

TAG Program Goals:

At all grade levels, TAG program goals are to:

- develop advanced research skills;
- develop advanced communication skills;
- develop creative thinking and creative problem solving skills;
- develop higher order and critical thinking skills;
- provide students with opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and independent learning; and,
- provide students with opportunities to generate new ideas and products.

Overview:

Elementary students receive gifted services one day per week in a “pull-out” resource class. The students attend the gifted class at his/her home school:

- Elementary class size is limited to a maximum of 21 students.
- The curricula provides challenging interdisciplinary units based upon *Gifted*, *Common Core*, and *Georgia Performance Standards*.
- While students participate in gifted resource classes, assignments in general education classes are modified or eliminated depending on the students’ academic strengths.
- Continuation criteria for TAG services include satisfactory performance in the general education and TAG classrooms.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can my child be tested during the summer/prior to the start of the school year?

- No. Facilitators from the *Talented and Gifted* department will begin the school year by completing the *Automatic Screening* process. (See *Screening, Referral, and Testing Procedures*.) Teachers are not contracted during the summer to administer tests for gifted services.

Can parents refer their children for TAG testing?

- No. The Fulton County School System has specific protocol for screening all students twice per school year to determine eligibility for gifted services. (See *Screening, Referral, and Testing Procedures*.) Highly qualified teaching professionals review test scores, screen students for superior abilities in 10 areas on the *Characteristics Instrument for Screening Students (CISS)* form, and review classroom placement levels in Language Arts and Mathematics to help determine referrals for testing for the gifted program.

My child was in a gifted program at another school. Will he/she automatically be placed into the Fulton County gifted program?

- If a student was in a gifted program in another Georgia public school, there is automatic reciprocity and he/she will be placed in the TAG program AS SOON AS documentation of gifted services/test scores is received from the transferring school. It is the parents' responsibility to see that this information is forwarded to Summit Hill. Hard copies of all test history and evidence of gifted services will be accepted as well as faxed copies. The Summit Hill fax number is: 770-667-2834. Attention: TAG Department
- If a student was in a gifted program outside the state of Georgia, or in a private school setting, it is the parents' responsibility to obtain and present all gifted program information and test history from the transferring school. Gifted programs vary from state to state and facilitators from the TAG department will examine all test score information to determine which tests meet Georgia guidelines and can be accepted or if the student needs further evaluations to meet multiple criteria requirements. Most helpful to obtain and forward are scores from: mental ability ("IQ") tests, creativity assessments, motivation assessments, and nationally-normed achievement tests.

My child is a straight-A student and is placed in Advanced/Accelerated subject area levels. Why isn't he/she automatically considered eligible for gifted services or testing for the program?

- Students must qualify to be tested for gifted services and found eligible for the gifted program in accordance with state required multiple criteria. Grade point average (GPA) is not one of these criteria. Need for gifted program services is determined by intellect and creativity as well as achievement and motivation.

Is the TAG program ever considered "full"?

- No. Every student who qualifies for gifted program services will be served within a timeframe as determined at the county level.

Students at the elementary school level are served in a one-day-a-week pull-out model. What are the chances my child will fall behind in the general education program?

- General education classes are expected to proceed as they normally do regardless of students attending additional education classes throughout the school day. Students who have been deemed 'talented and gifted' should be able to miss classes for a period of one day without it adversely affecting his/her classroom performance. TAG students are expected to complete homework assigned on their TAG day; this provides TAG students with an opportunity to review material that was missed. Academic instruction continues at a normal pace and may be inclusive of introduction of new material or tests.
- TAG classes are shortened or cancelled during system-wide testing such as the CRCT and ITBS as well as testing for the TAG program.

Why does it appear that some students are tested more frequently than others? I thought all TAG tests are valid for a period of two years?

- Mental ability tests and the *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)* are valid for two years. However, achievement test data can change year to year depending on whether a student is at a grade level receiving system-wide achievement testing. The *Gifted Ratings Scale – Motivation Section* may be administered once every calendar year if it is to the student's advantage.
- In some cases, a child may qualify for further testing in specific areas. Gifted education facilitators have the expertise and qualifications to determine if further testing criteria is met and can be offered.

