M-DCPS Gifted Procedures:
Referral, Screening, Assessment, and Eligibility

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Gifted Education Program provides qualitatively different programs designed to meet the needs of gifted students. A Gifted student is defined by State Board Education rule 6A-6.03019 as one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.

Gifted Pre-Referral Activities
Prior to a student being referred for an evaluation, all available data and information on the student is compiled. In order to be referred for a gifted evaluation, a student should meet two or more of the following criteria:

- High academic achievement, as indicated by standardized test score in the 89th percentile or higher or an FCAT 2.0 or EOC Level of 4 or 5 or course grades of A or B
- Above average creative output in artistic, literary, scientific, or mathematics endeavors
Gifted Pre-Referral Activities

- 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.

Gifted Pre-Referral Activities

A profile is developed for a student being considered for a referral for an assessment. A teacher or parent may initiate this process. This profile is comprised of:

1. A Gifted Characteristics Checklist* completed by the teacher
   - Completion of checklist may be done by more than one teacher
   - Students need to demonstrate a majority of characteristics to continue in process

   *Checklist identifies various learning, motivational, and leadership qualities typically seen among gifted students

2. Information that can be used to demonstrate the student's ability and need for gifted program services. This information may include, but is not limited to:
   - Standardized test scores (A standardized achievement test is administered to students who do not have Stanford Achievement Test, FCAT, or EOC scores; additionally, the Aprenda can be used to measure the achievement of Spanish-speaking ESOL students)
   - Classroom performance indicators such as report card grades, class work, and/or projects.
School Support Team (SST) Meeting

- Once all the data is compiled, the parent is invited to a SST meeting to discuss a possible referral for a gifted evaluation.
- The SST meeting is held at the student’s school to review the data and determine whether a referral for a gifted evaluation is appropriate.
- If a referral for gifted evaluation is recommended, the parent signs consent for an evaluation.

Gifted Evaluation

- An evaluation for gifted will consist of an intelligence test administered by the school psychologist who will select the most appropriate cognitive assessment instrument for the student.
- An academic achievement test may also be administered for students needing scores as part of the Plan B Matrix.

Gifted Eligibility:

Plan A

- For students who are not identified as English Language Learners or who are not on free/reduced lunch, gifted eligibility is based on:
  - Documented need for a gifted program
  - Criteria met on Gifted Characteristics checklist completed by teacher(s)
  - An overall score of 130 or above on a test of intelligence, or a score of 130 or above on part scores (if appropriate).
  - A standard error of measurement may be considered with justification
Gifted Eligibility: Plan B

For students who are identified as English Language Learners (i.e. ESOL) or who are on free/reduced lunch, gifted eligibility is based on:

- Documented need for gifted program
- Criteria met on Gifted Characteristics Checklist completed by teacher
- A score of 9 or higher on the Gifted Eligibility Determination Matrix, including at least 1 point in the IQ category (minimum score of 112).

Gifted Eligibility Meeting

For those students who meet testing criteria, a meeting will be held at the school to review data, obtain parental/guardian consent for placement, and develop an Educational Plan (EP).

For those students that did not meet testing criteria, notification of this will be mailed out to the parent. At any time, a parent may request a meeting to discuss the results.

Additional Information

- If a parent obtains a private evaluation for their child, a SST meeting will be scheduled for their student.
- If the student is referred for an evaluation, permission will be obtained for a school psychologist to review the private evaluation. This review serves to:
  - Assure credentials of the examiner
  - Ensure that the evaluation meets M-DCPS guidelines
  - Previous evaluation by M-DCPS
  - One year between assessment of same instrument (includes all Wechsler scales)
  - 15 Point Discrepancy Committee
Additional Information

- This review serves to:
  - Assure credentials of the examiner
  - Ensure that the evaluation meets M-DCPS guidelines (appropriate, most recent revision of testing instruments)
  - One year between assessment of same instrument (includes all Wechsler scales)
  - 15 Point Discrepancy Committee
  - Results of previous evaluation by M-DCPS
    - Who evaluated? (Second opinion testing by M-DCPS?)
    - How do results differ?
    - Recommendations of committee

Confounding Behaviors

- Children who are gifted possess advanced aptitudes, yet can present in complex ways, making identification challenging
- They can develop negative coping skills due to lack of support and understanding

Confounding Behaviors

- Typical gifted behaviors may resemble behavioral disorders, while certain medical disorders may be minimized or go unnoticed.
  - A student may demonstrate behaviors that makes one wonder if they should be referred for Gifted or Initial Evaluation or both
  - These behaviors may include:
Confounding Behaviors

- High Activity Level
  - Gifted Explanation: Passionate learner, kinesthetic learner
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: ADHD
- Extra-sensitive to loud noise, clothing tags, fluorescent lights
  - Gifted Explanation: Dabrowski’s overexcitabilities
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: Sensory-motor integration disorder, auditory-processing disorder

Confounding Behaviors

- Low Impulse Control, Impatient, Interrupts Others
  - Gifted Explanation: Asynchrony, judgment lags intelligence (delay of prefrontal cortex)
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: ADHD
- Worries frequently
  - Gifted Explanation: Idealistic, grapples with moral, ethical, philosophical, spiritual issues
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: Anxiety disorder, depression

Confounding Behaviors

- Distractible, fails to complete tasks, refuses to do schoolwork
  - Gifted Explanation: Daydreams, active imagination, needs to be intellectually challenged
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: ADHD, learning disability, auditory-processing disorder, conduct disorder
Confounding Behaviors

- Difficulty Relating to Classmates, Atypical Humor
  - Gifted Explanation-Asynchrony, unusual interests and passions
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis-ASD
- Stubborn, averse to transitions
  - Gifted Explanation-Independent, high expectations, deep interests, drive to learn
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis-OCD, ASD

Confounding Behaviors

- Highly emotional, moody, argumentative
  - Gifted Explanation-High sensitivity, intensity, asynchrony, needs increased challenge
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis-Mood disorder, conduct disorder
- Fine motor coordination delays, poor handwriting
  - Gifted Explanation-Asynchrony, mind quicker than hand
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis-Dysgraphia, dyslexia, learning disability

Confounding Behaviors

- Atypical Sleep Pattern
  - Gifted Explanation-Low need to sleep, won’t stop learning to sleep, nightmares, vivid dreams
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis-Sleep disorder, ADHD, mood disorder
Confounding Behaviors

- Atypical Eating Pattern
  - Gifted Explanation: Won’t stop learning to eat, averse to food textures
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: Food allergies, eating disorder, mood disorder, ASD
- Speech Delays
  - Gifted Explanation: Asynchrony
  - Possible Medical Misdiagnosis: ASD, SI, LI

FINAL THOUGHTS

- The School Support Team can assist in determining the most appropriate referral
- Gifted services are not a privilege that must be earned but a right for qualified students.

Questions?