

The Philadelphia School District provides programming for students who meet the criteria for intellectually gifted in second through 8th grades. These classes are located on the Philadelphia Elementary School campus.

Mission Statement

The mission of Philadelphia School District's intellectually gifted program is to provide a safe and incomparable learning environment that strives to address the unique needs of students identified as intellectually gifted. The purpose of the program is to assist these intellectually gifted students in the development of their intellectual potential through appropriate educational experiences and to encourage and respond to the diverse expressions of the gifts and talents of these students without regard to culture, racial and ethnic backgrounds, or socioeconomic group.

Goals

- Develop higher order level thinking skills and creative thinking skills.
- Strengthen communication skills.
- Expand student interests/strengths through research skills.
- Provide an environment conducive to development of autonomous learning.
- Promote self-esteem, self-direction, leadership skills, and group dynamics.
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of different cultures, environments, values, thoughts, and philosophies.
- Increase knowledge and appreciation of great literature, music, performing and visual arts, and people.
- Promote in-depth studies in careers.
- Initiate exploration of the worlds of science, futurism, and decision-making.
- Increase awareness of responsibility to self, to others, and to the school.

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.
- "Gifted Education Programs (GEP)" shall mean programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children within grades 2 through 8, programs of instruction for academically gifted children within grades 9 through 12, and programs of instruction for creatively and/or artistically gifted children within grades 2 through 12 in public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to the different form or regular program of instruction provided by the district.

The purpose of this programming is to identify those students who demonstrate unusually high achievement and/or potential for unusually high achievement. Because of their unusual capabilities, they require uniquely qualitatively differentiated educational programs not usually available in the general education classroom. These uniquely different programs are required to enable the gifted students to realize their potential contributions to self and society. Programming is offered through a pull-out resource program. Mississippi regulations require that intellectually gifted students be provided services by a properly endorsed teacher in a resource room for a minimum of five (5) hours per week.

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 IDEA guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD. Throughout the identification process, district personnel are careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

All data collected as part of the identification process are protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Access to this information is restricted to those personnel working directly with the identification process, working directly in the education field, or that have a documented need of access. Parents have the right to view their children's records at any time.

Referral Process for Consideration to the Intellectually Gifted Program

A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. A mass screening utilizing the Otis Lennon Standardized Achievement Test (OLSAT) will be conducted on all students in grade 1 annually in the spring semester. All students comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients for gifted education services. Referrals for gifted will be accepted throughout the year for grades 2-6. However, Phase II Testing will only take place twice per year (Once in the fall semester and once in the spring/summer).

Referral

The *Referral Form* is completed by the person initiating the referral process. Once a referral form has been initiated, signed and dated, only the Local Survey Committee (LSC) or parent(s) can stop the identification process.

Referral Criteria

A student shall satisfy a minimum of two of the following criteria at this level before moving forward in the identification process:

- Published Characteristics Checklist - local minimal acceptance criteria of 90th percentile on a gifted rating scale that assesses creativity and leadership and general knowledge.
- First Grade Screener score of 90% or above.

LSC Review

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

1. Move forward to Phase I of the assessment.
2. Identification process should stop.

Parent Conference

If criteria are met, the parent will be contacted and a meeting scheduled. At this time, district personnel shall obtain written parental consent for testing through the *Parent Permission for Testing Form*. Parents will be informed of *FERPA* and given a handout explaining their rights.

Phase I of the Assessment

A student shall satisfy a minimum of three of the following criteria at this level before moving forward in the identification process. Please note that measures from the referral process may be carried over into Phase I.

- Score at or above 90% range on a normed characteristics of giftedness checklist.
- Score at or above 90% range on a normed measure of creativity.
- Score in the 90% range on a normed measure of leadership.
- Score at or above the 90th percentile on the first grade screener.

If the minimum criteria are not met:

1. A letter shall be sent to parents along with formal documentation of the decision.
2. Parents may schedule a conference should they wish to review test results.

Phase II of the Assessment

Individual intelligence testing shall follow. All individual tests of intelligence shall be administered by a licensed examiner. The examiner shall review all available data on the student and use this information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. The examiner will provide a signed and dated report of the test administration. A student must score at or above 91st percentile (120) for the composite/full scale (some intelligence tests might allow the use of Verbal or Non-Verbal scores).

Eligibility Determination

Once the Assessment Report is finished, the LSC will review all data and determine eligibility criteria (whether met or not met). The LSC shall rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program. Parent(s) shall be notified in writing as to the assessment results.

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students

Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA, who are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy the minimal acceptable criteria on the individual test of intelligence shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. The district will follow procedures as outlined by the *Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013)*.

Potentially Disadvantaged Gifted

Students who have satisfied criteria on the Potentially Disadvantaged Gifted Checklist who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on an individual test of intelligence, but, did score at least the 85th percentile shall be administered an additional measure to determine eligibility as outlined by the *Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013)*.

Out-of-State 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.

Homework/Class Work

As outlined in the *Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013)*, gifted students in grades 2-8 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.

Instructional Management Plan

Students in the gifted program work under specific Instructional Management Plan (IMP) objectives and time frames. Withholding permission for a student to attend the gifted classes would not be used as a disciplinary measure. Failure to complete enrichment class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

Annual Reassessment

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

Since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under law, the student should remain in the program as long as he/she is being successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular classroom should not be considered as the sole reason for removal from the gifted program.

In the event a student has difficulty keeping up with the regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, teacher of the gifted, and the student 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.

If the committee recommends that a student be removed from the gifted program, the student's parent(s) must be notified and given an opportunity to discuss the decision before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student, the local district shall grant the parent(s) a hearing.

Hearing Process

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

If the parents do not agree with the decision, they have two weeks to appeal in writing. The procedure to conduct a hearing is as follows:

1. The parents (or guardian) will send a written request for a hearing to appeal the LSC committee decision to the building principal and Special Services Director.
2. Upon receipt of the written request, the Special Services Director will have two weeks to assemble a hearing committee comprised of the following members:
 - a. Gifted Contract Person
 - b. Principal or designee from another school
 - c. Psychometrist
3. The Special Services Director will preside over the hearing. All proceedings will be recorded for documentation purposes.
4. At the hearing, the LSC will present supporting data for its decision to dismiss the student from the gifted program. The parents will be able to present character witnesses, statements to support allowing the student to remain in the program, and other data as appropriate to support the request to allow the student to remain in the gifted program.
5. The hearing committee will review the evidence presented and notify the parent/guardian, principal and teacher within two working days of the decision.

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 LSC, with parent(s) in attendance, and documented in the minutes. Parent's signature on minutes will provide documentation of parental permission to reinstate the student in the program.

Program Evaluation

Prior to the end of the school year, in addition to the reassessment process, each participating student will be asked to complete an evaluation of the program. Parents will also be asked to complete an evaluation form annually. All completed information will be maintained in a confidential manner. The information will be used in the planning process for the upcoming school year. A report will be presented to the parents, administrators and other interested parties regarding the outcome of the program evaluation.

REFERENCE: *Regulations for the Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi (2013)*