Screening, Referral, and Testing Procedures at the Elementary School Level

Automatic Screening = At the beginning of the school year, TAG program facilitators review to determine if students meet at least two of the following:

- Standardized Tests (i.e. *ITBS, Stanford 10*) - Students in Grades 4 and 5 must have a minimum at the **85th and 90th percentile** in the areas of: *Total Reading, Total Math, and/or Complete Composite*, any combination therein. Students new to Fulton County who have previously taken a standardized nationally-normed test (not more than 2 years prior) may also be considered using these criteria. The same criteria are applied to third graders once *ITBS* results are received in the fall.
- Acceleration Assessments (Grades 1-3 and second semester Grade K) – Students must score at the 80th+ percentile on acceleration assessments in the areas of language arts and/or mathematics.
- Placement in Advanced or Accelerated levels (1st – 5th graders; second semester Grade K) in Reading/Language Arts and/or Mathematics.
- *Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)*, Grades 4 and 5 – Students must score at the top 20% (Reading or Math) of all students taking the CRCT in the Fulton County School System. **For Automatic Referral for 2012, the top 20% = 868 in Reading and 880 in Mathematics.**

Classroom Screening “CISS” = Local schools select a two-week period, typically in January, to screen all students in their schools:

- Highly qualified teaching professionals have been expertly trained on implementing the *Characteristics Instrument for Screening Students (CISS)* to identify students with (teacher observed/student demonstrated) superior abilities in five or more of the following ten areas: motivation, interests, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, memory, inquiry, insight, reasoning, creativity, and humor. All students in the school are screened using the CISS.
- Supporting data: Students with at least five observed *CISS* behaviors must also have at least one piece of supporting data to meet test referral criteria. See the above list (Automatic Screening/Referral) for reference.

Once referral criteria has been met:

- Gifted program facilitators check to find out if the referred student has active “valid” test scores.
- If no current test scores are “valid”, then the student will continue with the test referral.
- Parents receive the Parent Notification for Testing Consent Form. This gives the school permission to test their child.
- Students are tested between three and six test periods lasting no more than one hour per period. Duration depends on which tests are needed to gather information in all four Multiple Criteria areas.
- Parents will receive test results along with eligibility determination through the U.S. mail.
- Parents of eligible students will be invited to an eligibility informational meeting with the gifted program teachers.
- Eligible students will begin TAG services at a time specified by the county.

Talented and Gifted Testing

- Information shall be gathered in each of the four Multiple Criteria areas: **Mental Ability, Creativity, Achievement, and Motivation**. At least one of the criteria met must be a score on a nationally normed test. Any data used to establish eligibility in one category should not be used to establish eligibility in another category. Any piece of information used to establish eligibility shall be current within two years. The TAG department can only administer the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (mental ability) and the *TTCT* (creativity) once every two years.
- Data gathered and analyzed by a source outside the school system shall be used only in the Mental Ability area. It must be supported by two of the three remaining categories. One of the three remaining categories must be a nationally normed test. Mental Ability testing by a private source must hold a Georgia license number.

Procedure 1 – Students must meet three of the four criteria areas:

- **Mental Ability** – 96th percentile or higher composite or component score on a nationally normed mental ability test.
- **Achievement** – 90th percentile or higher in the areas of *Total Reading, Total Math, and/or Total Battery/Complete Composite*.
- **Creativity** – 90th percentile or higher on a standardized test of creative thinking (i.e. *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking*)
- **Motivation** – 90th percentile or higher on the *Gifted Ratings Scale, Motivation* section.

Procedure 2 – Students must meet these two of the four criteria areas:

- **Mental Ability** – 96th percentile (Grades 3 – 5) composite score on a standardized mental ability test. 99th percentile (Grades K-2) composite score on a standardized mental ability test, coupled with:

- **Achievement** – 90th percentile or higher in the areas of *Total Reading*, *Total Math*, and/or *Total Battery/Complete Composite* on a nationally normed achievement test.