

Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Division of Mathematics, Science, and Advanced Academic Programs

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Gifted Education

What is Florida’s Definition of “Gifted”?

A student is determined to be eligible for gifted service as defined by current State Board Rule, 6A-6.03019, FAC, *Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted*. This rule states that a gifted student is “one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.” The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are: need for a special instructional program, evidence of characteristics of the gifted, and evaluation documenting intellectual development. In addition, districts may develop a plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted. The plans must be approved and must include evaluation procedures to document the minimum evaluation requirements. For the purpose of the rule, under-represented populations are defined as groups who are Limited English proficient, or who are from a low socio-economic family.

What are the procedures for screening potentially gifted students?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) gifted screening process includes the development of a talent pool of students who demonstrate unusual ability. Students should be screened using two or more of the following criteria:

- High academic achievement, as indicated by standardized test 89 percentile or higher or FCAT SSS Level 4 or 5 or course work grades of A or B
- Above average creative output in artistic, literary, scientific, or mathematics endeavors
- Very rapid learning rate or unusually insightful conclusions
- Multiple nominations from teachers and staff who observe unique talent
- Parental reports of advanced developmental behavior, such as early reading, verbal precocity and use of complex syntax, or evidence of mechanical aptitude
- Outstanding academic, creative, or leadership abilities, self-reported or peer-reported.

In addition, all LEP students that have achieved a grade of A or B in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or home language arts (i.e., Spanish language arts, Haitian-Creole language arts) and mathematics are screened for gifted. Bi-annually, the Division of Mathematics, Science, and Advanced Academic Programs provides schools with a report from Information Technology Services (ITS) that includes the names of LEP students meeting gifted screening criteria to each school.

What are the procedures for referring a student for gifted services?

After a screening process has been completed, a referral for gifted education can be made by a teacher, a parent/guardian, or any qualified individual who has knowledge of student’s abilities. A student profile is developed for a student being referred to the School Support Team (SST).

- The student profile includes the following:
 - Gifted Characteristics Checklist (FM 7051)- Students need to demonstrate a majority of gifted characteristics on the rating scale to continue in the process); and
 - Information that can be utilized to demonstrate the student's ability and need for gifted program services. This information may include, but is not limited to:
 - (a.) standardized test scores; (*Note: A standardized achievement test is administered to potential Plan B students who do not have *Stanford Achievement Test* or *FCAT* scores; additionally, the *Apr enda* can be used to measure the achievement of Spanish- speaking ESOL students)*
 - (b.) classroom performance indicators such as report card grades, class work, and/or projects.

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- An SST meeting is convened in order to review the information gathered in the student's profile. The SST makes the determination of whether or not to continue the evaluation process, based on the supporting documentation and a majority of gifted characteristics as measured by the *Gifted Characteristics Checklist*.
- Limited English proficient students and students eligible for free/reduced lunch that are referred for gifted will also need the following forms completed: William's Scale for Creativity and Plan B Gifted Matrix form for Kindergarten (FM 7083), Plan B Gifted Matrix form for Grades 1-3 (FM 7082), Plan B Gifted Matrix for Grades 4-12 – Utilizing Percentile Scores (FM 7081), or Plan B Gifted Matrix for Grades 4-12 – Utilizing FCAT Scores (FM 7349).

What are the certification and endorsement requirements for teachers of the gifted?

All K-12 teachers providing service to students who are gifted must meet the highly qualified certification requirements for the grade/course content and have the gifted endorsement. State Board Rule 6A-4.01791 requires that gifted students in a gifted course be taught by a teacher with gifted endorsement. Gifted endorsement courses include:

- Nature and Needs of Gifted Students
- Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Gifted
- Education of Special Populations of Gifted Children
- Guidance and Counseling for the Gifted
- Theory and Development of Creativity for the Gifted

There is a waiver process (FM 5784) that allows for teachers who are not highly qualified to take the five (5) state required courses in a three year period. The Florida Department of Education recommends that teachers take two courses per year.

What delivery models are available for gifted education?

Ranges of gifted service delivery options are available to meet each student's special needs based on the student's Educational Plan (EP) and are provided with administrative support to assure adequate funds for materials and professional development. The following delivery models are available for M-DCPS students in elementary, middle, and senior high school:

- Elementary Part-time Content (K-5/6) - students attend the gifted program for a block of time from 1 to 2.5 hours each day. They receive a total of 5 to 12 hours of gifted services per week and interdisciplinary instruction around selected basic subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and/or Language Arts/Reading). All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Elementary Full-time (K-5/6) - students are served in a self-contained classroom in which gifted strategies are utilized throughout the school day and across all subject areas. All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Middle School Gifted Programs (6-8) - offer gifted content area courses (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and/or Language Arts/English) and/or State-approved middle school gifted elective courses. All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Senior High Gifted Programs (9-12) - offer gifted content area courses (Honors and/or Advanced Placement) and/or State-approved high school gifted elective courses. All of

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the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.

- Senior High Gifted Consultation (9-12) - general education teachers and teachers of the gifted meet regularly to plan, implement and monitor instructional alternatives designed to ensure that the gifted students achieve successful accomplishment of gifted goals in the Advanced Placement, Honors, International Baccalaureate or other academically rigorous programs. Gifted students are not assigned to a gifted course, rather receive consultation services from a teacher who is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.

Can gifted and non-gifted students be grouped together in a gifted class?

No. State Board Rule 6A-6.0311 informs that a class may not be considered a gifted class unless every student in the class has met gifted eligibility and the teacher has the gifted endorsement. If students are mixed – gifted and non-gifted – that class is considered a general education course.

Can a student be provided with gifted services while waiting for an evaluation and/or staffing?

