

Amite County Elementary School

Amite County School District Gifted Education Program
Enriching Curriculum for Higher Opportunities
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Amite County School District Gifted Education Program Enriching Curriculum for Higher Opportunities ECHO

The Amite County School District provides a program of enrichment for intellectually gifted students in second through sixth grade. The classes at the elementary level are called “ECHO” (Enriching Curriculum for Higher Opportunities). The students in ECHO receive five hours per week of gifted services.

Mississippi Department of Education gifted regulations and state mandate require that intellectually gifted students in grades two through six be provided services by a teacher with gifted endorsement for a minimum of five hours per week.

Gifted Mission Statement

The mission of the Amite County School District gifted program is to insure that intellectually gifted children, as defined by the Mississippi Department of Education are offered appropriate educational experiences that are qualitatively different from those available in the regular classroom in order to provide opportunities for them to realize their abilities and potential.

Mississippi Department of Education Gifted Child Definition

The state of Mississippi defines “Intellectually Gifted Children” and gifted Education Programs” as follows:

“Intellectually Gifted Children” shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process.

Philosophy

The Amite County School District, in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education’s regulations and standards for gifted education programs, is committed to identifying intellectually gifted students and provided a program of enrichment that addresses their unique talents, needs, and learning styles. Recognizing the intellectual, emotional, and social needs of gifted students; as well as their potential for creativity, higher-level thinking, independent learning, and leadership; the program addresses cognitive and affective needs with a curriculum that is qualitatively different from and in addition to the regular classroom.

Goals and Objectives

- To provide an equitable identification process for gifted students which is inclusive and meets the requirements as outlined in state regulations.
- To provide a gifted learning environment that allows gifted students regular opportunities to interact with intellectual peers.
- To provide challenging learning experiences in an environment that recognizes the multiple talents, challenges, and cultural diversity of the district's population.
- To provide a challenging, differentiated curriculum and teaching strategies that address the intellectual, cognitive, and affective needs of the gifted learner.
- To focus on students' interests, strengths, and learning styles to encourage a life-long love of learning.
- To provide opportunities for student to develop competency in creatively, critical thinking, information literacy, communication, affective, and success skills.
- With the assistance of school counselors, to increase differentiated guidance efforts to meet the social-emotional needs of gifted students including those who are underachieving, twice exceptional, and from diverse populations. (Criterion V. 1.3)
- To conduct a comprehensive annual assessment of the gifted program with added attention to obtaining input from community members. (Criterion IV. 2.4)

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The student identification process is separated into six stages, which include referral, LSC review of referral data, parental permission for testing, assessment, assessment report, and the LSC eligibility determination stage.

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD, as well as students who exhibit classroom behavior such as extreme shyness, short attention spans, disruptiveness, continual questioning, and anxiety. Throughout the identification process, district personnel are careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protect all data collected as part of the identification process. Access to this information is restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the gifted education program, or that have a documented need to access. Parents will be informed of the information/data collected and may gain access to their children's records by written request to the school's gifted education personnel at any time. Upon completion of the identification process, results of the Assessment Team Report will be explained to the parents, and a copy of the assessment report provided.

STAGE 1: REFERRAL

Referral for the gifted education program is based on consideration of performance in the regular classroom, potential ability, test performance, intellectual characteristics, creativity, and/or leadership potential. While grades and/or achievement test scores might be an indicator of giftedness, by MDE Regulations, neither classroom behavior, grades, nor achievement test scores may be used to eliminate a student from the identification process. As mandated in MDE Gifted Regulations, the Amite County School District follows the state minimal scale/percentile score criteria on all referral measures.

There are two types of gifted referral processes:

- Type One – The Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
- Type Two – The Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility.

Type One: Mass Screening Referral Process

A normed group measure of intelligence will be administered to all first grade students in the mass screening referral process to assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations. All students who obtain a full scale/composite score at or above the 90th percentile shall move forward in the referral process.

