

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

November 9, 2021

SUBJECT:

Revision of the following policy and administrative rule:

Policy IHBB Gifted and Talented Education, First Reading
Administrative Rule IHBB-R Gifted and Talented Education

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Aiken County Public School District offers gifted and talented education to meet the needs of all students. The board requires the administration to establish educational standards and develop a special program for students identified as “gifted and talented.”

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

Administration recommends the revision of Policy IHBB and Administrative Rule IHBB-R. Revisions to the policy and administrative rule reflect changes in the South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the following policy and administrative rule:

Policy IHBB Gifted and Talented Education, First Reading
Administrative Rule IHBB-R Gifted and Talented Education

ATTACHMENTS:

Policy IHBB Gifted and Talented Education, First Reading
Administrative Rule IHBB-R Gifted and Talented Education

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GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Code **IHBB** Issued **1/0211/21**

Purpose: To establish the board's adherence to regulations regarding the education of gifted and talented students.

The district strives to meet the educational needs of all students. In meeting this concept, the district recognizes the unique characteristics of gifted children. The district further recognizes the need to develop special programs to respond to their individual abilities and competencies. The board, therefore, requires the administration to establish educational standards and develop a special program for gifted and talented students to cultivate these students' unique talents.

Gifted and talented students are those in grades three-one through twelve identified as having demonstrated or potential abilities for high performance in academic or artistic areas. These students require services or programs not ordinarily provided by the regular school program.

The district will use the selection criteria developed by the state board of education in screening candidates for the gifted and talented program (see IHBB-R for procedures).

Adopted 10/9/84; Revised 1/8/02, 11/23/21

Legal references:

- A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
 - 1. Section 59-29-170 - Gifted and talented students to be provided programs by August 15, 1987.
- B. State Board of Education Regulations:
 - 1. R-43-220 - Guidelines for state-funded gifted/talented programs.

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Administrative Rule

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Code **IHBB-R** Issued **11/05/21**

Academically gifted

Identification of population to be served

The purposes of identification are to find students who display characteristics of the gifted and talented; to assess the aptitudes, attributes and behaviors of each student; and to evaluate students for the purposes of placement. Student aptitudes, attributes and behaviors will be identified, assessed and reviewed through a multi-step, multi-modal and multi-dimensional identification system.

Gifted and talented students may be found within any racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group; within any nationality; within both genders; and within population with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or behavioral problems.

Identification is a multi-step process that consists of screening and referral, assessment of eligibility and placement.

The following students are eligible for services.

- ~~Students who were served and qualified by state regulations prior to 1999.~~
- Students who meet the criteria in two out of three dimensions that follow.
- Students who meet the 96th national age percentile composite score or higher (placement grades 3-12) or the 98th national age percentile composite score or higher (placement grades 1-2) on an individual or group aptitude test.
- Students identified in one South Carolina school district are eligible for services in any South Carolina school district.
- Students who have met the state identification criteria in another state and who transfers into a South Carolina public school are eligible for services as deemed appropriate by the evaluation placement team

Identification procedures

Referral

Schools will screen all students by reviewing census aptitude and achievement test scores. Referrals from administrators, parents/legal guardians, teachers and students must be accepted. Initial screening does not in itself guarantee placement.

Schools will include the following procedures in the screening/referral process.

- Provide all parents/legal guardians with effective, written notice of the gifted education program, screening/referral procedures and eligibility requirements.

- Implement processes for identifying the academically gifted from all student populations.
- Provide training/guidance regarding the characteristics of academic giftedness for teachers and other school staff involved in the identification process.
- Use screening criteria and procedures that are directly related to the purpose of the gifted program.

All students with the potential for eligibility after screening and all students with referrals must continue into the assessment for eligibility phase of the identification process.

Eligibility assessment

The district must ensure that all assessment instruments/measures are reviewed for bias and accurately assess the ability/skills/potential intended to be measured and that these abilities/skills/potentials are consistent with the definition of population set forth in the state board regulation; and, to the extent that subjective assessment criteria are used, those individuals conducting the assessment are trained to ensure proper evaluation.

No private testing will be accepted for eligibility, but those results may be considered for referral purposes.

The following criteria organized by dimensions will be used in the screening/referral assessment processes of identification. Students must meet the criteria in two of the three dimensions.

- Dimension A: Reasoning abilities

These students demonstrate high aptitude (93rd national age percentile or above) in one or more of these areas: verbal/linguistic, quantitative/mathematical, non-verbal and/or a composite of the three using either an individual aptitude test (full-scale or component score) or a group aptitude test (composite, verbal or non-verbal scores).

