

Gifted Education

Manual

Section I Identification

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FOREWORD

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) provides exemplary educational programs that inspire and prepare all students for success. Gifted students measure their success through the challenges they are able to receive, meet, and often surpass. The goal of the DoDEA Gifted Education activities is to identify students with high potential and exceptional performance and to develop challenges that match their strengths.

The process of creating challenges for gifted students helps educators to recognize the strengths of all students. When teachers design activities that require students to stretch their thinking, they establish a learning environment that promotes academic excellence. In the process, some students reveal their giftedness in ways not readily measured through traditional assessment strategies.

This DoDEA Gifted Education Procedural Manual serves as the framework for the identification of gifted students and the delivery of services within our total educational community. The Manual guides administrators and teachers in recognizing students with high potential so that they can be encouraged to accept academic challenges. It also offers guidance as educators design new challenges for students whose performances are remarkable.

The DoDEA Gifted Education guidelines align with the National Association for Gifted Children's Pre-K - Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards and the latest research in gifted education. Appropriate educational practices for gifted students must meet the same test as those for all students. They must provide for individual student progress, continuous learning, and productive citizenship.

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Table of Contents

TAB

Procedural Guidelines for Identification.....	1
Timeline and Responsibilities	2
Identification Forms.....	3
Gifted Review Committee.....	4
Information on DoDEA Identification Process.....	5
Workshop on Identification.....	6
Readings and Resources.....	7
Bibliography.....	8

“Giftedness appears in many different forms in every cultural group at every level of society...Yet, it remains a potentiality until it has been discovered and developed. In coming to grips with more effective approaches to identify giftedness, the promise is that educators will better understand how to identify and nurture the potential of all learners.” (Passow and Frasier, 1996)

PURPOSE OF MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to update and provide DoDEA areas, districts, and schools with information to assist them in identifying and providing services for gifted students, and to cancel DS Manual 2590.2, "Schoolwide Enrichment Guide," July 1986. Emphasis is placed on procedures and strategies that meet high standards for gifted programs within the framework of the total education program.

OVERVIEW OF IDENTIFICATION

Philosophy

DoDEA is committed to provide an educational program in which students may grow to be fulfilled, productive, and contributing members of society according to their promise. The unique worth, ability, and dignity of each student should be recognized and cultivated. Children need a school environment that helps them realize their potential and instills in them a desire to develop their talents and abilities. To encourage optimum achievement, the school must provide varied and challenging learning opportunities matched to the needs and talents of students with high potential.

Definition of Gifted Learners

Gifted learners are children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. (U.S. Department of Education,1993)

Guiding Principles for the Identification of Gifted Learners

- Intelligence is multi-faceted and manifested in many ways.
- Instruments used should measure diverse abilities and talents.
- Student identification should be based on valid and reliable measures.
- No single instrument or score, including summed matrix scores, should be used to determine eligibility.
- Assessment of students should continue over time.
- A profile of each student's strengths and areas of need should be developed and maintained.
- A knowledgeable committee should review student assessments and determine eligibility.
- Written procedures should include matters of consent, eligibility, retention, and appeals.

Characteristics of Gifted Learners

Gifted students reveal themselves in many ways and in a variety of settings. Informal observations of students by parents, peers, teachers, and others in the school community are often rich with telltale signs of giftedness. Differences in the expression of characteristics occur developmentally. Other differences result from the diversity of cultural, ethnic, economic, and environmental backgrounds of youngsters.

Certain traits appear to be able to distinguish gifted students from those in the average range. Students considered gifted in a specific area usually exhibit the majority of the following traits in addition to advanced skills in their main area/s of competence.

General characteristics most often found in research studies include:

- Rapid learning
- Extensive stores of information
- Strong problem-solving abilities
- Long attention span
- Sensitivity
- Perfectionism
- High degree of energy
- Wide range of interests
- Preference for older companions
- Well-developed sense of humor
- Early reading; avid reading
- Ease with puzzles and mazes
- Maturity in judgment, at times
- Perseverance
- Imagination/creativity

(Frasier, 1991; Rogers, 1986; Silverman, Rogers, and Water, 1982 Silverman, Chitwood and Waters, 1986)

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Purpose

The purpose of **identification** in the gifted program is to find students whose potential and/or performance is so extraordinary that they require differentiation in their instructional program.

