Gifted Education Program
Guidelines

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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INTRODUCTION…………………………………………………………………………………………….. 3

State Law.......................................................................................................................... 3
Scope of Gifted Programs................................................................................................... 4

GUIDELINES FOR GIFTED PROGRAMS.............................................................. 4

Types of Services Provided to Identified Gifted Students............................................. 4
Guidelines for Student Selection..................................................................................... 5
A. Screening..................................................................................................................... 6
B. Individual Evaluation and Placement....................................................................... 6
   1. General Mental Ability........................................................................................... 6
   2. Academic Ability.................................................................................................. 6
   3. Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-solving Ability........................................... 6
   4. Other.................................................................................................................... 7
Alternate Identification Plans ......................................................................................... 7
Transfer Student Policy.................................................................................................. 8
Non Public School Student Participation ...................................................................... 8

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR STATE-APPROVED
GIFTED PROGRAMS................................................................................................. 8

District Procedures ....................................................................................................... 8
DESE Procedures ......................................................................................................... 8

APPENDICES.............................................................................................................. 10

A – Gifted Certification Requirements Beginning August 1, 2017 ........................... 10
B – Gifted Student Identification Process.................................................................... 11
C – Delivery System Descriptions................................................................................. 12
D – Definitions of Terms................................................................................................ 13
E - Core Data Reporting Guidelines.............................................................................. 14
INTRODUCTION

State Law

By law and tradition, Missouri school districts are expected to provide programs of instruction suitable for the full range of student ability, from handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced. In 1973, the General Assembly recognized that there are a limited number of academically advanced students whose mental capacity and learning potential are so advanced that they need services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided. As a result, in 1973, the General Assembly authorized the state program for gifted students. In so doing, the General Assembly did not intend to diminish in any way the regular program of instruction or to supplant existing programs for the academically advanced (superior) students. The intent was clearly to support special efforts to increase the educational opportunities available for students who are identified as gifted.

The state special education law (H.B. 474) enacted in 1973, authorized the State Board of Education to establish standards for special programs for gifted students. The following sections of state law pertain to gifted education programs:

Section 162.675, RSMo defines gifted children as "those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum."

Section 162.720, RSMo states that school districts may establish programs for gifted children "where a sufficient number of children are determined to be gifted and their development requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular public school programs . . ." and states that the State Board of Education "shall determine standards for such programs. Approval of such programs shall be made by the State Department of Education based upon project applications submitted each year."

Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, legislation requires districts to report: “whether the school district currently has a state-approved gifted education program, and the percentage and number of students who are currently being served in the district's state-approved gifted education program” and this information appears on their annual report card.

In 2013 the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children was established. The Council has seven members appointed by the Commissioner of Education. Members serve for a term of four years. Members must be Missouri residents and selected based on their knowledge and experience with the education of gifted and talented children.

The Council provides advice to the Commissioner and State Board of Education regarding all rules and policies relating to the education of gifted and talented children.

Senate Bill 638 passed by the General Assembly in 2016 and signed into law by the Governor requires the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to do an annual desk audit of state approved gifted programs to verify that districts are continuing to serve at least 80% of the total number of gifted students as they were serving in each previous school year. If a district experiences a decrease in its gifted program enrollment of twenty percent or more from the previous school year, an amount equal to the product of the difference between the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the current school year and the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the previous school year multiplied by six hundred eighty dollars shall be subtracted from the district's current year payment amount. The provisions of this subdivision shall apply to districts entitled to receive state aid payments but shall not apply to any school district with an average daily attendance of three hundred fifty or less. The payment adjustment provision will be first implemented in the 2017-2018 school year. To establish the initial base enrollment for this comparison, we will use the data submitted by districts in their April MOSIS Student Information files indicating if a student is identified as gifted and currently being served in a state approved gifted program with the Code GS. If your district has a state approved gifted program, it needs to ensure
that each year it accurately completes the required core data and MOSIS information about these programs to ensure compliance with the provisions of this legislation.

**Scope of Gifted Programs**

In accordance with the definition of giftedness which is set forth in the law, the programs for the gifted will be in the general academic areas and/or in the fine arts. It should be recognized that gifted students are capable of outstanding performance in one or more academic areas and may also display outstanding ability in one or more of the fine arts. It is further recognized that outstanding intellectual, creative thinking and reasoning abilities contribute singly and in various combinations to such performance. Consequently, school districts will need to assess a variety of student abilities and to design appropriate program services that will challenge and develop these abilities.