- Dimension B: High achievement in reading and/or mathematical areas

These students demonstrate high achievement (94th national percentile and above or advanced status) in reading and/or mathematical areas as measured by nationally normed or South Carolina statewide assessment instruments. (See *South Carolina Gifted and Talented Best Practices Manual* for approved subtest areas.)

- Dimension C: Intellectual/Academic performance

These students demonstrate a high degree of interest in and commitment to academic and/or intellectual pursuits or demonstrate intellectual characteristics such as curiosity/inquiry, reflection, persistence/tenacity in the face of challenge and creative productive thinking. Characteristics for this dimension are demonstrated through: a) students in grades 6-12 may qualify with a 3.75 grade point average on a 4.0 scale (math, English/language arts, science, social studies and full year foreign language coursework) or b) assessments of performance on Project STAR the Performance Task Assessment for placement in grades three through six.

The performance for the primary level is 16 on either the verbal or nonverbal assessments for placement into grade three; and 18 on either the verbal or nonverbal assessment for placement into grade four. The performance standard for the intermediate level is 16 on the verbal or 22 on the nonverbal for placement into grade five; and 18 on the verbal or 25 on the nonverbal for placement into grade six.

Schools will follow steps established by the state department of education to guarantee no single criterion eliminates students from gifted program participation.

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Placement

Each school will establish an evaluation/placement team composed of an administrator, GT teacher and ~~guidance-school~~ counselor. The evaluation step in the identification process of gifted and talented students will be the responsibility of an evaluation/placement team at each school. The evaluation/placement team will have the responsibility to interpret and evaluate student data in such a way to ensure appropriate placement.

Continuing students eligibility

The evaluation/placement team will be responsible for implementing district procedures for the removal of a student from the gifted program. Appropriate counseling with the student and conferences with the student's parents/legal guardians and teachers must precede removal from the program. Records of any assessment and evaluation measures and other student information must be maintained in a confidential manner.

Students identified and served according to prior eligibility criteria will continue to be eligible for placement provided their GT and classroom performance levels are at the required achievement level.

Removal

If a parent/legal guardian wishes to remove his/her child from the gifted and talented program, the following procedures must be followed.

- The parent/legal guardian must arrange for a meeting between the G/T teacher, parent/legal guardian and student.
- The parent/legal guardian must complete a "request for removal" form. This form must be signed by the parent/legal guardian, G/T teacher and principal. The request must then be forwarded to the district evaluation placement team for approval.
- A reasonable amount of time must be allowed for the removal request to be approved.

If a student is removed ~~from form~~ from the gifted and talented program at the request of a parent/legal guardian, the student may return to full participation in the gifted and talented program at the beginning of the next school year. The student is not required to requalify for participation.

If the school initiates the removal of a student from the gifted and talented program, the following procedures must be followed.

- Removal is defined as discontinuing the participation of a student in the program for the current school year. Prior to removal from a gifted and talented program, a student must be placed on probation.
- Probation is defined as critically examining and evaluating the performance of a student with the following criteria for no less than one grading period while the student remains in the program.

Criteria for resource room/pullout model

- A child has completed two years in the program, and performance in the regular classroom and/or the pullout/resource room has not been acceptable by both the parents/legal guardians and the teacher(s).

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- Regular conferences with the student, teacher(s) and parents/legal guardians have been conducted and documented.
- Specific strategies for supporting and improving student performance have been implemented and documented.
- Regular counseling has been provided by the school's guidance counselor to support the student during the probation period.
- Grade point average is not the sole indicator for removal under most circumstances.
- Performance on PACT is not the sole indicator for removal under most circumstances.
- Poor behavior is not the sole indicator for removal under most circumstances.
- A student's social, emotional or physical health is a factor related to removal from the program.
- The student and parents/legal guardians are advised that the student may return to full participation in the gifted and talented program at the beginning of the next school year. The student is not required to requalify for participation.

Additional guidelines

A director from the division of instructional services will meet with principals at the beginning of the school year to discuss any changes in the program and to clarify policy and procedures.

Teachers of gifted and talented students and guidance-school counselors will be briefed at the beginning of each school year on any changes in the program and on policy and procedures to be followed. The teachers of the gifted and talented students and/or guidance-school counselors are responsible for disseminating information to the faculty.

Identification procedures will be articulated for school staff and faculty, parents/legal guardians and community members who may wish to refer a student for the gifted and talented program. This may be accomplished through one or more of the following: school calendar, agenda, handbook, newsletter, orientation meeting, open house, etc.

Students participating in a resource room/pull-out model will not be responsible for written assignments covered in the regular classroom. Regular classroom teachers will develop a plan for ensuring that gifted and talented students are notified of the content missed and of homework assignments that were given during their absence.

Assignments within the gifted and talented class should emphasize quality rather than quantity.

