

# **Gilmer County Schools Gifted Education Manual**



Revised August 2021

# **Gilmer County Schools Mission and Vision Gifted Education Program and Student Goals**

**Gilmer County Schools Mission**  
*Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day*

**Gilmer County Schools Vision**  
*Our vision is to develop lifelong learners who enrich their community through the creation of learning environments that challenge and empower every student to reach his full potential to succeed in the workforce, military, or postsecondary opportunity.*

## **Gifted Program Goals**

Gilmer County Schools strives to:

- Meet the learning needs of gifted students through use of a curriculum that provides opportunities for research and the development of critical and creative thinking skills
- Identify and nurture strengths and potential in our students through the use of a continuum of services
- Enhance the skills of teachers who work with gifted children in order to provide for their needs more fully

## **Gifted Student Goals**

Students who participate in the Gilmer County Schools Gifted Program will experience opportunity for growth in:

- Creative Problem Solving
- Logical Problem Solving
- Research Skills
- Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Self-Directed Learning
- Collaboration with Others

# **Gilmer County Schools Gifted Education Services Administrative Procedures**

## **Definition:**

A gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. A gifted student may demonstrate expertise and experience in the specific content area. (Refer to O.C.G.A 160-4-2-.38) Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

## **Eligibility Process:**

1. Reported or Automatic Referral - Nomination that initiates referral process
2. Review of Nomination – Decision-making team considers data collected and decides if it is appropriate to proceed with formal evaluation
3. Formal Evaluation – Testing is conducted by educator credentialed for assessments
4. Identification of Students Eligible for Gifted Services – Eligibility team reviews assessment results and makes recommendations based on state criteria.

## **Referral:**

Reported Referral- A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents/guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.

Automatic Referral- The automatic referral process is an opportunity for students to be identified as potential candidates for further testing based on Gilmer County Schools universal screening data as well as standardized testing conducted the previous school year.

## **Review of Nomination:**

The decision-making team will review all current data to determine if it is appropriate to proceed with a formal evaluation. The committee may also invite other participants who can provide insight into a student's performance level as needed.

For students referred for formal evaluation, written consent shall be obtained from parents/guardians before the evaluation process begins.

## **Formal Evaluation:**

The formal evaluation process will be conducted by a credentialed educator. The educator(s) will administer the appropriate mental ability and achievement tests. Professional judgment should be used regarding additional testing of students. Classroom teachers shall complete appropriate rating scales. Only one rating scale may be used for placement. A vision and hearing screening will be completed for each student prior to evaluation.

## **Identification of Students Eligible for Gifted Services:**

The eligibility team will review assessment results and decide if the student meets Georgia Department of Education criteria for placement in the Gifted Program. Eligibility sheets will be maintained on file for review. Parents shall be informed in writing of the student's eligibility status and shall be afforded an opportunity to discuss student eligibility criteria and placement. **Parents will not be allowed to review tests or testing protocols used to qualify students for the program. This is a breach of testing security.**

Unless additional data indicates, a student will not be tested each year. Identification of gifted students shall be nondiscriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, or economic background.

### **Initial Eligibility:**

To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the qualifying score on at least one nationally normed referenced test and must qualify in two other categories by either assessments or observational data collected on his/her performance or production of a superior product. Information shall be collected in each of the four data categories for all students who are referred for gifted program evaluation. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category. Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two-calendar years. Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

Multiple Criteria - Students qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting criteria in any three of the four areas listed below.

OR

Psychometric Approach - Placement occurs when a student scores at the 99th percentile (grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (grades 3-12) on the composite or full-scale score of a standardized mental ability test and meets one of the achievement criteria listed below. Data must be collected in the creative and motivation categories but with no minimum scores.

**Mental Ability:** For Option A, students in grades K-12 shall score at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile on a composite or full-scale score, and students in grades 3-12 shall score at or above the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score on a norm-referenced test of mental ability. For option B students in grades K -12 shall score at or above the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile on a composite or full-scale score or appropriate score, as defined in the approved list of assessments on a norm referenced test of mental ability. Mental ability tests shall be the most current edition or additions approved by GaDOE of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability, which have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration. Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

**Achievement:** Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a norm-referenced achievement test or have produced a superior student-generated product or performance, where the superior performance is one that can be translated into a numerical score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale as evaluated by a panel of qualified evaluators.