It is important to note that state approved gifted programs are not designed for the typical superior student who is frequently an excellent scholar, can earn “A” grades, and achieve academic honors. The educational needs of these students should be met by existing school programs.

State approved gifted programs are reserved for the students who are as far from the superior student in potential as the superior is from the average student. The task is to identify these students and to provide educational opportunities that will challenge and develop their abilities.

**GUIDELINES FOR GIFTED PROGRAMS**

Districts should provide gifted students with an educational environment beyond that offered in the regular classroom setting for superior students and which is designed to meet the identified needs of gifted students. The educational needs of gifted students which are not met by the regular grade level program for superior students will require (1) a differentiated instructional program which accommodates higher cognitive processes and concepts, (2) teaching methods appropriate for their advanced abilities and individual styles of learning, and (3) flexible administrative arrangements needed to implement the program.

**Teachers** implementing the gifted program curriculum must hold appropriate certification for the gifted services they are providing.

All teacher positions in gifted education are designed to serve those students identified through the approved selection process as needing an academic environment beyond that offered by the standard grade level curriculum available to superior students. The following guidelines apply:

Instructional personnel must:

1. Serve in an instructional position described in Appendix C and provide instructional services to gifted students selected for the program according to criteria approved by DESE; and

2. Hold a valid Missouri teaching certificate for the area of gifted services they are providing.

**Types of Services Provided to Identified Gifted Students**

Services provided to gifted students will vary depending upon the age and grade level of the students, the size of the school district, school schedules, and community preferences. **State approved gifted programs must provide a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) minutes per week of direct instructional time in which the identified gifted students work exclusively with the certified teacher of gifted.**
Class or group sizes within the gifted program should not exceed fifteen (15) nor be less than five (5), with an average of ten (10) students per class.

Recommended maximum caseloads for full-time teachers of the gifted are as follows:

Resource Room Teacher (RRT) - 75 students
Special Class Teacher (SCT) - 90 students
Gifted Resource Teacher (GRT) - 90 students

Programs for Exceptionally Gifted Students (PGS) – Are established in agreement with the Director of Gifted Education Programs at DESE.

Caseloads this high are not ideal; they represent the extreme upper limit.

At the elementary level, the most common service model is a pull-out program in which students leave the regular classroom and spend their time in a resource room (RRT model) with the certified gifted teacher.

NOTE: For Kindergarten students ONLY, districts are allowed to use the first semester for identification with placement in direct instructional program starting second semester.

Middle school/junior high and high school programs may be pull-out programs (RRT) but often consist of a special class that is part of a student’s daily schedule (SCT model.) Special classes are often interdisciplinary in nature, but may focus on a specific subject area.

Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Honors, or Advanced classes can only be considered a state approved gifted service IF the teacher of the class has gifted certification and ALL of the students in the class have been identified as gifted using the district traditional criteria.

At grades 9 through 12, gifted students may participate in a special class or pull-out, but these options often create conflicts with other classes that students want to take. The Gifted Resource Teacher (GRT) model avoids many of these conflicts. In the GRT model, the teacher of gifted works with students and teachers in a resource capacity on a highly flexible schedule that does not require any minimum contact minutes per week.

In some instances, a district may identify a few exceptionally gifted students who need full-time specialized instruction to meet their needs. The Program for Exceptionally Gifted Students (PGS) model is an option for those students. Further explanation of service models and teacher position descriptions can be found in Appendix C of this manual.

A school district may serve different groups of students in various ways, with varying amounts of contact time. (See Appendix C in this Manual for descriptions of teacher positions and delivery systems.)

**Guidelines for Student Selection**

The student selection process must consist of at least the following two (2) stages:
(A) screening and
(B) individual evaluation and placement.

See Appendix B for a flow chart on the student selection process. Evaluation and placement of students should be completed prior to the beginning date of instructional services.

Schools must develop a system to identify children in need of the gifted education services that the district provides. Screening criteria should be as inclusive as possible. Identification criteria and test
instruments should be chosen that will maximize the students’ strength and limit the effects of any possible biases (LEP, culturally diverse background, poverty, etc.). Districts should consider their demographics when creating a menu of comparable test instruments that will be acceptable for screening and placement.

