



Quest Handbook



**Pearl Public School District
Pearl, MS**

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QUEST Program

GIFTED DEFINITION

The Mississippi State Department of Education defines intellectually gifted children as children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process.

The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, amended in 1993, mandates that each public school district within the state provides gifted education programs in grades 2-6.

PHILOSOPHY

The Pearl Public School District is committed to an educational program that provides all students with the opportunities to develop to their fullest potential. Inherent in that commitment is the recognition of the unique abilities, talents, interests, and needs of intellectually gifted students who require special educational consideration. (PROGRAM STANDARD III.3)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pearl Public School District's gifted program is to nurture, challenge, and develop the potential of intellectually gifted students. (PROGRAM STANDARD III.3)

GIFTED PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Pearl Public School District gifted program are:

- To identify, encourage, and respond to the diverse needs of students identified as intellectually gifted by facilitating and/or providing differentiated curriculum and instruction of significant depth and complexity.
- To provide intellectually gifted students with challenges and methods appropriate to their ability as they assume responsibility for their own learning and to ultimately become productive citizens and lifelong learners.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

QUEST is Pearl Public School District's program for intellectually gifted students in grades 2 - 8. QUEST is designed to meet the individual needs of intellectually gifted students and is different from the regular education program. In accordance with Mississippi Department of Education regulations, QUEST students in grades 2-5 are pulled from the regular education classroom for a minimum of five hours per week. Eligible gifted students in grades 6 - 8 select QUEST as an elective course and are served one academic period per day.

(PROGRAM STANDARDS II.2 and III.4)

OBJECTIVES

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

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

Each QUEST teacher will administer an appropriate interest inventory and learning styles inventory to students each year. The results will be shared with regular educators and counselors who serve the student. The QUEST teacher will use the information gathered to individualize instruction and make the learning experience qualitatively different. Instruction will be differentiated for QUEST students throughout the school year. The gifted contact person shall participate in district planning and decision making processes to ensure that gifted student needs are addressed. (PROGRAM STANDARDS I.1, I.2, and II.3)

QUEST teachers will collaborate regularly with administrators and regular education teachers to identify and make curricular modifications that address specific needs of their students. (PROGRAM STANDARD II.2)

Teachers will utilize flexible grouping procedures based on interests and abilities of students. Grouping arrangements are used to meet student needs in all educational settings within the school. (PROGRAM STANDARD III.4)

The school district shall provide adequate resources to support and sustain the goals and objectives of the QUEST program. Resources will be shared among educators in all settings to address student needs. Library and instructional materials will be purchased in accord with the school and district plan. (PROGRAM STANDARDS II.4, III. 2)

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Students in the QUEST program work under specific Instructional Management Plan (IMP) objectives and time frames. An Instructional Management Plan (IMP) is used to track the students' progress in their curricula throughout their participation in the gifted program. The Instructional Management Plan includes a scope and sequence of process skills in compliance with Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) gifted program outcomes and is regularly modified to meet individual student needs. Teachers will assess student growth toward the process skills in the Instructional Management Plan.

Teachers will challenge students to apply the process skills to solve real life situations and problems. (PROGRAM STANDARD I.4)

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Units of study based on the students' interests are planned to support the major outcome categories in Mississippi's Gifted Education program. The major outcome categories are:

- Thinking Skills
- Creativity
- Self-Directed Learning
- Group Dynamics
- Communication
- Research
- Leadership
- Visual and Performing Arts (PROGRAM STANDARD I.6)
- Career Exploration and Life Skills (PROGRAM STANDARD I.5)
- Socio-Emotional /Affective Needs (PROGRAM STANDARD IV.4)

ELEMENTARY CLASSWORK/HOMEWORK POLICY

Gifted students in grades 2 -5 should not be required to make up work missed while in QUEST if they can demonstrate proficiency in the desired skill and/or mastery of the desired concept.

