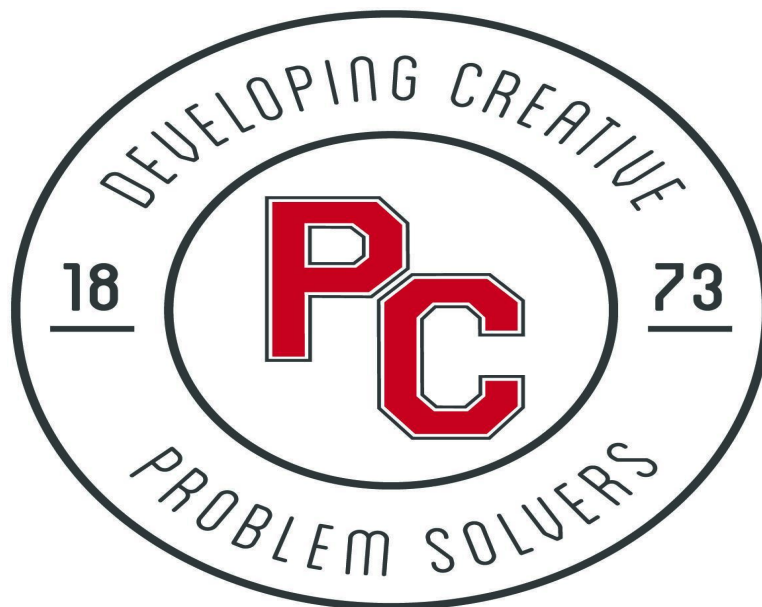


Pike County Schools
Resource Manual for Gifted Education
Services
"PROGRAM CHALLENGE"
2026-2027



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Program Challenge within the Pike County School System is to provide an educational environment that promotes the highest development of student abilities, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to themselves and society.

GOALS

- Provide enriched, accelerated, and in-depth experiences through a differentiated curriculum
 - Foster analytical and creative thinking skills through real-world applications
 - Promote advanced research skills and methods
-

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Pike County believes all students can learn and should be challenged at appropriate levels. Program Challenge is designed to provide intellectual challenges for gifted students through compacted curriculum, accelerated pacing, advanced research, and collaborative leadership opportunities. Curriculum modifications include real-world connections and an interdisciplinary approach.

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SECTION 1: STATE COMPLIANCE

In compliance with SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38, Pike County provides gifted services aligned with state guidelines. Full details can be found in the [GaDOE Gifted Resource Manual](#).

SECTION 2: BOARD POLICY

GIFTED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:

Descriptor Code: IDDD - [Gifted Student Programs](#)

The Pike County Board of Education provides gifted education services for K–12 students with exceptional potential, in accordance with Georgia Department of Education Rules 160-4-2-.08 and 160-4-2-.38, to enhance and extend the core curriculum. Students receiving gifted services will not be penalized for missing regular instruction and will not be required to forfeit recess, exploratory classes, or other activities to make up work.

SECTION 3: REFERRAL AND IDENTIFICATION

A. Referral for Services

A student may be referred for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, or others familiar with the student's abilities. The referral process begins with an Observation Form that includes evidence of gifted behaviors and work. No testing will occur until the form is complete, the Assessment Committee determines a reasonable expectation of eligibility, and parental permission is obtained. Gifted assessments are conducted only during designated testing windows each school year.

B. Referral and Reciprocity

Evaluation Options

Pike County evaluates gifted eligibility through:

- **Automatic Referrals:** Generated in grades 1, 3, 5, and 8 based on system-wide assessment scores on norm-referenced tests
- **Reported Referrals:** Any K–12 student may be referred by teachers, parents, counselors, peers, or others familiar with the student's abilities. The local eligibility team reviews all referrals to determine next steps.

Reciprocity

- In-State Transfers: Students identified as gifted in another Georgia district are eligible for services in Pike County.
- Out-of-State Transfers: Records will be reviewed for compliance with Georgia criteria. Reciprocity is not automatic unless the student is a dependent of active military personnel.

C. Identification of Students New to System

Referrals for New Students and Transfers

Parents, guardians, or teachers of new students may submit a Referral Form, available from the school counselor or Challenge teacher. Upon receipt, the Challenge teacher reviews available records and refers the student to the Eligibility Team if appropriate. If needed, the identification process is initiated.

