Covid-19 Considerations for Best Practices for Gifted and Talented Educational Services K-12 Upon Reopening

704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented. RELATES TO: KRS 157.196, 157.200(1)(n), 157.224, 157.230 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 156.070, 157.196(3), 157.220, 157.224 NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 157.200(1)(n) includes within the definition of "exceptional children" a category of ***"exceptional students"*** who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts. KRS 157.224(1) commits the state to a comprehensive educational program for its exceptional school-aged children. KRS 157.230 requires all school districts to operate programs for resident exceptional children, primary - grade twelve (12). This administrative regulation establishes the requirements for programs for gifted and talented students.

As schools consider reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year, adjustments need to be made to ensure the needs of gifted students and advanced learners are being met. The following document provides guidance and support for meeting those needs.

Addressing ***continuous progress*** applies to all gifted and high potential learners K-12.

Gifted Student Service Plans (GSSP's)

How do GSSP's need to be modified to encompass various contingencies that may be in place during the 2020-2021 school year?

- GSSP's should be written so that the services listed would have applications across multiple settings (traditional, hybrid, virtual).
- Consultation and/or Collaboration with the school/district GT Specialist should be used as a way to ensure student needs are being met.
- Ensure access to resources to ensure equity in servicing our students.
    - Consider access to the internet and devices, and provide alternate means, as applicable.
    - Services should be selected based on availability of instructional resources.

Services

How can districts meet the needs of Gifted and Advanced Learners?

- Pre-Assessment to assess level of achievement and content mastery is key to developing plans for addressing student needs for every learner; to include high potential learners (i.e. Primary Talent Pool) and gifted learners. Continuing to ensure equity for underrepresented populations is essential.
- Extensions and enrichments should be used in place of (not in addition to) content that has already been mastered.
- Consider cluster grouping as a best practice for meeting student needs.
- Training should be provided to educators on strategies/best practices for nurturing/enhancing potential for gifted and Primary Talent Pool students.

- Schools/districts should ensure that an online, individualized learning platform is available that includes differentiated options with content across all grade levels to meet the needs of gifted learners (e.g., Renzulli Learning).

Gifted Evaluation

How can districts ensure equity while also maintaining safety and validity during the 2020-2021 school year?

- Additional funds for online evaluation licenses, or for purchasing additional paper-pencil instruments, so as to avoid safety concern of sharing materials across buildings/students, will be necessary.
- Universal screening of students, along with use of local norms ensures greater equity in identification practices - Local Norms Calculator Tool.
- Adjusting Identification Services for the 2020-2021 School Year in the Time of COVID - Julia Roberts and Jonathan Plucker
- Virtual auditions may take the place of in-person auditions for Visual and Performing Arts.
- Virtual learners should be flagged for screening once in-person instruction resumes for those individuals, or screening may take place on an appointment basis, as resources allow.
- All evaluations should be proctored by school personnel and security of all testing materials should be maintained.

Service Delivery Models for Varied Settings

Best practice:

- Consultation/Collaboration with the GT Specialist is essential, and should be encouraged so that teachers can meet individual needs.
- Ensure that students have resources available and/or provided for them; in order to ensure equity in servicing our students when they are learning remotely.
- Consider access to the internet and devices.

Service	***Traditional Setting***	***Hybrid Setting***	***Full Virtual Setting***
Differentiation • *Assure use of pre-assessments to identify student readiness and mastery levels for instructional design.* • *Use power standards.* • *Provide alternate resources.* • *Use varied acceleration strategies to assure continuous progress.* • *Provide instructional/content adjustments based on content or process*	In this model, differentiation is provided by the classroom instructor depending on the results of formative assessment. This may take many forms, but often means that whole group instruction is more limited and small group instruction is tailored to the needs of students based on readiness.	Differentiation in a hybrid setting will likely mean that whole group instruction would take place in person and would be followed by differentiated assignments to be done virtually. Resources such as CommonLit or ReadWorks or Khan Academy, etc can be	In a virtual setting, differentiation may mean that students are assigned into small groups within a larger virtual classroom for assignments or content instruction through virtual means. Resources such as CommonLit or ReadWorks or Khan Academy, etc can be

