

South Conway County School District



Gifted Program Policies and Procedures

Purpose

The South Conway County School District's Gifted & Talented Program is dedicated to serving the needs of all students. The following definition guides our district in planning and preparing services and opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented:

Gifted and talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services.

Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and /or motivation, and creative ability.

Awareness of Program

Families and Community Members are encouraged to stay up to date with the Gifted Program through the following:

MIS GT Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/morriltonintermediategt/>

SCCSD GT Website

<http://sccsdgt.weebly.com/>

SCCSD District App

SCCSD District Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthConwayCountySchoolDistrict>

SCCSD District Website

<http://sccsd.org/sccsd/>

Program Goals

GOAL #1: To expand the use of technology in the gifted and talented program by expanding the district GT website so that anyone can view the program and make it easily accessible and developing an online resource for classroom teachers to access resources so they can better serve not only the gifted identified, but be able to enrich their regular classroom to include more differentiation.

GOAL #2: To increase identification of diverse groups including low socio-economic students and culturally diverse students by implementing the Hope Scale to try to reach out to a wider group. By giving this to all students in 3rd grade each year, it will make it easier to identify these students that may have been missed otherwise.

GOAL #3: To strengthen curriculum in 4-6 Pull-out Program by attending workshops annually.

GOAL #4: SCCSD's GT program will address the unique educational needs of gifted and talented students, including focus on creative thinking, critical thinking, research/independent learning, communication, affective development, beginning with students in Kindergarten until they graduate. SCCSD will make sure all students graduating have had the rigor needed to continue to college.

Information for Parents/Legal Guardians

It is the intent of this statement to inform parents and guardians of their rights and responsibilities and those of the SCCSD concerning the referral, evaluation, and placement of gifted children. The following procedures and policies have been adopted:

I. Data

A. Confidentiality

Consent will be required before the school district:

1. Discloses any information concerning the child to anyone other than the authorized personnel employed by the school district.
2. Uses any information concerning the child for any purpose other than educational planning and programming
3. Conducts formal evaluation of the child

B. Destruction of Data

The school district has the responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of data concerning the child and for the destruction of the data five years following termination of services. Parents may inspect the data at any time prior to its destruction.

C. Access to Data

Access to data is available to authorized school personnel only. Upon written request, parents and guardians may inspect data collected concerning the child. Parents disagreeing with data may file a letter stating the reason for the disagreement.

When the child reaches the age of 18, he may, upon written request, inspect the data and place in the file a letter of disagreement with the data. The child may determine who outside the district has access to the data.

II. Prior Notification and Consent

No comprehensive evaluation or placement of the child in the gifted and talented program will be made without the written notification and consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

The placement decision of a student into the gifted program is made by the identification committee who carefully screens each nominated student without bias or prejudice. The identification committee is chaired by the district gifted coordinator and is comprised of the building principal, the building guidance counselor, the licensed GT classroom teacher, and other classroom teachers.

The committee reviews all relevant data (test scores, nomination forms, and products) that is listed on a summary data sheet. The committee then assesses the results to make a determination of placing the student in the gifted program or identifying the students as needing further assessment to be considered at a later date. Students may be considered for placement at any time during the school year. A final list is developed after assessment with particular consideration given to identifying student of all genders, races, and socio-economic levels who need the differentiated gifted program in order to maximize their potentials.

Non-Discriminatory Identification Process

The process for identifying gifted students in our school district reflects a major component of our gifted and talented program for increasing the nomination and identification of subgroups. The coordinator and elementary GT specialist partner with the counselors in analyzing the test scores of the various subgroups comparing them within the subgroups. If the exceptional students have not been nominated by their teachers, the coordinator or GT teacher confers with the classroom teacher prior to nomination by the teacher of the GT personnel.

The identification instruments have been chosen after careful analysis to ensure non-bias in relation to ethnic/cultural background, socio-economic level, gender, physical limitations/handicap, limited English proficiency/language, or other potentially limiting factors. The testing environment is modified as needed (i.e. lighting, seating, use of visual aids, etc.). The district's ESL teacher is also utilized as needed, especially in parental contact situations.

Analyzing test scores within the subgroups and collecting data from non-biased sources which offer statistical support with a diverse norming sample provide a broader composite of all students to aid in the identification of all students who need access to the gifted program. Every effort is made to ensure that the district's gifted program is accessible to all students who need the services.

