



# IDENTIFICATION OF ACADEMICALLY AND ARTISTICALLY GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Marion County School District | 719 N. Main Street | Marion, SC 29571 | 843.423.1811

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## GIFTED EDUCATION OVERVIEW

**MISSION** The mission of gifted education is to maximize the potential of gifted and talented students by providing programs and services that match the unique characteristics and needs of these students.

**RATIONALE** Gifted and talented students are those who are identified as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore require an educational program beyond that normally provided by the general school program in order to achieve their potential.

**BELIEFS** Gifted and talented students have a right to an appropriate education, one grounded in the recognition of their individual differences and unique learning needs. Gifted and talented students must be taught using a curriculum that is responsive to their individual strengths and learning styles. Curriculum for gifted and talented learners must be founded on the South Carolina academic standards and must allow for both acceleration and enrichment. The instructional environment for gifted and talented learners must encourage and nurture inquiry, flexibility, and critical and creative thinking.

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## IDENTIFICATION

The GT identification process aims to find students who display characteristics of the gifted and talented, to assess the aptitudes, attributes, and behaviors of each student, and to evaluate each student for the purposes of placement.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF GT STUDENTS

- learns easily and rapidly
- recognizes implied relationships
- takes pleasure in intellectual activities
- interprets nonverbal cues
- draws inferences
- responds and relates well to parents, teachers, and other adults
- perceives similarities and differences
- prefers complex tasks
- retains what is heard or read
- exhibits independence, individualism, and self-sufficiency
- demonstrates a curious and investigative nature
- reads above grade level
- possesses a large vocabulary
- shows keen powers of observation
- focuses intently on interests
- grasps underlying principles
- makes valid generalizations
- displays a questioning attitude
- produces original products or ideas

### QUALIFYING FOR GT SERVICES

Students may qualify automatically with an extremely high aptitude or IQ score at the 96th percentile or higher for their age group. If students do not qualify solely on aptitude, this process will be used for screening:

- **Dimension A – Reasoning Abilities** Students must demonstrate high achievement (94th national percentile or above) in one or more of these areas: verbal, nonverbal, quantitative, and/or a composite of the three.
- **Dimension B – Academic Achievement** Students must demonstrate high achievement (94th national percentile and above or advanced status) in reading and/or math as measured by district or state assessments.
- **Dimension C – Intellectual/Academic Performance** Students must demonstrate a high degree of interest in and commitment to academic and/or intellectual characteristics. Students in Grades 2–5 may be eligible to take the Performance Task Assessment in March if they have already met the criteria in Dimension A or B. Beginning with Grade 5, students must have a 3.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale to meet the criteria in Dimension C.

Students must meet the criteria in two of these three dimensions to participate in the Gifted and Talented Program.

# REFERRAL

The GT referral process takes place throughout the academic year.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM REFERRAL

Administrators, parents, teachers, and students may refer students for screening for the gifted program. Forms are available in schools and on the district website.

Initial testing will take place during the Fall. Since the screening process is multi-faceted and some students may require additional testing in March, final results may not be available until May. Parents will be notified of screening results by the close of the school year.

All second grade students are screened using CogAT and IA which takes place in November. Only those second grade students who have met the eligibility requirements will be notified by the district.

## STUDENTS TRANSFERRING INTO MCSD

*From South Carolina Districts:* Students determined to be eligible for gifted in any district in South Carolina remain eligible in Marion County Schools. Submit the student's proof of eligibility by email to the Coordinator of GT ([rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us](mailto:rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us)).

*From Out-Of-State:* Students who are transferring from other states may submit recent nationally normed aptitude and achievement test scores and an official record of grades to the Coordinator of GT ([rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us](mailto:rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us)) to determine eligibility for the GT program.

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# PROGRAM MODELS

Marion County School District serves GT students through the Exceptional Children, Exceptional Learning (ExCEL) program. The following models are used to serve students identified as academically and/or artistically gifted.

## PULL-OUT ACADEMIC MODEL (GRADES 3-5)

In this model, gifted and talented students are pulled from the regular classroom one day each week for five hours to receive differentiated instruction from a GT endorsed teacher. The curriculum (STEMU) focuses on enrichment that is directly related to grade level academic standards.

## SPECIAL CLASS ACADEMIC MODEL (GRADES 9-12)

In this model, gifted and talented students are grouped into special classes organized around one academic subject. The special classes deliver services to identified students through a rigorous and often accelerated curriculum. Students are assigned to a schedule which allows them to work with other gifted and talented students. Instruction is provided by highly-qualified teachers who differentiate instruction based on student needs and interests.

## SPECIAL CLASS ARTISTIC MODEL (GRADES 11-12)

In this model, students are identified for artistic services through the use of state regulated auditions. Identified students are enrolled in a GT Honors Art Program that is instructed by a highly-qualified teacher that holds an Educator License in Visual Arts.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement classes provide our high school students the opportunity to take challenging college-level courses and exams with the possibility of receiving college credit. The district's AP program offers several opportunities to earn AP credit. While course offerings vary by year, classes include AP Studio Art, AP Biology, AP Calculus, AP English 3 (Language), AP English 4 (Literature), and AP Environmental Science.

## JUNIOR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The South Carolina Junior Scholars Program reflects the growing statewide effort to improve education in South Carolina and responds to the needs of students possessing unique abilities. The purpose of the program is to identify students and provide opportunities that will facilitate their intellectual growth, broaden their individual interests, and promote their scholastic achievement.



**For specific information regarding the ExCEL program, contact:**

Rachel Caulder | [rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us](mailto:rcaulder@marion.k12.sc.us)  
Learning Specialist / GT Coordinator

Marion County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

- **Section 504** – Dr. Cynthia Blaine, Director of Federal Programs
- **Title IX** – Mrs. Stacy Wilbanks, Director of Human Resources