A. Screening

All available data on the total school population should be considered during the screening stage. Any information contained in permanent records should be used, including nationally-normed achievement test scores, group intelligence test scores, Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores, and previous grades, anecdotal records demonstrating creative problem-solving and general creativity, and recommendations from teachers, parents, peers, and other personnel. Districts should also consider what methods will be effective in selecting hard-to-identify and traditionally underrepresented students. Districts should establish their own criteria so as to allow for approximately 10 to 20% of the population to be considered for further evaluation.

B. Individual Evaluation and Placement

Following screening and referral, the school may determine criteria which would be appropriate for the academic or fine arts service(s) provided, the grade levels to be served, and the background and needs of students in the district. The district MUST use three of these four areas to place a child in gifted services. It is expected that the use of tests and scales may differ within districts as well as between districts. For example, different procedures or instruments may be used with students of different ages or for parts of the program with specific curriculum focus, such as a Fine Arts, Math or Science focus. Alternate selection criteria and methods MUST HAVE prior DESE approval before they can be used for special populations or students with special needs (i.e., LEP or LD).

1. General Mental Ability

   **Full-scale or GAI scores on an individual intelligence test at or above the 95th percentile:** Although they are more time-consuming, individually administered intelligence tests provide more accurate indicators for final placement purposes than do group tests. The district may use various IQ tests, administered according to their appropriateness in reference to program areas and student needs. On Core Data screen 25, enter the minimum percentage required for placement in the state approved gifted on the test(s) given by the district.

2. Academic Ability

   **If achievement test scores are used for formal evaluation and placement, they must be derived from a norm-referenced test and the cut-off score must be set at the 95th percentile or higher.** For interdisciplinary programs, tests must be used that sample a majority of the core subject areas of Math, Science, Social Studies and Communication Arts.

   On Core Data screen 25, enter the minimum percentage required on the test(s) given by the district. While composite scores shall be used for multi-disciplinary academic programs, it may be appropriate to use subtest scores if an academic program is focused on a specific subject area. The scores must be in the subject area(s) or in the subtest area(s) most related to the design of the gifted program.

3. Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-solving Ability

   Results of valid tests or other assessments indicating outstanding ability in one of the following areas: (1) creative and productive thinking, (2) advanced insight, (3) outstanding imagination, (4) innovative or creative reasoning ability, (5) advanced perception of cause and effect relationships, (6) problem solving, or (7) abstract concepts. These areas of ability must be related to the design of the gifted program. Minimum criteria for identification must be established by the district and entered on Core Data screen 25.
4. Other

Documented evidence of exceptional performance in a general academic area, a fine arts area, or another area related to the design of the gifted program: Such evidence may take the form of portfolios of student work, MAP test scores, formal classroom observations by persons knowledgeable about characteristics of gifted students, auditions, product demonstrations, etc. Districts must establish minimum criteria for placement and enter it on Core Data screen 25.

Limitations of a single test of cognitive ability should be recognized. "If the identification criteria for a program for the gifted is based primarily on a single test, the population of gifted students identified will vary greatly depending upon which test is used." (Wood and Carri, 1991) No single test or method of identification will identify all children’s abilities.

Identification procedures typically include individual intelligence test scores, norm-referenced achievement test scores, previously demonstrated accomplishments, teacher observation and nomination, and scores on tests of creativity.

Alternate Identification Plans

The task of identifying gifted children is a complex one, especially the task of finding children who are gifted and also have other exceptionalities. Passow and Frazier identified the following groups as being under-identified and under-served, and in need of alternate assessment strategies.

1. Children who are characterized by racial/ethnic cultural group membership (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans);
2. Children with language differences or limitations (e.g., mother tongue other than English or limited English speaking);
3. Children from families of low socioeconomic status (e.g., qualifying for free or reduced price meals); and
4. Children of varied geographic locations (rural or inner city areas, barrios, or reservations).

Passow and Frasier indicate the need for "new models or paradigms" that "respond to these [issues] by focusing on gifted behaviors in a cultural context, designing dynamic approaches to assessing gifted behaviors within the students’ socio-cultural context, and integrating identification processes with learning opportunities." (Passow and Frasier, 1996)

Other children who may need to be identified by alternate means include children with learning disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, physical challenges, or behavioral difficulties. The various, and possibly negative manifestations of giftedness can make it difficult to recognize a child’s high abilities in a regular academic setting, causing some gifted children to remain unidentified and unserved.