Norm referenced achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests or additions approved by GaDOE, that measures reading skills, including comprehension, and shall yield a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based on a combination of scores in mathematics concepts and applications. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration.

Performances and products shall be assessed by a panel of qualified evaluators and must have been produced within the two calendar years prior to evaluation. Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

**Creativity:** Students shall score at or above the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a norm-referenced test of creative thinking, receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100-point scale on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances.

Norm-referenced tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests, or editions approved by GaDOE, that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and are normed on a nationally representative sample with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background within a 10-year period prior to administration. Rating scales used to qualify creativity shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation.

As evidence of creativity, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products or performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators. Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

**Motivation:** Students shall receive a score at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100 point scale on a structured observation or evaluation of student-generated products and/or performances, or for grades 6-12 have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, or a numeric grade point average (NGA) of 90 percent on a 100 point scale where 100 = A and a 89 = B. Grades used to determine the GPA or NGA must be a two-year average of regular school program core subject grades in mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, science, and full year world languages. Rating scales used to qualify student motivation shall differentiate levels such that judgments may equate to the 90th percentile. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.

As evidence of motivation, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products or performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of qualified evaluators. GPAs of students are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the subjects of mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, and full year world language, if such language study is included in the student's records. Source: Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services.

Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or LEA shall be considered as part of the referral and evaluation process. External evaluation data shall not be substituted for or used as the sole source of data the school generates during the initial eligibility process. External evaluations shall have been reviewed for bias with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

**Reciprocity.** Any student who meets the initial eligibility criteria in this rule for gifted education services in one LEA shall be considered eligible to receive gifted education services in any LEA within the state. As described in the section on Reciprocity in the GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services, a student transferring from one LEA to another within the state shall meet the criteria for continuation of gifted services established by the LBOE of the receiving school system. There is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of military personnel as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2140 et. seq.