No. State Statute 1003.57 states: “A student may not be given special instruction or services as an exceptional student until after he or she has been properly evaluated, classified, and placed in the manner prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education.” Thus a student may not be provided gifted services unless eligible.

What are the procedures for scheduling gifted students into gifted courses?

The following are gifted K-5 schedules that schools can select from:

- Program 16-Gifted Students Standard Subjects
- Program 40-Gifted Students, Standard Subjects with Spanish SL
- Program 41-Gifted Students, Standard Subjects with ESOL and Spanish S
- Program 42-Gifted Students, Standard Subjects with ESOL
- Program 43-Gifted Students, Standard Subjects with Spanish S

For secondary students, gifted elective courses and gifted content courses in Language Arts/English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are available in the Secondary Course Code Directory. Once the student’s schedule is complete, the contact hours for the gifted courses will appear on PF 4 and will generate the needed FTE. Failure to appropriately schedule gifted students in gifted courses will result in a loss of FTE and gifted allocations.

What is the allocation formula for elementary part-time gifted programs?

Based on the 2011-2012 School Allocation Plan, one (1) teacher of the gifted will be allocated for every 18.00 FTE. Gifted funding will be provided for a maximum of 12 hours per week of instruction. Each teacher of the gifted will service approximately two groups of 18 to 36 students depending on the contact hours per week. The following formula is used to calculate the gifted FTE generated by a school in addition to the basic funding that the gifted students generate:

$$\begin{aligned} & ((\text{Number of gifted students}) \times (\text{Number of contact hours per week})) \times .04 = \text{Total gifted FTE} \\ & \text{Total gifted FTE} / 18 = \text{Gifted unit allocation} \end{aligned}$$

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What is the allocation formula for elementary full-time gifted programs?

Based on the 2011-2012 School Allocation Plan, one (1) teacher of the gifted will be allocated for every 18.00 FTE. This adjustment will assist schools in conforming to the Class Size Reduction Amendment. The basic program is accordingly reduced by 18.00 FTE.

What is the allocation formula for middle school gifted programs?

Gifted class size for the 2011-2012 school year is based upon a 22.00:1 staffing ratio. Weighted funding will be provided for a maximum of 12 hours per week of instruction. Schools may schedule students for more than 12 hours per week of gifted instruction; however, all contact hours above 12 are generated by basic funding. The following formula is used to calculate the gifted FTE generated by a school in addition to the basic funding that the gifted students generate:

$$\begin{aligned} & ((\text{Number of gifted students}) \times (\text{Number of contact hours per week})) \times .04 = \text{Total gifted FTE} \\ & \text{Total gifted FTE} / 22 = \text{Gifted unit allocation} \end{aligned}$$

Principals with large gifted student populations may elect to receive gifted units in lieu of supplements. If this option is elected, the teacher assigned to the gifted unit must be certified and must teach five gifted classes. Gifted supplements allocated to the school may be converted or combined with other supplements at a value of 1:5 to cover the cost of a 6020 or 6030 teaching unit. When gifted supplements are converted to a full time position, they must be opened under program 6790. Full-time Gifted positions cannot exceed the number of full-time gifted positions from the prior year.

What is the allocation formula for high school gifted programs?

Gifted class size for the 2011-2012 school year is based upon a 25.00:1 staffing ratio. Weighted funding will be provided for a maximum of 12 hours per week of instruction. Schools may schedule students for more than 12 hours per week of gifted instruction; however, all contact hours above 12 are generated by basic funding. The following formula is used to calculate the gifted FTE generated by a school in addition to the basic funding that the gifted students generate:

$$\begin{aligned} & ((\text{Number of gifted students}) \times (\text{Number of contact hours per week})) \times .04 = \text{Total gifted FTE} \\ & \text{Total gifted FTE} / 25 = \text{Gifted unit allocation} \end{aligned}$$

Principals with large gifted student populations may elect to receive gifted units in lieu of supplements. If this option is elected, the teacher assigned to the gifted unit must be certified and must teach five gifted classes. Gifted supplements allocated to the school may be converted or combined with other supplements at a value of 1:5 to cover the cost of a 6020 or 6030 teacher unit. When gifted supplements are converted to a full time position, they must be opened under program 6790.

What is the allocation formula for the gifted consultation model?

Senior High Schools that do not offer gifted courses must provide services to gifted students via the Consultation Model. Students who are currently identified as gifted but not placed, must be staffed back into the gifted program and must have an active Education Plan (EP), indicating consultative service. The following formula should be used to compute units/supplements for gifted students receiving consultation:

$$(.09 \times \text{number of students}) / 25 = \text{Number of gifted units based on FTE} \times 5 \text{ for supplements}$$

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What is the allocation for gifted materials and supplies?

Based on the 2011-2012 School Allocation Plan, schools will receive MESA funds at the rate of \$39.32 per gifted FTE from the February Survey of the year prior to operation, with a review of the FTE data as of September 16th of the operating year. Funds are available through Program 6790, Object 5510.

Will there be gifted substitute days allocated for teachers of the gifted?

Yes. For 2011-2012 two (2) substitute days will be allocated per school. Please note that substitute days must be utilized prior to March 30, 2012. Additional information regarding gifted substitute days will be provided on Friday, August 26, 2011 via Weekly Briefing.

Will there be professional development provided on Gifted Compliance and Educational Plans?

Yes. During the Professional Development day, Friday, February 3, 2012 professional development will be provided. Additional information will be available via Weekly Briefing.

Where can I find additional information, updates, and Weekly Briefings related to gifted education?

For updates during the 2011-2012 school year please refer to the Advanced Academic website located at, <http://advancedacademicprograms.dadeschools.net/>.