Classroom teachers are expected to write all homework assignments on the board each day so the QUEST student can copy his/her assigned work. When students miss regular classroom assignments due to participation in QUEST, only material needed for weekly test preparation will have to be completed. Make up for other classroom assignments will **NOT** be required. The letter "Q" can be recorded in the grade book for graded assignments, and student averages will be computed with fewer grades. The QUEST student may elect to complete classwork assignments in areas of academic weakness. If the work is done, a grade may be recorded. All major tests missed must be made up.

Students should never be penalized for their participation in the QUEST program. Example: QUEST students should not be kept in during recess to complete classwork missed because of attending QUEST.

COUNSELING GIFTED STUDENTS

Gifted education teachers will provide activities that address affective, socio-emotional and career guidance needs of gifted students, and provide individual counseling as needed or referring them and parents to a trained counselor. Group activities to address concerns in a safe environment are an important part of the curriculum. Needs of at-risk gifted students shall be addressed, with efforts targeted at reversing underachievement patterns. Collaboration between the regular education teacher and the gifted class teacher can address the special needs of students who may be underachieving in the regular classroom.

School counselors will provide services to gifted students, inclusive of students that are at-risk, low income underachieving, twice exceptional, and from diverse populations . Counseling shall include career guidance consistent with student strengths and interests.

Regular education teachers will receive training by the gifted education teachers in identification of underachieving gifted students.

(PROGRAMS STANDARDS V.1, V.2, V.3, V.4, V, 5)

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

In grades 2-5 a progress checklist is sent home at midyear and year's end. This form should be returned with the parent's signature and kept on file until the end of the year. Grades will be issued on the regular report card in lieu of this form for grades 6 - 8.

Since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under law, the students should remain in QUEST as long as they are successful in the program. Failure to complete gifted education class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.

Grades and/or success in the regular education program should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program. Withholding permission for a student to attend the gifted classes should not be used as a disciplinary measure.

PARENT WITHDRAWAL OF CHILD FROM QUEST

Parents have the option of taking their child out of the QUEST program at any time. The Student Withdrawal Form must be signed at the time of withdrawal. The QUEST teacher is responsible for securing the parent's signature. The Local Survey Committees will review requests for re-entry into the QUEST program. Re-quests may not be granted if conditions and/or recommendations are unfavorable.

At the beginning of the school year, the QUEST teacher may contact the parent of each child who has dropped out of the gifted program to see if they desire re-entry.

(PROGRAM STANDARD VII.3)

STUDENT PROBATION

In the event a student in grades 2 - 5 has difficulty keeping up with the regular classroom work, a conference will be held with the parent, classroom teacher, gifted education teacher, and the principal to discuss the problem and to determine an appropriate course of action. A student in the QUEST program may be placed on probation from the program only if a formal meeting is held. Once a decision is reached, it must be recorded by the QUEST teacher on the probation form.

The following decisions can be reached:

- No action warranted at this time.
- Student will not attend QUEST during a specific subject for a specific number of weeks, after which his/her grades will be reviewed and follow-up action taken.
- Student will be on probation from QUEST for a specific number of weeks, after which his/her grades will be reviewed and follow - up action taken.
- Other (specify) (PROGRAM STAND VII.3)

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 documented with parents in attendance. The parent's signature on the form will provide documentation of parental permission to reinstate the student in the program. (PROGRAM STANDARD VII.3)

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT

A committee meets to reassess each student's participation in the gifted program at least once a year to determine if services will be continued for the following year. The committee includes the student's teacher in the gifted program and a designated administrative representative such as the school's principal or assistant principal. Documentation of the meeting will be maintained and will include the name of the student(s) discussed, a list of the committee members present, and the date of the meeting.

If a student is not recommended for continuation in the program due to lack of progress and/or unsatisfactory participation, the parents will be notified. At that time the parents will be given an opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed from the program. If the parents do not agree with the decision, they will be provided an opportunity for a hearing.

(PROGRAM STANDARD VIII.3)

HEARING PROCESS

Parents who are not in agreement with the school-based committee's decision to remove the student from the gifted program will present their concerns, orally or in writing, to the principal of the school. The principal and the 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 meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the Director of Special Services.