Goals

- ◆ Locate and recognize students in grades K-12 with extremely strong learning profiles in the areas of:
 - Intellectual ability
 - Academic achievement (general or specific)
 - Performing arts
- ◆ Use multiple criteria for eligibility and specific procedures that acknowledge the variety of ways and environments in which students manifest giftedness.

The School Gifted Review Committee

A Gifted Review Committee is formed at each school to facilitate the identification process. Membership consists of at least three representatives selected by the principal. Members should include those with expertise in general gifted characteristics and behaviors, and knowledge of the intellectual, academic and/or artistic areas being considered. Members generally serve for one school year and may be reappointed the following year. The chairperson of the committee may be the gifted resource teacher or another school educator selected by the principal. Input from individuals who know the student well, including the student himself/herself, peers, parents, teachers, and others in the school community should be encouraged.

The Gifted Review Committee receives and considers referrals on a regular basis throughout the school year. Transferring students should be considered as soon as possible after the transfer. Other referrals should be considered on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.

STEPS IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

1. **Referral** of students for consideration by the Gifted Review Committee will be completed through:
 - Screening - Available data on all students are used to find likely candidates for gifted program services.
 - Nomination - Individual students are recommended by professional staff members, parents/guardians, or through self-nomination.
 - Transfer Records - Students whose records from schools outside of DoDEA indicate eligibility for a gifted program are recommended for immediate review.
2. **Assessment** of each referred student is completed with parent or guardian permission.
3. An **eligibility** decision for each candidate is made through a review of the student's assessment profile.
4. **Determination of gifted program services** for eligible students is the decision of the Gifted Review Committee.

Referral

The purpose of referral is to provide the Gifted Review Committee with names of students who should be assessed and considered for eligibility for gifted program services. Students are referred through the screening process, by individual recommendation of a teacher, parent, or professional staff member or self-nomination, or as the result of previous eligibility in a non-DoDEA school. If no ability or achievement scores are available for a student, the student may be referred without such data. Parent or guardian permission for further review must be received prior to assessment and committee review of a student.

Referral through Screening

The purpose of screening is to quickly locate likely candidates for consideration by the Gifted Review Committee. Screening of **all** students occurs through:

- Group ability testing for second grade students (scores in the top 5% of the population)
- Review of students' performance on TerraNova achievement tests, grades 3-11 (total battery scores at or above 97th percentile)

Students whose test scores meet the criteria are referred to the Gifted Review Committee.

Referral through Nomination

The purpose of nomination is to encourage consideration of students who appear to be potential candidates but do not have test scores available or at a level high enough for an automatic referral. Professional staff members, parents/guardians, or students themselves nominate candidates. Rating scales are completed for nominated students.

Referral through Transfer Records

Students who have been found eligible at a DoDEA school shall be **automatically eligible** for services when transferring to another DoDDS or DDESS school. The Gifted Review Committee should review the profiles of transferring students as soon as possible to recommend program services.

Students transferring into a DoDEA school from a public or private school who provide evidence of participation in a gifted program should be referred to the Gifted Review Committee as soon as possible to determine eligibility.

Assessment

The purpose of assessment for the gifted program is to provide the Gifted Review Committee with sufficient information to make a decision on eligibility. Assessment of referred students should incorporate the use of multiple measures. A profile of each student's strengths is developed through the use of these measures. Strategies and instruments available for use by

schools are defined in Table 1. Additional data available at the school may be included in the student’s profile folder for committee review. Such information may come from teachers, parents, students, or others knowledgeable of the student’s strengths. Folders profiling each student’s strengths are prepared for committee use.

Table 1
Assessment Options

Intellectual Ability	Academic Achievement	Artistic Performance
Individual IQ test	Individual achievement test	Interview
Group ability test	Group achievement test	Performance/display
Record of observations	Grades	Record of observations
Record of accomplishments	Record of accomplishments	Record of accomplishments
Rating scale	Rating scale	Rating Scale
	Portfolio	Portfolio

Eligibility

The Gifted Review Committee makes a decision on eligibility for each student. Profiles of students’ strengths include data from multiple sources as indicated in Table 1. A folder prepared for each student should include all assessment data as well as any other significant information. Committee members to review each child’s strengths. If limited data are available, the committee chairperson should collect additional information prior to this review.