A school district may propose an alternative student selection plan when the proposed alternative will provide improved individual evaluation and selection of students in need of the services provided. The proposal must clearly set forth in writing the process of screening and individual evaluation of students. The plan must include: (a) established criteria for selection, (b) objective measures, and (c) competent professional evaluation. The plan must clearly state the criteria that a student must meet in order to be eligible for the state-approved gifted program. This here is a link to a document that provides guidance to assist districts in Identifying and Serving Traditionally Underrepresented Gifted Students. [Link](https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/qs-Gifted-Underrepresented-Gifted-Students-2016.pdf)

Districts must consult with the Director of Gifted Education Programs at DESE regarding appropriate alternative identification procedures and secure their approval prior to implementing any alternative selection criteria.
Transfer Student Policy

Students who transfer from a Missouri school with a state approved gifted program to a school with a state approved gifted program shall be placed in the receiving district's program if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The student meets or exceeds the selection criteria established by the receiving school for placement in its gifted program.

2. The areas addressed by the two programs must be similar: i.e., both are general academic programs; both are fine arts programs; or both are specific academic programs.

3. The student and parents agree to such placement.

Non Public School Student Participation

Any student may be enrolled in and attend a public, private, parochial or home school or a combination of schools during the school day. No artificial barriers can be placed in the way of the non public school student's participation in the state approved gifted program. The student MUST reside in the district where they wish to attend the state approved gifted program. The student MUST meet or exceed the placement criteria of the program in the public school district. The student or their parent/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from the non public school to the gifted program. If testing is required for placement, the public school policies, procedures and timelines should be utilized as they would be for any transfer student to the district. The non public school student should be coded as a part time student and the public school district receives ADA funding proportional to the time the student is participating in the program.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR STATE-APPROVED GIFTED PROGRAMS

District Procedures

1. Gifted program information is to be submitted electronically to DESE's MOSIS/Core Data Section in the appropriate reporting cycle as outlined by DESE's Office of Data Systems Management.

2. District must employ instructional personnel who have a valid Missouri teaching certificate for the area of gifted service they are providing. For specific questions regarding certification, call the Educator Certification Section at (573) 751-0051.

3. Instructional staff positions and assignments must be documented by names of staff members and course assignments reported to DESE in the MOSIS/Core Data Collection System using the program code "08" and the course code 990808 in reporting state approved gifted positions and assignments.

4. The results of an annual evaluation report shall be completed on or before June 30 of the program year and shall be maintained on file in the local school district. The evaluation procedures should be designed to determine the extent to which students have met the program objectives. The report should include a description of the evaluation procedures, a list of the people involved in the evaluation process, and an explanation of how their input is used to revise the program.

DESE Procedures

DESE will make the Gifted Education Programs Procedure Manual available to all local school districts. The Procedure Manual is available on DESE's Gifted webpage. http://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/gifted-education
1. The director of Gifted Education Programs is available for consultation with district personnel by telephone (573) 751-7754 or e-mail (david.welch@dese.mo.gov) or by appointment.

2. DESE shall review and will approve or disapprove the placement criteria submitted on Screen 25.

3. Core Data will be used to verify proper certification of all teachers coded 08 and the course code of 990808.

4. MOSIS/Core Data will be used to verify districts are in compliance with all established rules and regulations governing state approved gifted services.
Gifted Certification Requirements Beginning August 1, 2017

General Requirements

1. Valid Missouri Teaching Certification
2. Two-Years of Teaching Experience
3. The applicant must achieve a score equal to or in excess of the qualifying score on the required exit assessment(s) as defined in 5 CSR 20-400.310 and 5CSR 20-400.440. **There currently is no exit exam for gifted certification and requirement # 3 does not apply.**

Professional Requirements (Minimum of 23 semester hours)

1. Psychology and/or Education of the Exceptional Child (two semester hours)
2. Gifted Content Knowledge Area – Minimum of 15 semester hours which must include:
   a. A Survey of Gifted and Talented Education
   b. Programming, Planning and Development: An Understanding of Administration and Supervision of Gifted Programs
   c. Screening, Assessing, and Evaluating Gifted Students
   d. Curriculum and Instruction for the Gifted
   e. Meeting the Affective Needs of Gifted Students
3. Graduate course in Research Procedures (three semester hours)
4. Culminating Clinical Experience with Gifted Students (three semester hours to include both elementary and secondary settings)