Student Placement Decision Criteria

The SCCSD Gifted and Talented Identification Committee is committed to making informed decisions concerning the placement of students referred for services in order to best meet the needs of the individual child. The identification process requires obtaining data from a variety of procedures and sources and includes a minimum of two objective and two subjective tests of ability, achievement, and creativity. Informed decisions concerning the placement of students are based on the evaluation of multiple criteria. No cut-off scores are used to include or exclude a student, and data is analyzed without discrimination in regard to race, cultural or economic backgrounds, religion, national origin, gender, handicapping condition, or English language proficiency.

Annual Review Procedures

The progress of students in the gifted program is evaluated with input from teachers, parents, and the students themselves to determine if the program continues to meet the needs of the student. The coordinator and the gifted facilitator will assess the progress of the child in the gifted program throughout the years and follow the prescribed GT policies as needs arise. If the child's needs are being met by the gifted program, the child will remain in the program. Withdrawal or exit procedures will be followed if the child's needs are not being met in the program.

Appeal Procedures

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) should complete a written appeal and submit the appeal to the district's gifted program coordinator. This appeal must include the date and signature(s) of the party filing the appeal.
2. Upon receipt of the appeal, the coordinator and GT facilitator will schedule a conference to discuss the needs of the student and will review the student's file. The parent will be advised of the findings of the conference and will make a decision of whether they will continue with the process or not.
3. If the parent decides to pursue the appeal, the coordinator will schedule a meeting with the identification committee, which includes a building administrator, counselor, GT coordinator, GT facilitator and classroom teachers. (7.03) The committee will review all case study data (7.05) or any new data and will decide to either place the student in the program or to uphold the initial decision.
4. The coordinator will notify parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the final decision

Gifted Program Exit Procedures

If it becomes apparent that a student's needs are not being met in the program, then the following procedures will be utilized:

1. If a parent or legal guardian requests that a student be removed from the program, the parent or guardian must sign a form stating that the student will be removed from the program.
2. If the GT teacher/facilitator requests that a student be removed from the program, a formal written request and documentation must be provided and given to the program director/coordinator for a thorough review prior to a required conference with parent or legal guardian. If necessary, a second conference will be held with the identification committee which consists of an administrator, counselor, GT coordinator, and GT facilitator and classroom teachers (7.03), to analyze the student's files and documentation (7.05). A final decision will be made that will be in the best interest of the child. The GT teacher and the program coordinator will meet with the parents or legal guardians to notify them of the decision of the coordinator/committee. If the decision is for removal from the program, the parents or legal guardians will be informed of the reason(s) for the removal and of their right to appeal the decision and the appeal process.
3. If a student requests removal from the program, a conference will be held and will include the student, parent(s), the GT teacher, and the program coordinator. Reasons for withdrawal will be discussed and a decision will be made as to what adjustments or special modifications might be necessary so that the student will have an opportunity to rescind his/her request. The student and parent(s) will make the final decision and will be given the necessary paperwork to complete the process.

All documentation on withdrawal will be placed in the student's folder, and all folders will be kept on file for a minimum period of five years or for as long as needed for educational decisions.

Program Evaluation Plan

The South Conway County School District's Gifted and Talented Program is regularly assessed and evaluated to determine if it is meeting the needs of the identified students. Evaluation tools are designed to determine the goals of the program are being reached and are used to determine what revisions may need to be made. Various evaluation forms are periodically revised to meet the changing program goals and to ensure that the evaluations are based on and reflective of the program goals. Each area of the program is evaluated with the findings summarized on the yearly report to the Arkansas Department of Education's Office of Gifted and Talented. The area of focus include the identification process, professional staff development, program options, program goals and objectives, curriculum for the gifted, community involvement, program expenditures, program design, student achievement, and the evaluation process/plan.

The data is obtained through various means, including questionnaires, focus groups, analysis of student achievement (scores, reports, etc.), formal and informal assessments, etc. Various groups (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members) are surveyed annually. The advisory committee reviews the data collected from the evaluation tools, which include questionnaires focus groups, and both formal and informal methods of input and makes recommendations for revisions based on the findings. The tools are designed to reflect analysis of whether the program objectives are being met/exceeded so that modifications can be made as needed. The findings are used to determine the overall effectiveness of the total program in the various areas. The findings are reported annually through a presentation to the school board. Minutes to these meetings can be found online and a copy can be found in the Morrilton Community Channel archives which can be accessed by anyone interested.

Recommended Websites for Parents of Gifted Children

- Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education
 - <http://www.agatearkansas.org/>
- National Association for Gifted Children
 - <https://www.nagc.org/>
- Uniquely Gifted
 - <http://www.uniquelygifted.org/>
- Hoagies Gifted
 - <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parents>
- Council for Exceptional Children
 - <https://www.cec.sped.org/>