The Director of Special Services will schedule a meeting with the Local Survey Committee within five (5) school days or a timeframe agreed upon by the parents. Parents will be extended an invitation to attend the meeting. The committee will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

(PROGRAM STANDARD VII.3)

MAINTAINING STUDENT RECORDS

Each QUEST teacher will maintain a folder on each eligible child who is on his/her class roll. This folder will contain:

- Access to records sheet
- Gifted Pupil Personal Data Sheet (GPPDS) with eligibility ruling

- Consent for Placement or Refusal of Services (signed by parent)
- Assessment Team report
- Tracking Sheet
- Probation Forms (if used)

All QUEST records kept at school must be stored in a locked storage cabinet. A list of the teachers and administrators who can view the records without signing the Access to Records Sheet must be posted on the outside of the locked cabinet. This list must be updated annually or when personnel changes occur. Parents have the right to view their child's records at any time.

Each QUEST teacher should verify that a copy of the GPPDS is in each child's cumulative folder once a year. He/she is also responsible for informing the Special Services Office and the school's MSIS data entry person when a student transfers out of the district.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are required to hold a license in gifted education from the Mississippi Department of Education and continue to update their skills. Teachers will be encouraged to attend non-district, state and national professional development sessions at least once per year to keep abreast of developments in the field of gifted education.

Materials pertaining to gifted education are available to all school/district personnel. These are updated annually.

Examiners are properly trained in assessment procedures on an ongoing basis.

(PROGRAM STANDARDS VI.1, VI.2)

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Each QUEST teacher will conduct a formal evaluation of his/her program at the end of the school year. This will be done using a parent and student questionnaires. The Instructional Management Plan will be reviewed and updated based on the results of the evaluations. (PROGRAM STANDARDS I.2, II.3)

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

I = Skill is introduced

D = Skill will be developed

A = Skill will be advanced

M = Mastered

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
THINKING SKILLS							
Analogical Thinking	I	D	D	D	D	A	M
Attribute Listing	I	D	D	D	D	A	M
Deductive Reasoning	I	D	D	D	A	A	M
Inductive Reasoning			I	D	D	A	A
Figural Reasoning	I	D	D	D	A	A	M
Prediction		I	D	D	A	A	A
Questioning Techniques					I	D	D
Higher Order Thinking Skills		I	D	D	D	A	A
Intuitive Reasoning		I	D	D	A	A	A
CREATIVITY							
Creative Writing		I	D	D	A	A	A
Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, Elaboration	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Morphological Analysis/Synthesis					I	D	D
Spontaneous Thinking	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Synectics					I	D	D
Visualization Skills			I	D	D	A	A
Divergent Thinking		I	D	D	D	A	M
Preparation, Incubation, Illumination, Verification					I	D	D
RESEARCH SKILLS							
Basic Research Skills	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Creative Problem Solving				I	D	A	A
Critical Thinking Skills				I	D	D	D
Evaluation Techniques			I	D	D	D	D
Interdisciplinary Connections					I	D	D
Scientific Process			I	D	D	A	A
Writing Process		I	D	A	A	M	M
COMMUNICATION SKILLS							
Debating Skills					I	D	D
Fact and Opinion	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Listening Skills	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Propaganda Techniques				I	D	A	A
Speaking Skills	I	D	D	D	A	A	M
GROUP DYNAMICS/LEADERSHIP							
Working Cooperatively as a Group Member	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Ethical Awareness/Global Implications					I	D	D
Interpersonal Relationship Skills			I	D	D	D	A
Leadership Skills			I	D	D	A	A
Risk Taking		I	D	D	D	A	A
SELF-DIRECTED / AUTONOMOUS LEARNING							
Goal Setting/Evaluation Techniques	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
Self-Evaluation	I	D	D	A	A	A	A
Decision Making				I	D	D	A
Independent Investigation	I	D	D	A	A	A	M
AFFECTIVE SKILLS							
Learning Styles	I	D	D	D	A	A	M
Understanding of Self		I	D	D	D	A	A
Personal Growth	I	D	D	D	D	A	A
Coping Skills				I	D	D	A