Instructional personnel in the staff positions coded 08 must hold a valid Missouri teaching certificate. Coursework must be completed at a college or university with an approved program. For questions regarding certification of teachers, please contact the Educator Certification Section of DESE at (573) 751-0051, or e-mail at certification@dese.mo.gov.
Student Identification Process -- Text Only Version

Screening:
1. 100% of students enrolled in targeted grade levels should be included in the initial screening.
2. 10-20% of total are considered for further evaluation.
3. 80 to 90% of the student enrollment will be determined appropriately placed in the regular program, which includes special provisions for the disadvantaged and for persons with disabilities. 10 to 20% of the enrollment will probably be superior students who need an accelerated program.

Individual Evaluation and Selection:
1. Approximately 10% of the enrollment should be evaluated individually.

Placement:
1. Those students whose evaluations indicate a need for gifted services are placed in the appropriate program service.
Delivery System Descriptions

--Resource Room (RRT) – In this delivery system, 100% of the teacher’s time is spent providing direct instruction designed to meet the academic and affective needs of identified gifted students who are “pulled out” of the regular classroom for one or more sessions per week. Each gifted assignment must have the gifted program code 08 and course code 990808 assigned to it.

--Special Class (SCT) - In this delivery system, 100% of the teacher’s time is spent providing direct instruction designed to meet the academic and affective needs of identified gifted students who are assigned to a class on a daily basis for one or more periods/blocks a day. Each gifted assignment must have the gifted program code 08 assigned to it.

--Gifted Resource (GRT) - This position is for grades 9-12 only. In this delivery system, the teacher provides services that are designed to meet the academic and affective needs of identified gifted students for grades 9-12. School districts must allow a minimum of 150 minutes of teacher’s instructional time a week to be spent exclusively with identified gifted grades 9-12 students in one or more of the following approved activities:

- direct instruction of individuals or small groups of identified gifted students;
- services targeting the social/emotional needs of identified gifted students;
- establishing job shadowing and mentoring opportunities, selection/planning/scheduling of college entrance exam(s);
- researching/planning/scheduling educational options such as dual credit courses, distance learning, correspondence courses, and schedule planning;
- assisting with post-secondary school research/selection, admissions procedures, and completing scholarship applications;
- monitoring identified students’ progress in any of the above activities; or
- working with regular classroom teachers and modifying regular classroom curriculum to meet the needs of identified gifted students.

It is expected that providing service to identified gifted high school students will not reduce the amount of service provided to identified gifted students at other grade levels. Each gifted assignment must have the gifted program code 08 and course code 990808 assigned to it.

-- Programs for Exceptionally Gifted Students (PEGS) – Use the PEGS code for teachers who work in PEGS programs providing services to highly gifted students five days a week all day requires gifted certification. Each gifted assignment must have the gifted program code 08 assigned to it.
Definitions of Terms (as used in this manual)

Academic areas -- Language arts, sciences, mathematics, social studies, or any combination of these areas

AP - Advanced Placement courses approved by the College Board’s Course Audit Process

Affective areas – Unique social and emotional needs of gifted students

[Department] DESE - Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Differentiated Instruction - A planned curriculum which emphasizes high level cognitive and affective processes, instructional strategies which respond to the individual learning styles and abilities of gifted students; and an appropriate delivery system for these services

Direct Instruction – Certified teacher of the gifted directing or facilitating a group of identified gifted students in appropriately differentiated activities

Fine arts areas – Music, visual and performing arts

Gifted Resource Teacher (GRT) – A teacher who provides approvable services to identified gifted students in grades 9-12

Gifted Students -- Those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that their continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered in regular public school programs.

Individualized Instruction -- A program designed to accommodate the educational needs, interests, and learning styles of each student served

Interdisciplinary Instruction – Courses of study that include several academic areas (science, mathematics, communication arts, social studies) in a related whole

Instructional Personnel – Professionals holding appropriate certification who provide instructional services to gifted students

IB—International Baccalaureate courses approved by International Baccalaureate Organization

PEGS Program (PEGS) – Program for Exceptionally Gifted Students – Usually a full-time program of instruction for students whose academic abilities are so far beyond the “typical” gifted student that their needs cannot be met within a regular gifted program setting. The teacher code for PEGS programs is PGS.