In-State Transfers

Students previously served in a Georgia gifted program may be placed in Pike County's Challenge Program with official documentation. Placement requires proof of prior participation.

Out-of-State Transfers

Students with documentation of qualifying scores aligned to Georgia Rule 160-4-2-.38 may use those scores, even if over two years old. If scores do not meet Georgia criteria, the student must be referred to the Eligibility Team for further review.

Testing Guidelines

- The IREADY math or reading test will be administered according to the school/district assessment window.

D. Local School Eligibility Team Procedures

Membership: Team Membership: Challenge Teacher(s), Principal or Designee, Grade-Level Teacher(s)/Staff

Responsibilities:

- Meet throughout the year to review referrals, scores, and products

- Recommend testing or follow-up evaluations
- Determine eligibility and make placement decisions

Decisions:

- Test, follow up, not eligible, share strengths, or place
- Reconsider as new data emerges (scores valid for 2 years)

SECTION 4-TESTING

Testing Procedures

Challenge teachers are responsible for administering mental ability and achievement tests according to all instructions in the test manuals. **Testing irregularities must be reported to the Gifted Coordinator or Assessment Coordinator immediately.**

A. Test Security

- Store all test materials in a locked cabinet with restricted access.
- Maintain a sign-out log and year-labeled files for used/scored tests (retain for four years).
- Never reproduce test materials or share booklets, answer sheets, or copyrighted content.
- Parents may view online **sample items** under supervision—no notes allowed.
- Only authorized personnel may access or score student responses.
- Do not test or score a student if you are related or personally connected to the family.

B. Consent & Privacy

- Written parental consent is required before testing unless the test is part of a state- or school-wide assessment.
- Do not release identifiable results without parent consent, except as required by law.
- Scores may only be discussed with those having a professional need to know.

C. Testing Environment

- Provide a calm, distraction-free space. Avoid conflicts with classroom events or days like the first/last week of school.
- Postpone testing if the student is unwell or distressed. Never leave a student alone during testing.

D. Administration Guidelines

- Order and prepare materials in advance (e.g., sharpened pencils, clock, testing room).
- Seat students apart and separate known friend groups.
- Read directions exactly as written—no paraphrasing.
- Note any irregularities or disruptions during testing.
- Minor accommodations may be made for students with disabilities if they don't violate norming conditions.
- Stop testing if a student is disruptive; reschedule for 1:1 testing later.

E. Evaluation Process

1. **Referral Review** – The Eligibility Team reviews existing records and determines if additional testing is needed.
2. **Parent Notification** – Send consent form for further evaluation.
3. **Assessment Administration** (as needed):
 - Mental Ability (if current scores are unavailable)
 - Achievement
 - Creativity
 - Motivation
4. **Team Review** – The Eligibility Team reviews all scores and determines eligibility.
5. **Reevaluation** – If needed, appropriate reevaluation measures are administered.
6. **Documentation** – Complete required forms for eligible, ineligible, and incomplete cases.
7. **Parent Notification** – Send written eligibility/ineligibility decision.

F. Eligibility for Gifted Education Services

160-4-2-.38

ELIGIBILITY for K-12

Eligibility may be determined under either provision of state rule 160-4-2-.38.

- Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two years.
- Outside data must be considered but may not be substituted for school generated data to determine eligibility.
- Students may qualify for gifted services through one of two options:

Psychometric Measure (In State Rule, see Eligibility Option A)

Grade Level	Mental Ability Test Score	Achievement Test Score
K-2	99 th percentile (Composite Only)	90th percentile in Total Reading or Total Math or Composite
3-12	96 th percentile (Composite Only)	90th percentile in Total Reading or Total Math or Composite

Multiple Criteria (In State Rule, see Eligibility Option B)

- Information shall be gathered in each of the following areas.
- A student must meet criteria in any three of the following four areas.
- At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a nationally normed test.
- A product/performance may be used to meet eligibility in one area.
- Data used to establish eligibility in one area may not be used to establish eligibility in another area.

