



# Identifying and Serving Gifted Learners in a 100% Distanced Learning Model



Developed in Consultation with the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

September 2020

Even with the challenges of the 2020-21 school year, it is important to provide services to gifted learners. This document contains suggestions for identifying and serving gifted learners in a 100% distanced learning model.

Topic	Guidance	Further Considerations for a Distanced Learning Model
<b>The Ongoing Need for Gifted Education</b>	It is important to identify and support gifted learners so they make continuous academic progress and to develop their talents.	Students need services provided by well-trained teachers, who challenge and support them, both academically and emotionally, in order to fully develop their gifts and talents. The needs of gifted students, just as those of any other students with special needs, must still be met regardless of the format school may take. The myth that “gifted students will do fine on their own” is not supported by research. Therefore, it is important to identify and serve students during challenging circumstances.
<b>Distanced Learning Gifted Education</b>	<p>The following tenants are important to remember when planning distanced learning gifted education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gifted Program is a safe place for gifted learners.</li> <li>• Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is paramount.</li> <li>• Communication with the student, parents/guardians, and classroom teacher is essential.</li> <li>• Engaging 100% of the students is just and equitable.</li> <li>• The school system’s Gifted Learner Outcomes is the academic focus. This often includes creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving.</li> </ul>	There are many deliberate strategies educators can use that are impactful in engaging gifted learners and providing opportunities for growth. The Task Force for Learning Acceleration developed these <a href="#">Alternate Methods of Instruction (AMI) Migration Maps</a> as examples. (The gifted education examples are on pages 23-25 though other content sections are also useful.) Gifted Education Specialists can develop Migration Maps for their use.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several instructional models used in gifted education migrate well to distance learning including <a href="#">Project Based Learning</a>, Independent Projects (“Genius Hour” Projects), <a href="#">Design Thinking</a>, and <a href="#">Engineering Design Process</a>.</li> <li>• Distance learning includes synchronous meetings/lessons, asynchronous lessons, online assignments, and “unplugged” assignments.</li> </ul>	
Social-Emotional Learning	It is important for the gifted program to develop a plan for addressing the SEL needs of gifted students.	During the summer of 2020, over 20 gifted education specialists participated in a statewide SEL curriculum writing project led by representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Gifted Association of Missouri, and Lindenwood University. These lessons are part of an online repository that are accessible to gifted education specialists throughout the state. Further information and directions to access the directory can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
Gifted Program Minutes of Service	The <a href="#">Gifted Education Program Guidelines</a> state that students receive 150 minutes a week. These minutes could include synchronous meetings/lessons, asynchronous lessons, online assignments, and “unplugged” assignments.	It is important for gifted education specialists and gifted learners to spend time together synchronously via a teleconference platform in which student-teacher and student-student interactions are possible. An example schedule can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
In-person Assessments	Students who are participating in online learning could, following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), health department, and school system guidelines, attend school to be assessed.	<p>In-person testing can be completed using carefully designed safety measures and <b>clearly communicated safety protocols</b> to educators, students, and their families. It is advisable for school systems to align the testing protocols for gifted education with testing protocols for special education.</p> <p>In accordance with health department guidelines, it is advised examiners make modifications, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stagger schedules to minimize student interactions;</li> <li>• sanitize testing materials between students;</li> <li>• place a sneeze guard between examiner and examinee;</li> <li>• wear see-through masks;</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● provide a freshly sharpened pencil for each student to use and take home; and</li> <li>● use a pointer to indicate items on a booklet.</li> </ul> <p>With careful planning, assessments can be completed safely and with validity.</p> <p>To minimize student anxiety the examiner could employ various techniques, including but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● meeting virtually with students (and possibly parents/guardians) before the assessment;</li> <li>● wearing a self-portrait button or keeping a photo of the examiner on the table (since the examiner’s mask hides the face); and</li> <li>● communicating procedures before the in-person meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternate Identification Plans (AIP)</b>	<p>DESE’s <a href="#">Gifted Education Program Guidelines</a> allows for Alternate Identification Plans. If a school system is deviating from the state-approved gifted identification plan because of a 100% distanced learning model, an Alternate Identification Plan must be approved. Any alternative pathway a school system chooses to use must be approved by DESE’s Director of Gifted Education prior to implementation. The process for approval is to submit a plan electronically.</p>	<p>It is still the expectation, even with an Alternate Identification Plan (AIP), that school systems continue administering a universal screener.</p> <p>Contact DESE’s Director of Gifted Education, <a href="#">Christine Nobbe</a>, as soon as possible to submit an AIP.</p>
<b>Telepractice or Tele-assessment</b>	<p>While individual assessments are the most reliable and valid, school systems may decide that all assessments will be conducted online. School system personnel can plan carefully to ensure that telepractice procedures are equitable, reliable, and valid. Refer to assessment protocols provided by publishers, document any non-standard assessment conditions, and include in the interpretation of the results whether any non-standard assessment conditions impacted the assessment results in any way.</p>	<p>The American Psychological Association is providing guidance on tele-assessment on their <a href="#">website</a>. Pearson Associates have telepractice support on their <a href="#">website</a> for the WISC-V, NNAT-3, and OLSAT-8. Contact Riverside via their <a href="#">website</a> to learn more about CogAT remote administration resources.</p>

