areas. It is not logical that all students in a school system would have the same areas of strength. It is important to be consistent, however, if you make decisions to NOT use a particular indicator.

2. Should we accept products from home?

This is an example of a system-level decision. Most systems accept products only if they have been done under a teacher's supervision. Other systems make exceptions for things like a recorded piano concert or an obviously student completed collection, etc. Some systems accept products from school or home. The following questions may be helpful in gaining insight into the student's thought processes as well as the level of involvement of others.

- *How much time did it take you to do this project?*
- *Did you enjoy working on it?*
- *What are some of the things you learned while working on your project?*
- *Were you satisfied with your final product?*
- *Who helped you with your product? What did they do?*

- *Do you think might like to work on another project in the future?*
- *Do you have any ideas for a future project?*

Teachers who have used these questions said that almost invariably they awarded the project more points than they would have had they not queried the student. Bright, young students many times do not have the skill set to make a product "look" as sophisticated and/or complex as the thought that went into it.

3. How should products be scored?

This is a very complex question. The most authentic way to score a product is with a scoring rubric. Rubrics are provided in the *Second Grade Child Find Required Planned Experiences.* A good reference for the development of rubrics is Bertie Kingore's ***Assessment: Time-Saving Procedures for Busy Teachers*****.** It is most helpful if you have a whole class set of a particular product when scoring. This allows you to create somewhat of a bell curve and therefore helps to discern what a superior product looks like in a typical elementary grade class. It is difficult for those who have only taught upper level students to know what can be expected from younger students. We recommend that if possible, teachers of the gifted be given time to visit second grade classrooms (since this is the grade level where screening is required) and teach at least three lessons that elicit products. This provides class sets of products and the system is assured that everyone has had the same instructional opportunity.

VIII. Gifted Referral Tracking Log

The report data will be populated from forms in SETS. The Gifted Referral Tracking Log will be submitted to the ALSDE.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement requires the collection of data regarding: (1) the number, by race, of students referred for evaluation for eligibility for gifted services; (2) the number, by race, of students determined eligible for services; and (3) the number, by race and grade, of students actually served during the school year. Data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of assessment instruments/measures and eligibility standards with respect to the evaluation of underrepresented groups shall also be collected and maintained.

Timeline: The Gifted Referral Tracking Log is generated annually. The report dates cover October 2 (of previous school year) to October 1 (of current school year).

IX. 6 Year Racial Representation Report

A Six Year Racial Representation Report is generated by the ALSDE and sent to each LEA. Each LEA report shows the percentage of students, for each subgroup of students, enrolled that LEA and in the gifted education program.

Justification: The Title VI Resolution Agreement states that a report will be prepared annually to evaluate the status of the State's gifted program including issues related to the participation of minority (underrepresented) groups.

Timeline: The report is generated annually.

X. Gifted Service Indicators

The quality of services provided to gifted students is impacted by many variables. The *Gifted Service Indicators* form, was developed as a guide to evaluate gifted programs in Alabama. All major contributors (teachers of the gifted, principals, and program administrators) are asked to review the variables affecting the gifted program that are within their control. The ALSDE reviews the responses to help the LEA determine where assistance is needed.

XI. Five-Year Compliance and Continuous Improvement Review for Gifted

Components of review:

Documentation LEA Submits	ALSDE and LEA Reviews
LEA Gifted Profile Needs Assessment • Gifted Service Indicators Form • Assurances of Second Grade Child Find Lessons, Acceleration, Interruption of services and Accommodations • Gifted Specialist Schedule/Caseload	LEA Plan for Gifted
Student Names for folder review	Gifted Services Indicators Form
	Assurances of Second Grade Child Find Lessons, Acceleration, Interruption of services and Accommodations
	Gifted Specialist Schedule/Caseload
	Gifted Referral Tracking Log
	6-year Racial Representation Report
	Gifted Budget
	Hard and/or digital copies of folders
	Compliance and Continuous Improvement Review for Gifted

XII. Enrichment Programs

A. Rationale

An enrichment program may be implemented if a school or system is unsuccessful in identifying gifted students using state criteria or simply *wants* to provide such services to a broader spectrum of their population. This guide for enrichment programs is based on Joseph Renzulli's *Schoolwide Enrichment Model* (Renzulli, 1985). Because schools differ in populations, financial resources, and community support, it is therefore important that an enrichment model be dynamic and easily modifiable. The Renzulli model meets these criteria. Although each of the components in the *Schoolwide Enrichment Model* are important and the integrity of the objectives for each component should be maintained, schools may modify the program to best suit its particular situations.