Mental Ability	Achievement	Creativity	Motivation
$\geq 96^{\text{th}}$ percentile, by age, on a composite/full scale score or appropriate component score of a <i>standardized mental ability test</i>	$\geq 90^{\text{th}}$ percentile by grade or age, on Total Battery score or Total Reading or Total Math of a <i>standardized achievement test</i> OR A superior rating (numerical score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100) on a student-generated product or performance evaluated by a panel of three or more professionals or experts in a field	$\geq 90^{\text{th}}$ percentile, by grade or age, on the Total Battery score of a <i>standardized creativity test</i>. OR Superior rating (equivalent to the 90thile or above) on a <i>standardized creativity characteristics rating scale</i>. OR A superior rating (numerical score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100) on a <i>student-generated product or performance evaluated by a panel of three or more professionals or experts in a field</i>.	A superior rating (equivalent to the 90thile or above) on a <i>standardized motivational characteristics rating scale</i> OR A superior rating (numerical score ≥ 90 on a scale of 1-100) on a <i>student-generated product or performance evaluated by a panel of three or more professionals or experts in a field</i>. OR GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in grades 6-12.

MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PLACEMENT INTO THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

G. Pike County Schools – Challenge Program Testing Schedule

Fall Testing - August-October:

1. Grades 1–12 referrals reviewed
2. Universal screening data used for screening:
Grades 1-8: Students scoring above the 90th percentile are tested
Grades 4-8: Georgia Milestones scores resulting in scale score 550 or higher in reading/math considered for further testing
3. Eligibility Committee convenes
4. Parent consent forms sent
5. Assessments conducted
6. Notify parents of eligibility decisions

Spring Testing: April -May Goal: Complete testing/eligibility by end of May; place eligible students at start of next year

- Spring referrals assessed for students not tested earlier in the school year Kindergarten referrals prepared for next school year (testing only with System Committee approval)
- Grades 1–12 referrals reviewed
- Universal screening data used for screening:
Grades 1-8: Students scoring above the 90th percentile are tested
Grades 4-8: Georgia Milestones scores resulting in scale score 550 or higher in reading/math considered for further testing
- Eligibility Committee convenes
- Parent consent forms sent
- Assessments conducted
- Notify parents of eligibility decisions

H. Data Collection

The Pike County Board of Education shall track and archive data on gifted referrals, eligibility, and service, disaggregated by grade, gender, and ethnicity. The LEA will evaluate its gifted program at least every three years per GaDOE guidelines.

Section 5: Reevaluation Criteria

A. Reevaluation Criteria

The Eligibility Team determines when reevaluation is appropriate, using existing data and student needs. Reevaluation provides students near qualification an additional opportunity to meet gifted eligibility, with test instruments matched to their strengths and background. If the student being re-evaluated has special needs, please contact the gifted coordinator.

- 1.
2. Mental Abilities:

A student will be reevaluated in a specific area of eligibility when the student has:

1. Qualifying scores in two of the four areas	<i>AND</i>	1. At least one of the two remaining areas falls within the criteria for reevaluation.
1. If reevaluation measures have already been administered in the area of mental abilities under the psychometric method, use the score obtained.	→	1. Do not re-administer for multiple criteria.
1. Under the multiple criteria method, if a component score on a nationally- normed mental ability test is within the standard error of measurement, <i>AND</i> there are two other qualifying areas (cannot be 2 rating scales),	→	1. administer another nationally-normed ability test

3. Achievement:

A student will be reevaluated in a specific area of eligibility when the student has:

1. Qualifying scores in two of the four areas	AND	1. At least one of the two remaining areas falls within the criteria for reevaluation.
1. If one of the total scores (total reading, total math or composite) on the ITBS is within the standard error of measurement, <i>AND</i> there are two other qualifying areas (cannot be 2 rating scales),	→	1. administer a nationally-normed standardized Achievement test

4. Creativity:

1. If the creativity assessment score is within the standard error of measurement, <i>AND</i> there are two other qualifying areas,	→	1. administer another creativity assessment approved by the Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services
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5. Motivation:

1. If the motivation assessment is within the standard error of measurement, <i>AND</i> there are two other qualifying areas,	→	1. administer another motivation assessment approved by the Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services
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Section 6: Continuation Participation

A. Continuation Policy: Grades K–5

Eligibility for Continued Participation

To remain in the Program Challenge gifted program, K–5 students must:

- Maintain a B average or higher in each gifted class
- Demonstrate consistent participation and engagement

Probation and Support

Students not meeting these expectations will be placed on probation for one grading period. During probation:

- The student will remain in the gifted program
- A Support Plan will be created, which may include:
 - Weekly teacher check-ins
 - Goal setting and progress monitoring
 - Parent communication
- At the end of the period, performance will be reviewed

If progress is not sufficient, the student may be withdrawn only from the gifted class(es) in which performance remains unsatisfactory. For example, a student excelling in math but struggling in ELA would continue in math.