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<b>Gathering Evidence in a 100% Distanced Learning Model</b>	<p>As required by state guidelines, school systems must use at least three of the four areas below to place a child in gifted education services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Mental Ability</li> <li>2. Academic Ability</li> <li>3. Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-Solving Ability</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> <p>Further information on identification and selection is available <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Collecting data in a 100% distanced learning model will be a challenge but possible. <b>School systems are encouraged to develop an Alternate Identification Plan (see above).</b></p>	<p><b>General Mental Ability.</b> For the 2020-21 school year, school systems in a 100% distanced learning model may consider using the NNAT-3, CogAT, OLSAT-8, or other “group” intelligence test, rather than an individual intelligence test like the WISC-V. For the 2020-21 school year one “group” intelligence test may be given rather than two and the test may have been given in the 2019-20 school year.</p> <p><b>Academic Ability.</b> For the school year 2020-21, school systems may use benchmark test scores even if the instrument does not provide national norms. Using the benchmark scores available pre-COVID-19 is acceptable.</p> <p><b>Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-Solving Ability.</b> Many school systems use a test of creative thinking: the <a href="#">Torrance Test of Creative Thinking</a>, the <a href="#">Profile of Creative Abilities</a>, or <a href="#">Creativity Assessment Packet</a>. Contact the publishing company for tele-practice guidance, if students cannot attend school for in-person testing.</p> <p><b>Other.</b> Options include, but are not limited to, teacher and parent rating scales, a structured interview conducted by the gifted education specialist, and a portfolio of student work evaluated by a team of educators. These assessments could be completed using a teleconference platform.</p>
<b>Local Norms</b>	<p>Nationally normed tests were normed during a typical school year. These past months have not been typical and are impacting gifted learners in many ways. Using local norms will help mitigate this concern. Using local norms is a part of most Alternate Identification Plans.</p>	<p>The document <a href="#">Using Local Norms to Equitably Identify Gifted Learners</a> provides examples. For further information, contact DESE’s Director of Gifted Education, <a href="#">Christine Nobbe</a>.</p>
<b>Personalized Education</b>	<p>Gifted learners come from all backgrounds, with a wide range of abilities, interests, and struggles. In an online environment, some students might need targeted individual consideration to</p>	<p>Students' needs should be addressed on a case-by-case basis as determined by the gifted education specialist. An example of an Individual Growth Plan, should a gifted education specialist</p>

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	support their academic growth and social-emotional well-being.	choose to use one, is <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Student Core</b>	Identified gifted students (both served and not served) are counted in the October, April, and June MOSIS cycles. The October and April data are used by DESE for compliance monitoring as required by state statute, Section 163.031.6 RSMo.	As much as possible, strive to complete identification/selection by September. 23, 2020 and, at the very latest, March 31, 2021.