Student Identification Process

STUDENT REFERRAL

Students may be referred by a teacher, administrator, counselor, parent, peer, self, or any other person having reason to believe that the student may be intellectually gifted. Students must go through the referral process to be considered for testing. Only the Local Survey Committee or parents can stop the identification process once a referral form has been initiated, signed and dated,

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

- a group measure of intelligence administered within the past twelve months at the 90th percentile;
- published characteristics of giftedness measure
- published measure of creativity
- published measure of leadership
- achievement test scores at the 90th percentile
- individual measure of intelligence administered within the past twelve months at the 90th percentile

Students may not be assessed for the intellectually gifted program more than two times.

Pearl Public School District will conduct intellectually gifted screening for all first grade students during the second semester to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. Parental permission does not need to be obtained when a complete grade is blanket screened. Referral information will be gathered on the referral form only on students who score at or above the established cut-off score.

(PROGRAM STANDARD VII.1)

LOCAL SURVEY COMMITTEE (LSC) REVIEW

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

- move forward to Phase I Assessment
- collect additional data
- identification process should stop

If the criteria have been met, the parents will be contacted. At this time district personnel shall obtain written parental consent for testing through the Gifted Pupil Personal Data Sheet (GPPDS). Parents will be informed of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at this time. FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - PHASE 1

A student must 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.

Measures	Minimum Criteria
Norm-Referenced Group Intelligence Test	90th percentile
Norm-Referenced Cognitive Abilities Test	90th percentile
Norm-Referenced Achievement Test	90th percentile
Norm-Referenced General Checklist	superior
Norm-Referenced Creativity Checklist	superior
Norm-Referenced Leadership Checklist	superior

In order to ensure the validity of assessments, there must be a minimum of one calendar year between each assessment.

If the minimum criteria are not met:

- A letter of the decision will be sent to parents.
- Parents may schedule a conference should they wish to review the test results.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - PHASE 2

If the Phase 1 requirements are met, the district will administer an individual, norm-referenced intelligence test. A licensed psychometrist or psychologist will administer the individual intelligence test. The psychometrist/psychologist will use the data collected from Phase 1 to select the most appropriate intelligence test that most closely matches the strengths of the individual child.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the Assessment Report is complete, the Local Survey Committee will meet to review all data and determine if the eligibility criteria has been met. The LSC will rule that the student is or is not eligible for the gifted program. Parents and the child's school will be notified in writing of the LSC determination.

All data collected as part of the identification process is protected by FERPA. All data collected shall be placed in an individual eligibility file and maintained in a locked storage facility with access restricted to personnel with a documented need to know.

PLACEMENT

A student can be placed in QUEST only if the following paperwork is on file:

1. Eligibility ruling on the Gifted Pupil Personal Data Sheet
2. Written parental consent for placement

IN-STATE ELIGIBILITY

Students with a Mississippi eligibility ruling as Intellectually Gifted shall be accepted and placed appropriately once parental consent is obtained. No additional testing is necessary. Placement in the gifted program should be addressed upon initial enrollment in the Pearl Public School District.

OUT-OF-STATE ELIGIBILITY

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 the 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 eligibility process within the district.

(PROGRAM STANDARDS III.1, and VII.1, VII.2, VII.3, VII.4)

QUESTIONS ABOUT GIFTED CHILDREN

How can you tell if a child is gifted?

An exceptionally bright child may have several, but usually not all, of the following characteristics. Some children learn to hide these traits to please teachers or parents, or to fit in with other children. Some characteristics can be masked by mild learning disabilities. Proper assessment is important because it can reveal the intellectual abilities that can be missed by informal observation.