No single score or matrix total should define a student’s eligibility for gifted program services. Rather, the committee should look at all available data to reach a professional decision.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Table 2 provides guidance for interpreting student assessment data. Scores or levels defined in each area represent the expectation that a student is demonstrating strength at the highest levels, equivalent to the top 2-4% of students of similar age in this area of ability or achievement. The Gifted Review Committee should note scores or indicators of student potential and/or performance at this high level in making an eligibility decision.

The committee should recognize that a student’s profile of strengths may not be evidenced in a traditional manner. Linguistic and cultural differences may mask individual

student strengths. It is important that the committee members look at all available data in determining a student's eligibility.

Students found eligible should be demonstrating **more than one indicator** of exceptional performance or the capability of attaining high performance with the support of gifted program services.

Table 2

Guidelines for Gifted Committee Decision Making

Indicators of Highly Unusual Ability/Performance

Eligible students demonstrate more than one of the following indicators:

Intellectual Ability

- An IQ score of 130 or higher on an individual IQ test
- A total score at or above 95th percentile on the Raven Progressive Matrices
- A score at or above 97th percentile on the Test of Cognitive Skills
- An average rating scale score of 36 or higher from two or more ratings
- Qualitative data (observations, anecdotal evidence) indicative of highly unusual ability

and/or

Academic Achievement

- A total battery score at or above 97th percentile on TerraNova
- A total score at or above 97th percentile on an alternative standardized achievement test
- Qualitative data (observations, anecdotal evidence, portfolios) giving clear evidence of highly unusual academic performance

and/or

Artistic Performance

- Record of accomplishments indicative of highly unusual performance
- Artistic Rating scale score at or above 36
- Qualitative data (observations, anecdotal evidence, portfolio) giving clear evidence of highly unusual performance

THE COMMITTEE REVIEW

An individual student's profile of strengths provides the Gifted Review Committee with data for decision making about eligibility. Information from the assessment profile as well as any other data of relevance provided to the committee should be used. No single score and no summed scores from a matrix shall be used for identification. Rather, the committee reviews the profile of student strengths and makes a professional decision about eligibility.

The Gifted Review Committee determines that the child is eligible for services, ineligible for services, or is to be monitored. Each member of the Gifted Review Committee independently reviews a student's profile. Using the available data and the indicators of highly unusual ability and/or performance, each member determines a student eligible, ineligible, or to

be monitored. If all members agree, a student is eligible. If not all members indicate eligibility, the committee as a whole reviews the profile and makes a decision.

Services for students found **eligible** are recommended by the Gifted Review Committee and coordinated through the school principal, the gifted resource teacher, classroom teachers, and other school professionals as appropriate. All schools will offer services for students found eligible as intellectually/academically gifted, or gifted in the performing arts. Gifted program options are defined in Section II, Guidelines and Requirements for Gifted Program Services, K-12.

Students found **ineligible** for gifted program services may benefit from general enrichment activities within the school. Their profiles of strength should be shared with classroom teachers, parents, the students themselves, and other professionals in the school. The gifted resource teacher may be able to assist the school community in recognizing and maximizing the special strengths of students found ineligible.

Students selected for **monitoring** are those whose profiles indicate strong potential but do not appear ready to participate in a gifted program. Students who are gifted and underachieving are typical candidates in this category. The gifted resource teacher and other school professionals should carefully follow each monitored student during the semester. Additional data on these students should be collected and reviewed by the Gifted Review Committee the next semester. Like those students found ineligible, students to be monitored should be given opportunities to use and enhance their talents and gifts. Students may remain in a monitored status for up to two semesters.

CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the gifted program is reviewed annually by the Gifted Review Committee. The review is generally completed at the end of the school year to document eligibility for the upcoming school year. Information about student performance and outcomes in the program is considered in the decision to continue eligibility for the next school year. Students who do not experience success through gifted program services may be recommended for monitoring. This change in status is reviewed by semester. A student should be recommended for ineligibility after a period of monitoring equivalent to two semesters.

APPEALS

A parent or guardian of a student found ineligible for gifted program services may appeal the decision of the committee. A parent or guardian who wishes to file an appeal concerning the process for identifying a student or services provided under the auspices of the gifted program may present an appeal to the school principal.