### GIFTED EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY CHART

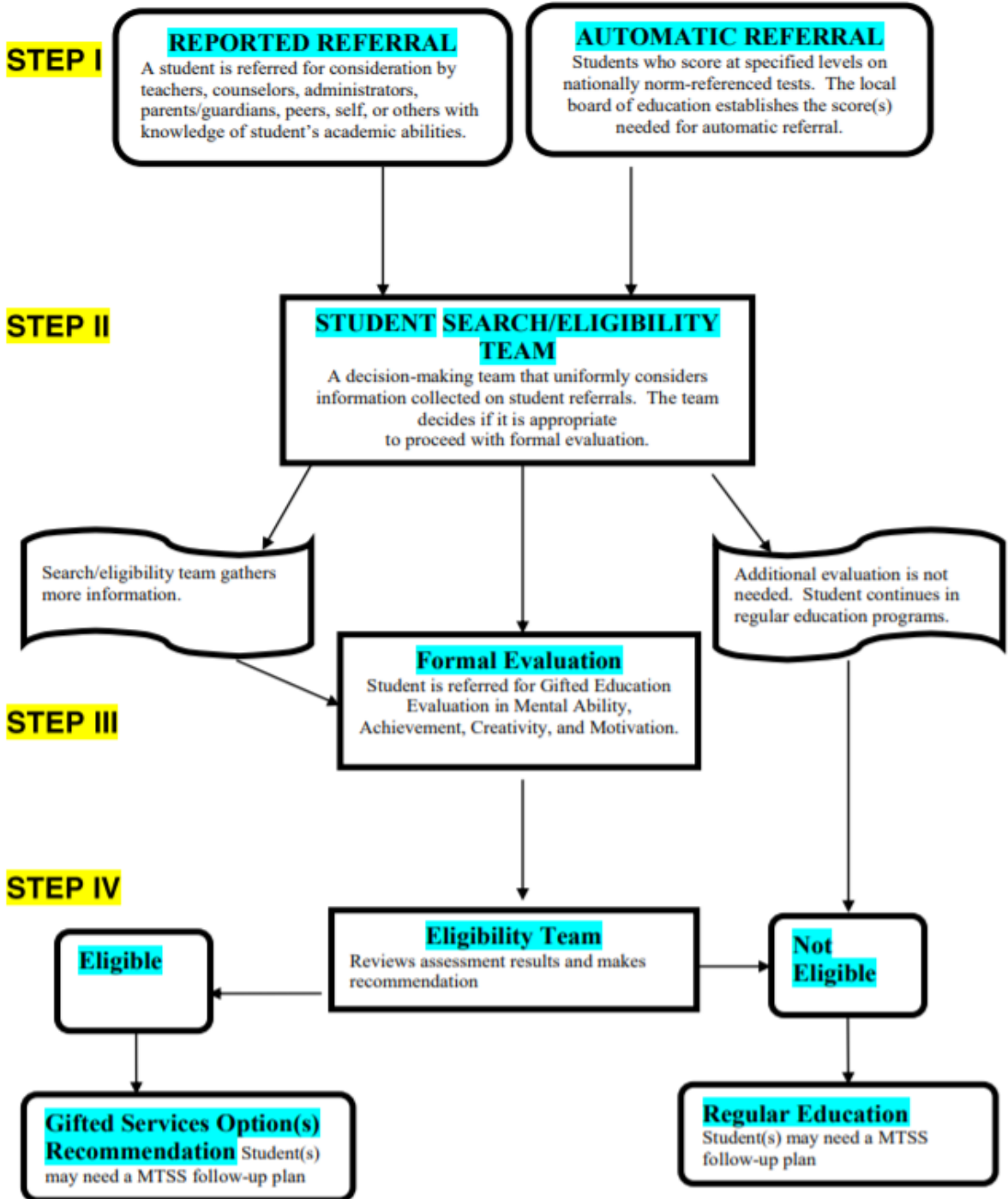
- In option A and B, information shall be gathered in each of the four categories.
- At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a GaDOE approved nationally normed- referenced test.
- Any data used to establish eligibility in one category shall not be used to establish eligibility in another category.
- If a rating scale is used to evaluate creativity, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate motivation. If a rating scale is used to evaluate motivation, a rating scale shall not be used to evaluate creativity.
- Any piece of information used to establish eligibility shall be current within two years.
- Local school systems must establish policies in regards to the use of data gathered and analyzed by private entities.

Category	Option A	Option B
	<b>Student must have a qualifying score in the mental ability AND achievement categories.</b>	<b>Student must qualify in <u>three of the four</u> categories.</b>
<b>Mental Ability</b>	<b>Grades K-2</b> 99 <sup>th</sup> percentile composite score on a nationally normed mental ability test <b>Grades 3-12</b> ≥96 <sup>th</sup> percentile composite score on a nationally age normed mental ability test	<b>Grades K- 12</b> ≥ 96th percentile composite OR appropriate component score on a nationally age normed mental ability tests
<b>Achievement (Gilmer Guidelines)</b>	<b>Grade K-1</b> 94% twice (consecutive) total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test <b>Grades 2-12</b> ≥ 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test	<b>Grades K-12</b> ≥ 90th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a nationally normed achievement test <b>Grades K-12</b> Superior product/ performance with a score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators
<b>Creativity</b>	Evaluation data required	<b>Grades K-12</b> ≥ 90th percentile on composite

		<p>score on a nationally normed creativity test</p> <p><b>Grades K-12</b> Rating scales used to qualify student creativity must equate to the 90th percentile</p> <p><b>Grades K-12</b> Superior product/performance with a score <math>\geq</math> 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators</p>
<b>Motivation</b>	Evaluation data required	<p><b>Grades 6-12</b> Two-year average of a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale in regular core subject of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, science, and full year world languages and must be in 90<sup>th</sup>ile of grade level</p> <p><b>Grades K-12</b> Rating scales used to qualify student motivation must equate to the 90th percentile</p> <p><b>Grades K-12</b> Superior product/performance with a score <math>\geq</math> 90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators</p>

[Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services](#)

**SECTION IV REFERRAL and ELIGIBILITY PROCESS CHART**





## **Delivery Models:**

Students identified as gifted and whose participation has received parental consent shall receive at least five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted education services, using one of the following GaDOE approved models. Local Education Agencies (LEA) shall make available to the public and the GaDOE a description of the differentiated curricula and delivery models used for instruction of gifted students. In forming classes, please keep in mind the Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities, and economic background.

