

Q & A for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Gifted Program:

What is Florida's Definition of "Gifted"?

A student is determined to be eligible for gifted services as defined by current State Board Rule, 6A-6.03019, FAC, *Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted*. This rule, adopted in Florida in 1977 states that a gifted student is "one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance." The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are: need for a special instructional program, evidence of characteristics of the gifted, and evaluation documenting intellectual development with an IQ of 130 or higher. In addition, districts may develop a plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted. The plans must be approved and must include evaluation procedures to document the minimum evaluation requirements. For the purpose of the rule, under-represented populations are defined as groups who are Limited English proficient, or who are from a low socio-economic family.

What are the procedures for screening potentially gifted students?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) gifted screening process includes the development of a talent pool of students who demonstrate unusual ability. Students should be screened using two or more of the following criteria:

- High academic achievement, as indicated by standardized test 89 percentile or higher or Levels 4 or 5 or course work grades of A or B
- Above average creative output in artistic, literary, scientific, or mathematics endeavors
- Very rapid learning rate or unusually insightful conclusions
- Multiple nominations from teachers and staff who observe unique talent
- Parental reports of advanced developmental behavior, such as early reading, verbal precocity and use of complex syntax, or evidence of mechanical aptitude
- Outstanding academic, creative, or leadership abilities, self-reported or peer-reported.

In addition, all LEP students that have achieved a grade of A or B in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or home language arts (i.e., Spanish language arts, Haitian-Creole language arts) and mathematics are screened for gifted.

What are the procedures for referring a student for gifted services?

After a screening process has been completed, a referral for gifted education can be made by a teacher, a parent/guardian, or any qualified individual who has knowledge of student's abilities. A student profile is developed for a student being referred to the School Support Team (SST).

- The student profile includes the following:
 - Gifted Characteristics Checklist - Students need to demonstrate a majority of gifted characteristics on the rating scale to continue in the process); and
 - Information that can be utilized to demonstrate the student's ability and need for gifted program services. This information may include, but is not limited to:
 - (a.) standardized test scores or classroom performance indicators such as report card grades, class work, and/or projects.
- An SST meeting is convened in order to review the information gathered in the student's profile. The SST makes the determination of whether or not to continue the evaluation process, based on the supporting documentation and a majority of gifted characteristics as measured by the *Gifted Characteristics Checklist*.

What is “Plan B” gifted eligibility in Florida?

Part B (also referred to as Plan B) of State Board Rule, 6A-6.03019 addresses the documented underrepresentation of minority students receiving gifted services. Part B of the gifted eligibility rule was first introduced in 1991 to include options for developing alternative plans to address underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups (African American and Hispanic students) in gifted programs. In 2002, the State Board of Education revised Part B to define underrepresented students as those “who are limited English proficient, or who are from a low socio-economic status family.” Ethnicity is no longer considered under Plan B and Districts have the option of whether or not to implement it. M-DCPS is one of 35 Districts in Florida currently implementing a Plan B for gifted eligibility.

Each district is authorized to develop its own plan tailored to its population and providing for specific criteria to increase eligibility for gifted services among these underrepresented students.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ *District Plan to Increase the Participation of Underrepresented Students in the Gifted Program* (Gifted Plan B Matrix) utilizes four indicators of giftedness to determine eligibility for students in underrepresented groups:

- The Gifted Characteristics Checklist is used to determine students’ verbal, learning, motivational, and social/leadership abilities.
- A variety of standardized academic achievement test data is used depending on the student’s grade level.
- To determine the intellectual development of a potentially gifted student, a school psychologist administers an individualized test of intelligence.

- The *Williams Creativity Scale* is used to determine creativity.

These four indicators are assigned points on a rubric. Students scoring nine (9) points in three of the four categories with a minimum IQ of 112 are eligible for gifted.

In general, how does a parent interested in having a student tested go about doing so?

A parent/guardian of a student in K-12 can request that their child be considered for gifted testing by making the request to their child's teacher, counselor, or administrator at the school.

How long does an evaluation for the gifted program take?

The evaluation process is conducted within 90 school days of attendance from the date of parental consent to the date of evaluation. The evaluation process may include direct assessment of intellectual functioning by a M-DCPS school psychologist or a review of an evaluation conducted by a private provider if one has been obtained by the parent.

Evaluations conducted by qualified private providers utilizing appropriate testing instruments within the previous two years are considered by the district and eligibility for the program is determined after review of all available data.

What is the process for a student who transfers from an out of state gifted program?

When a student transfers into Miami-Dade County Public Schools from another state with an Educational Plan indicating previous placement in a gifted program, the district honors that placement until an evaluation is conducted to determine if the student meets Florida's criteria for placement in the gifted program.

What does the gifted program provide?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Gifted Education Program provides qualitatively different programs designed to meet the needs of gifted students. Gifted students are defined as those who have superior intellectual development and are capable of high performance. Students who meet the State eligibility criteria are provided with a range of gifted service delivery options (K-12) to meet each student's special needs based on the student's Educational Plan. Instructional programs for gifted students emphasize acceleration and enrichment based on students' strengths. The Gifted Education Program emphasizes a quantitatively differentiated curriculum based on content, concepts, processes, and applications through products/projects in language arts, mathematics, science and/or social studies. Such a differentiated

curriculum provides for in-depth consideration of topics and concepts beyond the requirements of regular courses, and therefore, is designated as an academically accelerated program. Currently, over 39,000 students in Miami-Dade County participate in the gifted program and all traditional public schools provide services to gifted students.

What are the certification and endorsement requirements for teachers of the gifted?

All K-12 teachers providing service to students who are gifted must meet the highly qualified certification requirements for the grade/course content and have the gifted endorsement. State Board Rule 6A-4.01791 requires that gifted students in a gifted course be taught by a teacher with gifted endorsement. Gifted endorsement courses include:

- Nature and Needs of Gifted Students
- Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Gifted
- Education of Special Populations of Gifted Children
- Guidance and Counseling for the Gifted
- Theory and Development of Creativity for the Gifted

What delivery models are available for gifted education in M-DCPS?

As per School Board Policy #2460, a range of gifted service delivery options are available to meet each student's special needs based on the student's Educational Plan (EP) and are provided with administrative support to assure adequate funds for materials and professional development. The following delivery models are available for M-DCPS students in elementary, middle, and senior high school:

- Elementary Part-time Content (K-5/6) - students attend the gifted program for a block of time from 1 to 2.5 hours each day. They receive a total of 5 to 12 hours of gifted services per week and interdisciplinary instruction around selected basic subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and/or Language Arts/Reading). All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Elementary Full-time (K-5/6) - students are served in a self-contained classroom in which gifted strategies are utilized throughout the school day and across all subject areas. All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Middle School Gifted Programs (6-8) - offer gifted content area courses (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and/or Language Arts/English) and/or State-approved middle school gifted elective courses. All of the students in the

gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.

- Senior High Gifted Programs (9-12) - offer gifted content area courses (Honors and/or Advanced Placement) and/or State-approved high school gifted elective courses. All of the students in the gifted course are eligible for gifted services and the teacher is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.
- Senior High Gifted Consultation (9-12) - general education teachers and teachers of the gifted meet regularly to plan, implement and monitor instructional alternatives designed to ensure that the gifted students achieve successful accomplishment of gifted goals in the Advanced Placement, Honors, International Baccalaureate or other academically rigorous programs. Gifted students are not assigned to a gifted course, rather receive consultation services from a teacher who is endorsed to teach gifted or on an approved waiver to complete the gifted endorsement.