Program models

To provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment that maximize the potential of the identified students, educational programming for academically gifted and talented students must reflect the following characteristics:

- (a) content, process, and product standards that exceed the state-adopted standards for all students and that provide challenges at appropriate levels for strengths of individual students;
- (b) goals and indicators that require students to demonstrate depth and complexity of knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills;
- (c) instructional strategies that promote inquiry and accommodate the unique needs of gifted and talented learners;
- (d) a confluent approach that incorporates acceleration and enrichment;

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- (e) opportunities for the critical consumption, use, and creation of information using available technologies ; and (
- f) evaluation of student performance and programming effectiveness.

~~All gifted and talented classes and courses should reflect the following characteristics.~~

- ~~• Content, process and product standards exceed the state adopted standards for all students.~~
- ~~• Goals and indicators of student learning require students to demonstrate depth and complexity of knowledge and skills.~~
- ~~• Teachers must be trained in using instructional strategies that accommodate the unique needs of gifted learners.~~
- ~~• The confluent approach to instruction incorporates acceleration and enrichment.~~
- ~~• Opportunities exist for worldwide communication and/or research.~~
- ~~• On-going evaluation of student performance and the effectiveness of the program occurs consistently.~~

Schools should include support services for gifted and talented students that facilitate learning and fulfill their needs. Examples include technology, guidance and counseling, academic competition and leadership opportunities.

The subject-based model may be expanded to include offerings in all four major subject areas as funding becomes available. This, in fact, should be the goal since gifted and talented students may not exhibit strengths in all areas.

Elementary schools have the option of using one of the following models for instruction. The multi-disciplinary curriculum focuses on the expansion and the advancement of state academic standards in the appropriate subject areas.

- Resource room/pull-out class or center

The resource room/pull-out class or center provides services to identified students through a self-contained class that meets away from the regular classroom. In this model, gifted and talented students are removed from the regular classroom for a specified period each week to receive differentiated instruction. The maximum class size is 20 students. When the number of identified students in a special class is significantly lower than the maximum class size established in R43-220, the district may develop procedures and criteria for trial placing high-achieving students in the class to complete the teacher/student ratio (1:20). The district will only receive funding for those students identified as gifted and talented according to state criteria. Multi-grade grouping may be used in the resource room/pull-out class or center to constitute classes of sufficient size.

- Special school

Special school is a full-time gifted and talented magnet school or a full-time gifted and talented school-within-a-school. This is a separate, self-contained school or school-within-a-school designed exclusively for gifted and talented learners. Students take their basic subject classes with other gifted and talented students. Teachers are responsible for the instruction of basic subject areas as well as enrichment. The curriculum is rigorous and often accelerated, with instruction geared to a level appropriate to gifted and talented learners. Usually students are drawn from a wider population base than served by the school itself. (This model is not in place currently in Aiken County.)

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- Special class

Gifted and talented students served in the special class or special school program model should be engaged with a curriculum that reflects acceleration and enrichment in a specific discipline. Both the special class and special school model recognize that students often display high ability or potential in some academic areas but not in others.

At a minimum, a gifted and talented student must be placed in a special class that corresponds with the strength(s) of the learner in order to be successful. For example, it would be inappropriate to only place a child in a language arts special class if a child's strengths were nonverbal/quantitative and mathematical. The maximum class size for students in grades 3-5 participating in the special class model is 25 students.

In grades 8-12, two program models may be used for academically gifted students.

- Special class

The special classes offered must use the subject-based model. Classes will not have more than 25 students. Subjects chosen for the gifted program must use the honor-level textbook for the subject, as per the uniform-grading policy guidelines, and must use a differentiated curriculum as described in the state guidelines.

- Special school

The special school model exists in the state for students gifted in science and math or in the fine arts. Gifted and talented students who are interested should be encouraged by their parents/legal guardians, classroom teachers and guidance counselors to apply to these programs. Several schools also offer summer academic programs. (This model is not currently used in Aiken County.)

The following chart indicates the approved gifted and talented models for South Carolina schools along with the approved teacher/student ratios, appropriate grade levels and time requirements for each model.

<u>Approved Model (Teacher/Pupil Ratio)</u>	<u>Grade Levels</u>	<u>Minimum Minutes Per Year (Per Week**)</u>
<u>Regular Classroom/Itinerant/Itinerant Teacher (1:10)</u>	<u>Grades 1 & 2*</u>	<u>4500 (125)</u>
<u>Multi-Age Classroom (ratio not applicable)</u>	<u>Grades 1 & 2*</u>	<u>NA</u>
<u>Resource Room/Pull-out Class or Center (1:15 in Grades 1 & 2; 1:20 in Grades 3-8)</u>	<u>Grades 1&2*</u> <u>Grade 3</u> <u>Grades 4-8</u>	<u>4500 (125)</u> <u>4500 (125)</u> <u>7200 (200)</u>
<u>Special Class (1:25)</u>	<u>Grades 3-12</u>	<u>8100 (225)</u>
<u>Special School (1:25)</u>	<u>Grades 3-12</u>	<u>8100 (225)</u>

Note. * Grades 1 and 2 are not currently funded by the state. **Assumes programming services of 36 weeks per school year.