Resource Room Teacher (RRT) - A teacher who provides direct instruction to groups of identified gifted students who are "pulled out" of the regular classroom for one or more sessions per week

Screening and Placement Process - A systematic set of steps including screening and referral, individual testing and evaluation, and a determination of students who need special educational services beyond those provided for superior students.

Special Class Teacher (SCT) - A teacher who provides direct instruction to classes of identified gifted students who are assigned to that class on a daily basis for one or more periods a day
Core Data Reporting Guidelines

As your district prepares to enter Core Data/MOSIS information about State Approved Gifted Programs, please keep these guidelines in mind to help ensure the most accurate data reporting. Reporting information for gifted programing is required in October, April, and June.

Student program selection criteria (Screen 25) Reported in Core Data

1. Screen 25 is to be completed ONLY if a district has a state approved gifted program.
2. Screen 25 MUST be completed each year even if the student selection criterion does not change from the previous year.
3. Enter the minimum percentage cut-off score, NOT the actual numerical minimum cut-off score necessary for placement in the state approved gifted program.
4. Enter the minimum percentage cut-off score in each line of the appropriate delivery system(s) the district is implementing.

Educator Course and Assignment Data (Screen 20) Reported in MOSIS

1) ONLY teaching assignments in state approved gifted programs may use the course code 990808 AND they MUST include the use of the program code 08 for each assignment.
2) No Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Dual Credit course should have a program code of 08 UNLESS all three of these items are met:
   a. ALL of the students in the course have been identified as gifted using state approved gifted student selection criteria.
   b. The teacher of the course has gifted certification.
   c. The class meets for a minimum of 150 minutes per week.
3) If a staff member with gifted certification has Gifted Departmental duties for a state approved gifted program, use the course code 990898 and program code 08 for this assignment.
4) If a staff member supervising a state approved gifted program has gifted certification AND a Graduate Level Degree in any area, you may use the course code 990897 and program code 08 for that assignment.
5) If the district utilizes a gifted center for its state approved gifted program where attendance is reported at another building, you should use the attendance center code of 1020.
6) Use the following delivery system codes.
   a. Delivery System Code C if students are pulled out and meet in a resource room that is not a center based program.
   b. There is NO push-in instructional method (PI) delivery system allowed for state approved gifted programs.
7) The following grade level codes should be used for the state approved gifted assignments that include multiple grade levels:
   a. Code 13 if the assignment has multiple grade levels 9-12.
   b. Code 14 if the assignment has multiple grade levels 7-9.
   c. Code 15 if the assignment has multiple grade levels 4-8.
   d. Code 16 if the assignment has multiple grade levels K-8.
8) Enter the enrollment for each gifted assignment reported as an unduplicated count for each educator as the caseload.
9) ALL educators with a state approved gifted assignment MUST have a gifted certification endorsement. (Full certification or a Temporary Authorization or Provisional is acceptable)
1. Students that have been identified as gifted using state approved gifted student selection criteria in any district in Missouri MUST have one of these two designations. Gifted Not Served (GN) if they are not currently being served in a state approve gifted program in the current school year. Gifted Served (GS) ONLY if they are being served in a state approved gifted program in the current school year. ALL other students should be designated as Not Identified (NI).

2. The April MOSIS Student information file will be the data used to establish the annual state approved gifted enrollment base to determine if a payment adjustment is necessary per the formula enacted in SB 638. The language of SB 638 states: “...if a district experiences a decrease in its gifted program enrollment of twenty percent or more from the previous school year, an amount equal to the product of the difference between the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the current school year and the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the previous school year multiplied by six hundred eighty dollars shall be subtracted from the district’s current year payment amount. The provisions of this subdivision shall apply to districts entitled to receive state aid payments under both subsections 1 and 2 of this section but shall not apply to any school district with an average daily attendance of three hundred fifty or less.”

Reference Manuals

Exhibits
Exhibit 10 – Course Code
Exhibit 12 – Grade Levels
Exhibit 13 – Program Code
Exhibit 14 – Delivery System
Exhibit 25 – Reporting Gifted Program