Elementary Gifted is offered to students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Once a student enters middle school (grades 6-8), they may be enrolled in honors classes without being identified as gifted. These placements are based upon teacher referral, educational performance, and work ethic or by completing an honors class waiver application. This opportunity is also available throughout high school where students can further challenge themselves through honors and/or the Advanced Placement Programs. Gifted and honors services are designed to meet the specific needs of gifted students by emphasizing the following competencies:

Critical and creative thinking  
Higher order reasoning  
Extensive and advanced research skills  
Advanced and accelerated academics

A differentiated curriculum is defined as courses of study in which the content, teaching strategies, and expectations of student mastery have been adjusted to be appropriate for gifted students. In the delivery models described below, the instruction must be based on the Georgia curriculum standards.

## **Direct Services**

### **Resource Class (K-12)**

1. All students must have been identified as gifted by SBOE criteria.
2. The curriculum must have an academic content foundation based on the Georgia curriculum standards, but it should focus on interdisciplinary enrichment activities and not any one content area.
3. The content and pacing should be differentiated to the degree that the activities are clearly not appropriate for more typical students at that grade level.
4. Gifted students may receive no more than 10 gifted FTE segments per week of resource class service.

### **Advanced Content (K-12)**

1. Students are homogeneously grouped on the basis of achievement and interests.
2. The district may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted, but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation in a particular content area.
3. Gilmer County Schools has established criteria and guidelines that identify gifted and regular education students who will be successful in advanced content classes.
4. Gilmer County Schools maintains a description of the course curriculum which very clearly shows how the advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills, and assessments differ from courses more typical for students at that grade level.
5. Advanced Content Classes through the Advanced Placement (AP) College Courses are offered to students in grades 9-12. Students are homogeneously grouped in these classes on the basis of achievement and interest in a specific academic content area. Gilmer may elect to include students who are not identified as gifted but who have demonstrated exceptional ability and motivation in a

particular content area. Gilmer County Schools must maintain a description of the course curriculum which is based on the College Board or framework. These frameworks very clearly show how the AP course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills and assessments differ from the courses more typical for students at that grade level.

### **Cluster Grouping (K-12)**

1. Identified gifted students are placed as a group into an otherwise heterogeneous classroom, rather than being dispersed among all of the rooms/courses at that grade level.
2. The regular classroom teacher must have a current GaPSC approved gifted endorsement.
3. The teacher must document the curriculum modifications made for the gifted student(s) by completing individual or group contracts which include the following requirements:
  - a. A description of the course curriculum which is based on Georgia standards that very clearly show how the advanced course content, teaching strategies, pacing, process skills and assessments differ from courses more typical for student(s) at that grade level.
  - b. Separate lesson plans which show reason(s) why the gifted student(s) needs an advanced curriculum in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages;
  - c. Dates and amount of time (in segments) the student(s) will be engaged in the higher-level activities; and how the students will be evaluated (formative and summative).

Gifted/Honors students are reviewed each year for the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses in regard to the program. Data is reviewed and discussed among teacher teams to determine any potential concerns as well as to identify students for further testing and/or placement in advanced content classes. Data considered includes, but is not limited to, Milestones/EOG/EOCT, GPA, MAP results, teacher comments, and motivational ratings.

### **Acceleration Procedures:**

A request for consideration of whole-grade acceleration:

1. The acceleration referral form shall be completed and given to the school principal.
2. The school level team will review all current data to determine if further action is required.
3. If the decision is made to proceed, the system level gifted coordinator shall obtain written permission for further evaluation.
4. The school level team will review all data to determine appropriate placement for the student (complete acceleration team placement report)
  - a. If grade level acceleration is recommended, a nine-week trial period will be in order and a review will be conducted of student progress and social adjustment. The school level gifted lead teacher will monitor placement and performance.