B. Continuation Policy: Grades 6–12

Eligibility for Continued Participation

To remain active in the gifted program in grades 6–12, students must:

- Be enrolled in at least one gifted (Challenge or Advanced Content) class
- Earn a “B” average or higher in each gifted course
- Maintain positive engagement and effort in gifted coursework

Probation and Support

If a student's performance falls below expectations, they will be placed on probation for one grading period. During this time:

- The student will remain in their gifted class
- A written Support Plan will be developed, including:
 - Academic support strategies
 - Monitoring checkpoints
 - Teacher or counselor conferences

After the grading period, if no improvement is shown, the student may be withdrawn only from the specific gifted class(es) in which they continue to struggle. They may remain enrolled in other gifted courses where they are meeting expectations.

C. PROGRAM EXIT AND RE-ENTRY

1. Exit and Re-Entry from Gifted Services

Students may be withdrawn from the gifted program under the following conditions:

- Failure to meet continuation criteria following a probationary period
- Written request from a parent or guardian
- Recommendation by the school-level eligibility or assessment committee

Parents or guardians will receive written notification before any withdrawal from gifted services.

Once identified, a student remains classified as gifted in the state database but is marked as “not served”. Students may re-enter the gifted program without re-testing, especially if the gap in service is less than one year.

If more than one calendar year has passed since withdrawal, the Eligibility Team will review updated records to determine whether re-entry is appropriate or if additional evidence is needed.

2. Reciprocity

a. 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.

b. There is no mandated reciprocity between states unless the student is a dependent of active military personnel as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2140 et. seq.

Section 7: Student Records

A. Security of Gifted Materials

Access to student gifted records/files and all gifted testing materials shall be restricted to the Program Challenge staff and other certified personnel with a legitimate need for access to such information. All student gifted records/files and gifted testing materials shall be kept in a locked cabinet at all times.

B. Student Files

Gifted Education Specialists are responsible for maintaining accurate records and transferring them as needed within the district. Records may only be shared with other Gifted Specialists unless approved by the Curriculum Coordinator .

1. For All Students (Eligible and Non-Eligible):

- Student status will be entered annually into PowerSchool, the district’s Student Information System (SIS).
- The original Eligibility Report will be uploaded as an attachment in PowerSchool.

2. Files for Eligible Students Must Include:

- Referral Form
Parent Permission for Evaluation
Test Data Reports
Eligibility Report
Parent Consent for Placement
Annual Review Report
- GaDOE states that gifted selection and placement documentation has permanent retention under Georgia Archives schedule LG-06-009.

3. Files for Non-Eligible Students Must Include:

- Referral Form
Parent Permission for Evaluation
Test Data Reports

Eligibility Report (marked Not Eligible)
Notification of Ineligibility (with date)

C. End-of-Year Checklist – Program Challenge

1. Next Year's Roster: This can be done in a spreadsheet format
Create an alphabetical list by raising grade level of all Challenge students remaining at your school.
2. Transitioning Students (Grades 2, 5, 8): This can be done in a spreadsheet format.
 - List all students moving to a new school.
 - Attach this list to their folders.
 - Separate stacks for:
 - Withdrawn students (due to Continuation Policy)
 - Incomplete folders (include notes on missing info)
 - Tested-but-not-qualified students
 - Inactive students
3. Records Check:
Ensure all records in Powerschool are complete
4. Eligibility Team Minutes
File minutes for current and past years in a clearly labeled folder or binder.
5. Testing Documentation

File used tests and testing logs by year—label clearly for retention and shredding.
Store all testing materials and student files in a locked cabinet for summer.

Section 7: Gifted Service Delivery Models

Pike County Schools provides a variety of gifted education services aligned with Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) guidelines. Identified gifted students who have parental consent must receive a minimum of five segments per week (or the yearly equivalent) of gifted instruction. Pike County reserves the right to implement any approved delivery model outlined in the GaDOE Gifted Program Manual. Curriculum and instruction for gifted learners must be differentiated and aligned to Georgia standards.