In addition to the normed group measure of intelligence obtained in mass screening, a student shall satisfy two of the following criteria before moving forward to Stage 2 of the identification process, LSC Review of Referral Data:

1. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
4. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
7. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

Type Two: Individual Referral Process

This process involves students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility. Any student who does not meet the minimum acceptable criteria (score in the 90th percentile) on the normed group measure of intelligence during the Mass Screening Referral Process and does not qualify for the Emerging Potential for Gifted criteria, can be referred by anyone for the Individual Referral for Screening Process. The individually referred student shall not be excluded from the referral process by his or her performance on the normed group measure of intelligence administered during the Mass Screening Referral Process.

All students in grades served by the program comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients for gifted education services. A student may be referred for consideration, pending documentation of the above criteria, by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. A referral must be initiated by written request to the teacher of the gifted. The person initiating the referral shall sign the referral form and date it. Once the student is referred, the district personnel shall collect the data required to satisfy the referral criteria. Once a referral form has been initiated, signed, and dated, only the LSC or parents can stop the identification process.

Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy three of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,
2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
7. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
8. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

STAGE 2: LSC REVIEW OF REFERRAL DATA

Once the referral data have been collected, the LSC shall review all data and make one of the following recommendations:

1. the student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage, or
2. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however, the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time, or
3. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

Provisions for Emerging Potential for Gifted Populations

At this point the LSC shall make the decision as to the possibility that the student could be eligible for consideration as a candidate for an emerging potential for gifted assessment. If it is believed that the student might have emerging gifted potential, then the Emerging Potential for Intellectually Gifted Assessment Checklist will be completed for possible use during the assessment process. The Emerging Potential for Gifted category makes provisions for factors that exist and may put the student at a disadvantage when inappropriate instruments are used during the assessment process.

STAGE 3: PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING

If a student meets the criteria for referral, the Gifted Local Survey Committee will recommend individual assessment to determine eligibility for an “Intellectually Gifted” ruling. Written parental permission for testing must be obtained before any individual testing is initiated and parents will be notified in writing of their rights under FERPA.

STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT

District personnel shall review and compile all data available on the student. This data shall be made available to a licensed examiner who will administer an individual test of intelligence.

In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner shall review all available data on the student to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures will be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner’s manuals.

A student must score at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale or the 91st percentile on approved subtests (as per publisher) in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

Identification criteria, as approved by the MDE on the Amite County School District Gifted Education Program Proposal, must be satisfied for a student to be ruled eligible by the LSC for the intellectually gifted education program.

Emerging Potential for Gifted

Students who have satisfied criteria on the Emerging Potential for Gifted Checklist who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but, did score at least at the 84th percentile or have a scale score that falls within the range of the 90th percentile confidence interval of the state minimum scale/percentile score, may be administered one of the following additional measures to determine eligibility:

1. A test of cognitive abilities with a minimal score at the 90th percentile,
2. A group intelligence measure with a minimal score at the 90th percentile, or
3. A district-developed matrix approved by the MDE.

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students

In compliance with MDE gifted regulations, students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, will be considered potentially Twice-Exceptional. Students who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria, but did meet at least one referral criterion, shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence composite score or approved subtest score or, in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

STAGE 5: ASSESSMENT REPORT

District personnel shall compile an Assessment Report, which contains all the MDE required components:

1. Student's name,
2. Name of at least three measures from Stage 1: Referral that were used to determine the need to administer an individual test of intelligence,
3. Results of each measure,
4. Name of individual who administered or completed each measure and the date administered or completed,
5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s),
6. Interpretation of the results of each individually administered test(s),
7. Name of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence and date test was administered,
8. Qualifications of the individual who administered the individual test of intelligence,
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and, identified strengths and weaknesses,
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position, and
11. Date of the Assessment Report.

STAGE 6: LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the LSC shall meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program.

Parental Notification

Parents of each student tested will be notified in writing about the results of their child's assessment for the intellectually gifted program and their rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). District personnel shall offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions.

OUT-OF-STATE GIFTED ELIGIBILITIES

As each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program, a student moving to Mississippi with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy Mississippi eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi.