B. Staffing

The first step towards establishing an enrichment program is designating an enrichment specialist. The enrichment specialist position should ideally be a full-time position. If the enrichment specialist is serving an entire school system, it is imperative that the person be full-time with no other responsibilities. The responsibilities of the specialist are many and varied and require superior organizational and interpersonal skills.

C. Planning

Renzulli recommends that schools begin with developing a five-year plan. Listed below are possible goals for Years One through Five. In parenthesis are codes for the various people who could be involved in carrying out the goals.

Enrichment Specialist **(S)**	Administrator **(A)**
Regular Education Teacher **(R)**	Gifted Teacher **(G)**
Parents **(P)**	Community Members **(C)**
Whole Team **(T)**	Others such as counselors **(O)**

First Year

Possible first-year goals would be:

- Conduct a formal or informal needs assessment (S, A, O).
- Conduct orientation sessions for administrators and teachers, then parents and students (S, G).
- Organize an Enrichment Team (S, G).
- Develop a survey for locating community resources (S, G, T).
- Develop a database system for tracking community resources (S, G, C, O).
- Develop criteria and standards for identifying a Talent Pool (S, G, T).

Clarification of Terms

1. *Community Resources* – At times students will demonstrate needs that are outside the expertise of educators. Community resources can be called upon to help meet these needs.
2. *Enrichment Team* – This group is comprised of parents, teachers, staff, community volunteers, etc., who meet on a regular basis to review community resources and determine how they can be used to meet student needs.
3. *Needs Assessment* – This is a formal or informal data collection process designed to gather information concerning the expectations of administration and staff as well as the needs of the students (i.e., areas not being satisfied in the regular curriculum).
4. *Talent Pool* – This is a group of students usually consisting of the top 15 to 20 percent of the school population in general or specific abilities.

Second Year

Second-year goals might include:

- Identify a Talent Pool based on criteria (S, G, O).
- Administer an Interest Inventory with Talent Pool students and the student body at large (S, G, O, R).
- Begin scheduling Type I activities for Talent Pool students and the student body at large (S, G, O).
- Begin in-service training for teachers concerning curriculum compacting (S, G).
- Develop a scope and sequence for Type II activities (S, G).
- Begin scheduling Type II activities with both Talent Pool and student body at large (S, G, O).
- Schedule Type III activities time as needed (S, G).

Clarification of Terms

1. *Curriculum Compacting* – This is a strategy which allows students to demonstrate mastery over particular content so that they may "buy" time to participate in enrichment activities.
2. *Type I Enrichment* – This consists of general exploratory activities designed to expose students to topics or areas of study. Enrichment experiences are selected based on student interest.
3. *Type II Enrichment* – This consists of instructional strategies designed to address higher order thinking and "how to" skills. Type II activities include creative problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and inquiry training.
4. *Type III Enrichment* – This consists of opportunities for students to conduct in-depth investigations in areas of interest. Students become actual investigators of real problems and produce products for an appropriate audience.

Third – Fifth Year

Third through Fifth year possible goals might be:

- Evaluate the program and make necessary modifications (S, G, A, T).
- Continue to fine tune and expand the program (S, G, T).
- Develop orientation handbooks and videos for new students and teachers (S, G, A, C, T).

For More Information

A more detailed account of each of the above elements can be found in The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A Comprehensive Plan for Educational Excellence by Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis. In this book, the authors provide in-depth descriptions of each of the components of schoolwide enrichment as well as sample forms and letters. The book begins with a rationale for schoolwide enrichment and is replete with "how to" suggestions.

REFERENCES

Renzulli, J.S. & Reis, S.M. (1985). The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A Comprehensive Plan for Educational Excellence. Mansfield, Conn.: Creative Learning Press Inc.