A. Direct Services

Resource Class (K–12)

- Gifted-only classes focused on interdisciplinary enrichment
- Differentiated content and pacing
- Taught by certified teachers with a gifted endorsement

Advanced Content (K–12)

- Homogeneous grouping in academic subjects (e.g., ELA, math, science, social studies, world languages, fine arts, CTAE)
- May include high-achieving non-gifted students per local criteria
- Curriculum must exceed typical grade-level expectations
- Taught by gifted-endorsed content-area teachers

Advanced Content Classes: Grades 9-12-Advanced Placement (AP) course,

- Courses follow College Board, IB, or Cambridge frameworks
- Grouping based on interest and achievement
- Teachers must have appropriate content certification and complete gifted Professional Development course in Georgia Learns or hold a Gifted endorsement

B. Indirect Services

Cluster Grouping (K–12)

- Gifted students grouped (6–8 recommended) in a general education class

- Cluster services require individual or group contracts identifying differentiated curriculum, dates, segments, advanced activities, and evaluation methods differentiated curriculum and document enrichment plans
- Have completed content-area GAPSC-approved certification **AND** Have a GaPSC-approved gifted endorsement or be actively enrolled/participating in a gifted endorsement program.

Section 8 : Gifted Education Curriculum

A. Gifted Curriculum

Pike County's gifted curriculum is aligned with Georgia State Board of Education (SBOE) standards and is reviewed annually to reflect research-based best practices in gifted education. It is designed to promote cognitive, research, metacognitive, and critical thinking skills through differentiated instruction that addresses each gifted learner's readiness, interests, and learning profile. In line with Georgia DOE guidance, teachers are expected to document their gifted differentiation strategies within lesson and unit plans. Each school in the district follows a clearly defined procedure for implementing, monitoring, and supporting the gifted curriculum to ensure consistent, rigorous, and high-quality service delivery across all grade levels and subject areas.

Differentiated instruction for gifted learners involves adapting content, process, product, learning environment, and assessment methods to meet their advanced learning needs:

- Content: Emphasizes complex, real-world topics supported by primary sources, research opportunities, and interdisciplinary connections
- Process: Engages students in strategies that promote higher-order thinking, creativity, communication, and self-directed learning
- Product: Encourages students to demonstrate their understanding through problem-solving, collaboration, and meaningful expression
- Environment: Provides flexible learning spaces, independent study opportunities, and mentorship experiences
- Assessment: Utilizes pre- and post-tests, rubrics, checklists, and ongoing feedback to guide and document growth

This comprehensive approach empowers gifted students to build deep understanding, academic autonomy, and a commitment to excellence.

B. Instructional Options for Gifted and High-Ability Students

To meet the diverse needs of gifted learners, Pike County provides a range of instructional supports across Tiers 1–3. Teachers and administrators, with parent input as needed, work together to determine the most appropriate support for each student. These options ensure flexible, enriched, and individualized learning pathways for gifted and high-ability students.

Learning objectives are personalized and may include:

- Acceleration (Subject/Whole Grade): Student advances beyond their grade level in one or more subjects or skips a grade entirely.
- Assessments: Used to determine mastery; may include off-grade-level tools to reflect advanced learning.
- Cross-Age or Multi-Age Grouping: Students of varying ages learn together based on ability.
- Curriculum Compacting: Mastered content is replaced with advanced or enriched material.
- Gifted Resource/Enrichment Clusters: Groups work on interdisciplinary, advanced learning activities.
- Graduated Rubrics: Higher expectations for performance are clearly defined and used to push student excellence.
- Independent/Directed Study: Students pursue self-driven projects under teacher supervision, based on research and presentation.
- Internships/Mentorships: Students work with professionals to explore career interests and real-world applications.
- Interest Centers: Classroom areas tailored to extend learning through student interests and talents.
- Cluster Grouping: Gifted students are grouped in regular classes for differentiated instruction in one or more subjects.
- Flexible Subject Grouping: Students are regrouped across classes or grades based on achievement for specific subject instruction.

Section 9: Resources

The following are sample forms and resources available for use within the Gifted Program in Pike County Schools. These documents support the identification, placement, and ongoing services for gifted learners across the district.

Forms and Letters

Section 10: Public Review

This manual is available to the public on the Pike County Schools website through the [Teaching and Learning Department](#), under the section for Gifted Students.