There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the district.

PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Once a student is ruled eligible for placement in the gifted program, the parent has the right to agree to placement or withhold placement of the child in the program. Written parental permission must be obtained before the child can be placed in the program.

Participation in the Gifted Education Program is NOT a reward. It is an Entitlement under State Law (Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181).

Once a student is determined eligible for a gifted program in Mississippi, no reevaluation testing is required to remain in the program. Although criteria may vary from district to district, an eligible determination is accepted by all school districts within the State of Mississippi.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

As ECHO students' work under specific Instructional Management Plan objectives and time frames, withholding permission to attend gifted classes shall not be used as a disciplinary measure.

The activities in the gifted class develop and enhance the process skills as established in the MDE required outcomes document, the teaching strategies notebook, and required components of the gifted program standards document. A differentiated curriculum that includes short-term exploratory activities and long-term activities that enhance the integration of advanced content and individual student's interests utilizing higher-level thinking skills, creative problem solving, critical thinking skills, research skills, personal growth and human relations exercises, leadership skills, and creative expression are provided in the gifted enrichment program. Activities also create an appreciation for the multicultural composition of the school and community. Failure to complete enrichment class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

As outlined in MDE Gifted Regulations, gifted students may not be required to make up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students shall be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. Homework assigned to the regular classroom students for the evening of the ECHO day must be completed.

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUED PLACEMENT

A committee shall meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the gifted program. The committee must include at least the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative.

As stated in the MDE Gifted Education Regulations, "since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under the law, the students should remain in the gifted program as long as they are being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular education program are the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program."

In the event a student fails to make progress or exhibits unsatisfactory participation in the gifted program, a meeting of the reassessment committee will be held to consider the student's performance. If the committee determines that the student is failing to make progress in the program, the student will be placed on probation in the gifted program for the next 9-weeks term. The parents will be notified and given an opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the decision and develop a plan of action. During this time, the student will continue to participate in the gifted program. If at the end of the period of probation, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level, the student will be removed from probation and recommended for continued placement. If at the end of the 9-weeks term the student has failed to improve his/her performance to a satisfactory level, the reassessment committee can recommend the student be removed from the program. Documentation of all reassessment committee meetings must be maintained.

If the committee determines that the student should exit ECHO due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents will be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the district shall grant the parents a hearing.

HEARING PROCESS

Parents who are not in agreement with the school based committee decision to remove a student from the gifted program will present their concerns, orally or in writing to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

If the parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parents shall, within five (5) school days after the meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the Amite County gifted contact person. The gifted contact person will schedule a meeting of the LSC. Parents will be extended an invitation to attend the LSC will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURES

Students will be considered for reinstatement in the gifted program at the request of the parents and with the recommendation of classroom teachers. Consideration and arrangements for reinstatement in the program will be made through the Local Gifted Survey Committee and documented in the minutes. Written notification of the student's eligibility for reinstatement will be forwarded to the parents and teachers of the student. Written parental permission must be obtained before the student can be placed in the program.

PERFORMANCE IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

In the event a student has difficulty keeping up with regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, teacher of the gifted, and the student, if appropriate, to discuss the problem and to determine an appropriate course of action. The conference and plan of action will be documented and follow-up conferences will be held as needed.

As the academic progress and welfare of the students are of prime consideration, special situations will be handled on an individual basis.

For additional information or questions about the Amite County School District Gifted Education Program please contact Patricia Taylor, Gifted Teacher/ Gifted Contact Person at Amite County Elementary School 601-657-8311.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

- Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, Mississippi Code Sections 37-23-171 through 37-23-181
- Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2006)

Gifted Parent Appeal Process -

If a student does not qualify for ECHO after an initial referral, he/she may be referred again. Each referral shall follow the same procedure that includes an intelligence screener, checklists, and individual IQ test. Anyone (teacher, parent, self, peer, etc.) with reason to believe a student is intellectually gifted may refer students for placement in this program. Contact a teacher, the Gifted Contact Person, or counselor to begin the referral process. Only one individual intelligence test may be used for identification within a six-month period.