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In the Aiken County Public School District the Special Class model is used to provide gifted and talented services for students in grades 3–12.

Approved model (teacher/student ratio)	Grade levels	Minimum minutes/year
Resource room and/or pull-out class or center (1:20)	Grades 4 - 8	7200
Resource room and/or pull-out class or center (1:20)	Grade 3	4500
Special class (1:25)	Grades 8 - 12	8100
Special school (1:25)	Grades 3 - 12	Full time

Teacher qualifications

Teachers must hold valid teaching certificates appropriate to the grade level(s) or subject area(s) included in the program. Each teacher of a state-funded gifted and talented course or class will have completed a training program approved by the state department of education and have the gifted and talented endorsement on their certificate. Newly assigned teachers will have one year to meet the requirements. Teachers who have a master's degree or higher in gifted education may have the requirement waived upon approval of credentials by the state department of education.

Professional development

Appropriate, ongoing professional development in gifted education will be provided annually by the district.

Artistically gifted

Program

Artistically gifted and talented students in grades 3-12 are served through the district's summer GATEWAY program which adheres to Regulation 43-220. Students in grades 3-5 are served through a diversified program in which students participate in dance, drama, music, creative writing and the visual arts. Students in grades 6-12 participate in a program which concentrates on a specific arts discipline. Although the district uses the summer school model, Regulation 43-220 permits in-school programs, Saturday programs and after-school programs. Combinations of the approved program models are also acceptable. Students in grades 9-12 may earn one unit of Carnegie credit for successful completion of the program. This credit may be awarded only once in the high school.

The Gateway Program will offer students a 3020-day program in length to include the following.

- grade 3 - 4500 minutes 2 ½ hours per day
- grades 4-8 - 7200 minutes 4 hours per day
- grades 9-12 - 8100 minutes 5 hours per day

Identification and selection

Referral/Recommendation procedures

Students may be referred by a teacher, administrator, parent/legal guardian, self or a peer using a state department of education-approved instrument appropriate to the visual and performing arts area, to include creativity and expressive qualities. The referral/recommendation should be used to identify students who have an aptitude for the arts and may benefit from intense exploration and

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in-depth study in one or more of the arts. The initial referral/recommendation does not guarantee placement.

The program coordinator will provide written notice of the program to all principals and arts coordinators of each school who in turn share the announcement with students, teachers and parents/legal guardians. A district review team comprised of an arts teacher, an administrator and a community person with experience in the arts will ensure that all assessment instruments and application/recommendation forms are free of bias and accurately assess the abilities/skills/potentials intended to be measured and to the extent that subjective assessment criteria are used.

Application packages are distributed to students desiring admission to the program through the arts teachers during the second nine weeks grading period. Recommendation forms (included in the application package) are to be completed by the dance teacher, the physical education teacher, the classroom teacher, the drama teacher (or the classroom teacher in the elementary or middle school if there is no drama teacher), the music teacher or the visual arts teacher. The teacher should base responses on student behaviors observed throughout the school year. Application forms require students to provide identifying information and respond to three open-ended questions. Students applying for the visual arts program in grades 6-12 are required to submit examples of their work.

Audition/Interview

All students submitting completed applications will be scheduled for an audition and interview with the evaluation/placement team. The audition will consist of portfolio submission, performance, testing and workshops specific to the arts discipline. Specific requirements and criteria are presented to the student in the application package. Students are rank ordered using the results of the application, teacher recommendation and audition.

Placement

Placement of gifted and talented students is the responsibility of the evaluation/placement team comprised of one member of the arts faculty, an administrator and an additional member from the community who has expertise in the arts for which the student has been referred.

~~When the reasonable class sizes have been filled, students will be designated as alternates and placed on a waiting list to be served as space becomes available.~~

Students may be removed from the program following parent/legal guardian notification, parental/student/teacher conferences and student counseling.

Teachers must hold a valid teaching certificate appropriate to the grade level(s) or subject area(s) included in the program. Professionals in the visual and performing arts may teach in the gifted and talented program if serving in the program under the supervision of the appropriate district personnel.

Professional development

Appropriate, ongoing staff development activities will be provided by the district annually.

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