- Extraordinary memory
- Excellent sense of humor
- Poor attention, boredom and daydreaming but long attention span when involved in some things
- Wide range of interests
- Extended general knowledge
- Perfectionism
- Strong opinions
- Leadership ability
- Questioning rules, customs and traditions
- Abstract reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Vivid imagination
- Sensitivity and compassion - easily disturbed by news reports

Why don't all gifted students make good grades?

Bright students are susceptible to underachievement. Tests may show they have mastered a subject area or have high abilities, but they do not bring home good grades or the quality of their work is poor. Sometimes they "coast" for too many years and lose their study habits. Sometimes they try to fit in with their peers and "dumb themselves down." Bright, underachieving students could have a learning disability or an attention problem. Occasionally bright students struggle with social or emotional concerns that are getting in the way of their school performance. To help you better understand gifted students, here are some surprising myths and truths about exceptionally bright children.

Myths About Gifted Students

- Gifted kids can accomplish anything they put their minds to, they just have to apply themselves.
- Gifted kids have fewer problems than others; they do not need or deserve extra time and attention.
- Gifted kids are self-directed, they know where they are heading. Gifted underachievers just need to try harder and get organized.

- The primary value of the gifted child is in his or her brain power.
- A gifted child's family always prizes his or her abilities.
- Gifted kids need to serve as examples to others and they should always assume extra responsibility.
- All gifted kids are high achievers; they don't have to work for grades.
- Gifted kids don't need help with study skills, they can manage on their own.

Truths About Gifted Students

- Gifted kids are often perfectionists and idealistic and may equate achievement and grades with self-esteem and self-worth. This can lead to fear of failure and can interfere with their achievement in and out of school.
- The social and emotional development of a gifted child may not be at the same level as their intellectual development.
- Gifted kids may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, producing constant guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low.
- Some gifted students are "mappers" (sequential learners), while others are "leapers" (spatial learners). Leapers often can't say how they got a "right answer." Mappers may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer.
- Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age classmates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins. Their boredom can result in low achievement and grades.
- In school, gifted kids may need real problems to work on in order to achieve at high levels. Gifted students often refuse to work for grades alone.
- Gifted kids often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with study and test taking skills. They can justify all the answers in a multiple choice question, or skip reading test instructions because they are impatient.
- Gifted kids who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence, they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

Adapted from *College Planning for Gifted Students*, 2nd edition, by Sandra Berger.

RESOURCES

There are many resources available for parents and teachers who want to learn more about gifted education, or who are looking for ways to support and encourage gifted children. A partial listing of organizations, publications and Internet sites about gifted education is listed below. Most of the books listed are available at various local libraries and bookstores. Internet sites include sources for ordering additional materials, as well as home pages of organizations that address the needs of gifted children.

Organizations

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

www.nagc.org

Mississippi Association for Gifted Children (MAGC)

P.O. Box 3545

Jackson, MS 39207

www.msms.k12.ms.us/MAGC

Publications

The Gifted Child Today (published by Prufrock Press)

Internet Sites

Duke Talent Identification Program

www.tip.duke.edu

University of Southern Mississippi / Karnes Center for Gifted Studies

www.dept.usm.edu/~gifted

Hoagies Gifted Education

www.hoagiesgifted.org

Special Schools for Gifted High School Students

Mississippi School for Math and Science

www.msms.k12.ms.us

Mississippi School of the Arts

www.msa.k12.ms.us

Summer Programs for Gifted Students

Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi

Books

Adventures and Challenges: Real Life Stories by Girls and Young Women by Karnes and Bean

Gifted Children, Myths and Realities by Ellen Winner

Gifted Kids Have Feelings Too and Other Not-So-Fiction Stories for and About Teenagers by Sylvia B. Rimm

Growing Up Gifted by Barbara Clark

Guiding Gifted Readers from Preschool to High School: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, Librarians and Counselors by Judith Wynn Halstead

My Child is Gifted! Now What! by Rick Olenchak

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide by Judy Galbraith and James Delisle

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook (Ages 11-18) by James Delisle and Judy Galbraith

Helping Gifted Kids Soar by Strip and Hirsch

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids by Sally Walker