IV. Students enrolled in the district's gifted program will not be responsible for missed class work. They will be only held responsible for mastery of concepts covered while out of the classroom.

V. Students in gifted programs will be reassessed annually by the Local Survey Committee in accordance with the MDE guidelines.

For a student to be removed from the program:

- A. A lack of success in the gifted program must be documented OR**
- B. The parent or guardian must submit a written request to remove the student.**

Students removed may not reenter the program until the beginning of the following school year.

VI. If the Local Survey Committee recommends that a student be removed from the gifted program, the student's parents must be notified and given an opportunity to discuss the decision before the student is removed.

Request for Furlough from ECHO

Should the parent of an ECHO student request a furlough from the program, a written request will be submitted to the LSC. If the LSC approves the furlough, it will be for a grading period (9 weeks), beginning at the date of approved furlough.

Removal of Gifted Child from Gifted Services

A parent who is not in agreement with the school based committee decision to remove their student from the gifted program or does not agree with any action within the gifted process will present their concerns, orally or in writing, to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

If the parent is not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parent shall within five (5) school days request a hearing by putting their concerns in writing and presenting the written request for a hearing to the district's contact person for gifted programming. The parent will be extended an invitation to attend the gifted hearing committee meeting for a time to be agreed upon by the parent and the committee. The committee will consist of the district's coordinator of gifted programs, a district or school level administrator, and a teacher of the program education other than the student's current teacher and/ or administrator. The gifted hearing committee will render a written decision based on information shared during the hearing meeting. The decision of the hearing committee will be mailed to the parent. The decision of the hearing committee is final. If the student is removed from the program, written documentation will be given to the gifted teacher within 3 school days. The teacher will provide the counselor with a copy of the written documentation within 3 school days of receipt. The student shall be removed from the gifted program within 5 days of the decision or as indicated on the documentation form.

Gifted Outcomes This document, which is the foundation for all Mississippi gifted programs, identifies desired gifted learner outcomes for communication, creativity, group dynamics, thinking skills, research, self-directed learning. By developing these skills, students work toward achieving the overall goal of *metacognition: the ability to understand one's thinking process and thereby, use it more effectively.*

<p>Thinking Skills</p>	<p>Creativity</p>
<p>Given a topic/situation, the learner will define and classify the problem(s), make connections, and draw distinctions, analyze information objectively and critically (reflectively developing a relationship between facts and values), and differentiate truth and beliefs from his/her understanding of what is logically and realistically possible.</p>	<p>Given a real-life situation, the student will be able to select from divergent thinking, analogical thinking, visualization, attribute listing, morphological analysis, synectics, intuitive thinking, spontaneous thinking, creative problem solving, and/or the creative process in an appropriate manner to develop a workable solution(s).</p>
<p>Information Literacy</p>	<p>Communication Skills</p>
<p>Given a real situation, the student will identify and define the problem, design a research plan appropriate to the problem, conduct the investigation, decide on the most appropriate media for dissemination of the findings/ solutions, and present the results before an authentic audience.</p>	<p>Given the need to retrieve and/or disseminate information, the students will select and utilize the most appropriate media based upon available resources, technology, audience, and time available, for the most effective communication of information, ideas, feelings, and concepts and correctly interpreting those of others.</p>
<p>Affective Skills</p>	<p>Success Skills</p>
<p>As a gifted learner, students will develop self-acceptance and awareness and demonstrate responsibility for personal growth along with awareness of personal and cultural diversity in others by recognizing forms of bias and stereotypes in order to respect unique beliefs and experiences in themselves and others by understanding and embracing giftedness, appropriately coping with stress in order to become healthy, responsive, contributing, and productive members of classroom communities and society as a whole.</p>	<p>Given a real-life situation, the student will utilize effective organizational, decision making, goal-setting, project management, and time management skills, including controlling impulses and adapting to unforeseen circumstances, in order to develop solutions to problems and achieve goals whether working individually or as a leader or member of a team.</p>