or product matched to student needs. ● *Design modules or targeted tasks reflecting differentiated sequence.*		used which allow teachers to assign online work that can be done independently which is at different levels but addressing the same skill.	used which allow teachers to assign online work that can be done independently which is at different levels but addressing the same skill.
Enrichment ● *Design multidisciplinary tasks.* ● *Use virtual field trips to support and extend content study.* ● *Teach Socratic Thinking strategies.* **Potential resources:** Critical Thinking: ● The Foundation for Critical Thinking ● *Helping Students Ask Better Questions; Socratic Seminar Guidelines,* Wiggins ● Teach Thought ● *Fact vs. Fiction: Teaching Critical Thinking in the Age of Fake News,* LaGarde ● *The Fallacy Detective: 38 Lessons on on How to Recognize Bad Reasoning,* Bluedorn ● *Thinking Like a Lawyer,* Seale Creative Thinking: ● *Fifty Strategies to Boost Cognitive Engagement,* Stobaugh ● *Creativity Unhinged,* Sarnat ● *Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential through Creative Math,* Boaler ● *The Kid's Guide to Social Action,* Lewis*;* ● ThoughtCo./Lifelong Learning ● The Kid Should See This ● Canva	Enrichment may be offered by the classroom teacher and/or gifted specialist. Enrichment options should be aligned with standards (at or above grade level), and offered "in place of" other classroom tasks, not "in addition to" other tasks and should be based on formative assessments which indicate the need for enrichment.	In virtual terms, enrichment could be planned by the classroom teacher and/or gifted specialist and funneled to the student(s) by the classroom teacher. Enrichment menus which support current classroom instruction, which are based on a general standard or that are topic specific, could be created. Rubrics should be included as well. GT specialists could also offer virtual enrichment via Zoom, etc. Enrichment options should be "in place of" other classroom tasks, not "in addition to" other tasks and should be based on formative assessments which indicate the need for enrichment.	

Cluster Grouping *Deliberate placement of students with similar instructional needs in order to facilitate planning and delivery of appropriate instruction to support continuous progress.*	Students are scheduled into classroom instruction (in-person or virtual) based on similar interests, needs, or abilities, usually in groups of 6 - 8. The benefits of cluster grouping are well established for students in all areas of instructional need. Cluster grouping does not require special materials or resources (besides initial scheduling) and often makes other service options easier to implement since students are in class together. When students are cluster grouped, by adding the GT specialist to the Google classroom, that support can be targeted and collaboration can be refined, to assist with differentiation and enrichment design and delivery.	
Independent Study • *Quality independent study should reflect a student-based problem to be solved, a content related question to be answered, or an in-depth pursuit of an area of interest.* • *Use contracting to establish goals, presentation expectations, documentation/source crediting, timelines for each part of the project, and to communicate with all stakeholders.* • *Pre-teach research strategies--note-taking, task analysis, organizational strategies, and evaluation of resource credibility.* • *Brainstorm questions to be answered about the topic or issue. (These will create the basis for the research and reduce tendency to download, print, and plagarize products.)* • *Provide ongoing checks at each timeline point to reduce procrastination.* • *Provide clear rubrics for all components of the process and the final product.* **Potential Resources:** • Global Cognition	A service delivery option which allows a student to complete a study of a topic of interest with minimal involvement from others in the process. Requires set-up and planning, timelines, access to resources, and rubrics from an instructor in order for the student to proceed through the project. Often used as a product choice for a student as part of a larger unit of study.	In a virtual setting, this could be assisted by a GT specialist much as described above in the “enrichment” area of this table.

• Research Project Guide (by level - Elementary, Middle, High) - Link		
Advanced Courses (AP, Honor's, IB, Dual Credit)	This option would remain similar in all settings using an advanced or prescribed curriculum to meet the needs of students.	

Additional Considerations

Hybrid Model

- Excellent opportunity to promote genuine differentiation by collaborative design with content area teachers to support acceleration and/or enrichment of content assignments.
- Support use of alternate texts, advanced topic readings, rapid pacing for content coverage, content substitution, use of pre-assessments to determine skill/concept readiness or mastery.
- Creation of content and resources should be shared with staff to assist them in sharing alternative work with GT students.

Virtual/Online School

- Should be dual-pronged—link to content instruction to assure continuous progress AND provide experiences to meet unique needs of gifted.
- Design quality independent study; support collaborative differentiation to promote acceleration/enrichment; provide specific training in critical thinking, creative problem solving, Socratic thinking, rhetoric, biography study, leadership training, executive function skills, goal setting, etc.
- Enrichment menus are a good approach so that student choice is included in what is offered.

Equity

- Equity of access virtually disappears within NTI/virtual models as children of poverty will have less access to devices, less access to the internet, less access to resources that support independent manipulation/inquiry. Consider that students may have at-home responsibilities that limit ability to focus on virtual tasks, limited parental support due to work schedules or experiences, etc. It is imperative that instructional design does not assume equal access.
- Schools should ensure access for students. For example, allow students to check out devices so that enrichment options are available to them at home, park buses in neighborhoods with Wifi access, and/or make sure that offline options are available for all students in place of the internet.