MAXIMIZING STUDENTS' STRENGTHS

Schools should use data gathered through the gifted screening and identification process to recognize also students exhibiting unusual strengths in areas other than intellectual, academic, and performing arts. Such areas include creative and productive thinking, leadership, kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and/or intrapersonal areas. The purpose of this recognition is to include students in learning activities that may be available at individual schools and to promote school activities that support growth in these areas. Such activities may either be ongoing or may be special events and seminars. Many schools provide mentorships, internships, before and after school activities, leadership seminars, opportunities for exhibits, performances, publication, contests, and other experiences. Such enrichment activities may be individual, group, class, or schoolwide.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal

The School Principal shall:

1. Assure school compliance with DoDEA Regulation 2590.1, "Program for Gifted Students."
2. Appoint a standing Gifted Review Committee for the school. A minimum of three members should include those with expertise in the area being assessed, in general gifted characteristics and behaviors, as well as with knowledge of the child being reviewed. A teacher, an administrator or administrative designee, and a counselor should be part of the committee. Input from all persons who know the student well, including the student himself

or herself, peers, parents, teachers, and others in the school community should be encouraged.

3. Articulate procedures for receiving referrals from students, parents, teachers, and administrators.
4. Plan eligibility committee meetings for each school year to be held at least quarterly.
5. Monitor record keeping for each student reviewed by the Gifted Review Committee.
6. Provide gifted program services for eligible students in accordance with the Procedural Manual section on guidelines and requirements for gifted program services, K-12.
7. Ensure that students currently eligible in any other DoDEA school are automatically found eligible for gifted program services.
8. Receive and address appeals to Gifted Review Committee decisions.

Chairperson

The Chairperson, Gifted Review Committee, shall:

1. Facilitate the review of student screening at all grades.
2. Prepare referrals on all students found through screening.
3. Request individual referrals from professional staff.
4. Receive referrals from parents or guardians.
5. Prepare profile folders for each referred student.
6. Request parent or guardian permission for assessment and review of student.

7. Facilitate assessments of individual students as appropriate.
8. Chair committee meetings.
9. Maintain records of meetings and records for individual students.
10. Facilitate placement of students into program.
11. Monitor the progress of students placed on the monitoring list.
12. Facilitate the review of referred students on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, and transferring students as soon as possible after a transfer.

Committee Members

Members of the Gifted Review Committee shall:

1. Support the review of each student referred to the committee.
2. Review all available data on each child referred to the committee.
3. With other committee members, determine eligibility, ineligibility, or monitored status for each child.
4. Maintain confidentiality regarding information on students and on committee proceedings.

Teachers

Teachers shall:

1. Become familiar with indicators of giftedness.
2. Contribute to the screening process by considering all students' potentials and by completing rating scales for students whom they recommend.
3. Refer individual students to the Gifted Review Committee as appropriate.
4. Provide evidence of student strengths for committee use.

SUMMARY OF STEPS IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Referral

Referral of individual students may occur through any one of three methods:

- Screening through group ability and achievement test results
- Nomination by staff, parent/guardians, or self-nomination
- Transfer records indicating eligibility for gifted services in a non-DoDEA school

The Gifted Review Committee considers referrals on a quarterly basis, at a minimum. Students with documentation of gifted services in a non-DoDEA school should be reviewed as soon as possible.

Students found eligible at another DoDEA school shall automatically be eligible for services when transferring to a different DoDEA school. The Gifted Review Committee should review the profiles of transferring students as soon as possible to recommend program services at the new school.

A letter is sent to the parent or guardian of each referred student, asking permission for further review and assessment of their child. The committee proceeds with the review of students with parent/guardian permission. No further student assessment is completed without permission.

Assessment

The use of multiple measures results in a student profile of strengths. The chairperson of the committee develops a profile folder for each student. The folder contains all available data including rating scales, transcripts, test information, student products, and other evidence. Sufficient data should be collected to facilitate committee review.

Eligibility

The Gifted Review Committee reviews profiles on individual students and determines eligibility status. A student may be found ineligible, eligible, or placed on a monitor status. Students who are monitored are automatically referred back to the committee for review the following semester.

CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the gifted program is reviewed annually by the Gifted Review Committee. The review is generally completed at the end of the school year to document eligibility for the upcoming school year. Information about student performance and outcomes in the program are considered in the decision to continue eligibility for the next school year. Students who do not experience success through gifted program services may be recommended for monitoring. This change in status is reviewed by semester. A student should be recommended for ineligibility after a period of monitoring equivalent to two semesters.

APPEALS

Parents or guardians of students found ineligible for gifted program services may appeal the decision of the committee. A parent or guardian who wishes to file an appeal concerning the process for identifying a student or services provided under the auspices of the gifted program may do so under the process outlined in the administrative procedures.