Gilmer County Schools will take the whole child into consideration when determinations are made. Social, emotional, intellectual, developmental and interpersonal skills are all factors to be considered during the process of academic acceleration.

### **Gifted Education Curriculum:**

Curricula for gifted education learners must incorporate the SBOE approved curriculum. Local BOE curricula for gifted students shall focus on developing cognitive learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping, using principles of differentiation.

Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Tomlinson, 2011). The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum (Hall, 2011).

A differentiated curriculum for gifted learners includes the following expectations:

Content: Complex and challenging subject matter that:

- Requires intellectual struggle
- Utilizes primary documents
- Integrates research skills and methods
- Incorporates relevant and real-life experiences
- Integrates interdisciplinary connections

Process: Instructional strategies are designed to:

- Emphasize higher-order thinking, problem-solving and communications skills
- Foster self-initiated and self-directed learning
- Promote creative application of ideas
- Model and encourage academic discussion

Product: Gifted student products should demonstrate a developmentally appropriate capacity for:

- Self-directed learning
- Meaningful collaboration
- Effective problem solving of challenging and complex issues
- Effective communication
- Social and emotional understanding of self relative to community, culture, and physical environment

Environmental: Physical setting and work conditions to:

- Change the actual place where students work
- Allow flexible time
- Provide opportunities for independent study and in-depth research
- Provide opportunities for mentorship

Assessment: Gifted learners need various methods and opportunities to document mastery of curriculum such as:

- Pre/post tests
- Self-assessment through rubrics
- Creation of goal-based checklists
- Conferencing, commentary, and qualitative feedback (Cobb, 2012)

### **Continuation Procedures:**

Continued placement in the program for the Gifted, shall include satisfactory performance in both regular education and gifted classes. A probationary period is provided. The following continuation provisions must be met:

1. In grades K-8, satisfactory performance in regular education shall be based on the student's maintaining at least an 80 or its equivalent in all subjects according to the regular standards of the system for each 9-week grading period.

In grades 9-12, satisfactory performance in regular education shall be based on the student remaining on track for graduation.

*A key part to success in gifted services is regular attendance. The curriculum and instruction are differentiated to meet the specific needs of the gifted student. Regular attendance is expected; this is a legally identified service and to enable success, students are required to attend at the designated class times and dates.*

2. Satisfactory performance in the gifted class will be based on the recommendation of the gifted classroom teacher, with such recommendation to be based on required products, active participation, and any grades assigned in the gifted class.

Any student in Grades K-8 who fails to meet the continuation criteria will be placed on probation for a minimum of one 9-weeks grading period without interruption of services. At the end of the probationary period, if the student has not resumed satisfactory performance, he/she will be withdrawn from the gifted-served class and/or all gifted services.

Any students in grades 9-12 who fail to meet the continuation criteria will be placed on probation for a minimum of one semester without interruption of services. At the end of the probationary period, if the student has not resumed satisfactory performance, he/she will be withdrawn from the gifted-served class and/or all gifted services.

Parents will be notified in writing of a student's probationary status and will be afforded the opportunity to discuss requirements.

3. Re-entry to the program may be considered when the student meets continuation policy criteria for one nine-week probationary period, or at the end of the current semester, following withdrawal and upon the recommendation of the school-level gifted committee, the gifted teacher, and the principal.
4. If a student remains withdrawn from the program for more than one calendar year, he/she must qualify for re-entry based on eligibility criteria.

Parent request for break in service: A parent can request, in writing, a break in gifted service or withdrawal from the gifted program. This request could be for a variety of reasons including but not limited to illness, personal issues, etc. This break in service will be granted as long as the student is meeting continuation criteria at the time of the request. Additionally, the break will last for no more than one full year from the date of the beginning of the break. At the end of the year, should the student not re-enter service, gifted services will be terminated. Gilmer County Schools does recognize that there are extenuating circumstances, such as long-term illnesses, that may require a more individualized plan for gifted service; in cases such as that, appeals should be directed to the Gifted Coordinator.