



West Georgia RESA

Gifted Endorsement Program Handbook

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Admission Criteria for Endorsement Candidates to be Admitted to the Program

- Each candidate will have a clear renewable Georgia teaching certificate.
- Each candidate will have the recommendation of the principal or other appropriate supervisors in the employing school system.
- Each candidate will have provided documentation of dispositions that indicate the likelihood of being successful in the work of the Program.

Required Courses

The Program consists of four consecutive courses designed to encompass a full view of gifted services. Each course is ten weeks long. The typical duration of the entire Endorsement is approximately ten months, if courses are completed sequentially without interruption. The essential questions for each course are listed below:

- (1) **Characteristics of the Gifted Learner:** What attributes of giftedness necessitate educational service models that are markedly different from general classroom instruction?
- (2) **Methods and Materials for the Gifted Learner:** What methods and research-based strategies are effective for most gifted learners?
- (3) **Curriculum and Program Development:** What factors impact curriculum content, model of delivery, and school-wide organization of gifted services?
- (4) **Assessment for the Gifted Learner:** What instruments and methods may be employed to measure criteria for gifted services? Also, what means, measures and special considerations should be used to determine the extent and depth of learning for gifted learners?
- (5) **Assessment Portfolio:** What outcomes from summative student assessment data might serve as evidence of your own personal growth in regards to differentiation of instruction, curriculum, and assessment for gifted learners?

Beliefs and Commitments

West Georgia RESA believes:

1. Professional learning is a continuous process that enhances professional abilities and focuses on improving student learning.
2. Professional learning includes a sequence of activities such as needs assessment, goals training, workplace application, and evaluation based on school improvement planning and validated educational research.
3. Professional learning requires leadership and the opportunities for diverse populations to share and exchange ideas, thus creating a climate of mutual respect and trust.
4. Professional learning increases the capacity of teachers and leaders to develop a learning culture that nurtures student achievement.
5. Professional learning is essential to educational improvement and is maximized when provided at optimal learning times and through primarily job-embedded delivery models.
6. Professional learning promotes a culture wherein educators increase their knowledge and understanding, broaden their skills, and enhance their confidence in improving student performance.
7. Professional learning must model the use of technology as an essential component of teaching and learning.

InTASC Progression and Standards

Learner Development & Learning Differences

Standard #1: The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher uses understanding of how learners grow and develop (in cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas) to design and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
2. The teacher uses understanding of learners' commonalities and individual differences within and across diverse communities to design inclusive learning experiences that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Learning Environments

Standard #3: The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher collaborates with others to build a positive learning climate marked by respect, rigor, and responsibility.
2. The teacher manages the learning environment to engage learners actively.

Content Knowledge

Standard #4: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches.
2. The teacher creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Application of Content

Standard #5: The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher connects concepts, perspectives from varied disciplines, and interdisciplinary themes to real world problems and issues.
2. The teacher engages learners in critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication to address authentic local and global issues.

Assessment

Standard #6: The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher uses, designs or adapts multiple methods of assessment to document, monitor, and support learner progress appropriate for learning goals and objectives.
2. The teacher uses assessment to engage learners in their own growth.
3. The teacher implements assessments in an ethical manner and minimizes bias to enable learners to display the full extent of their learning.

Planning for Instruction

Standard #7: The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, crossdisciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher selects, creates, and sequences learning experiences and performance tasks that support learners in reaching rigorous curriculum goals based on content standards and cross-disciplinary skills.
2. The teacher plans instruction based on information from formative and summative assessments as well as other sources and systematically adjusts plans to meet each student's learning needs.
3. The teacher plans instruction by collaborating with colleagues, specialists, community resources, families and learners to meet individual learning needs.

Instructional Strategies

Standard #8: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies and makes learning accessible to all learners.

2. The teacher encourages learners to develop deep understanding of content areas, makes connections across content, and applies content knowledge in meaningful ways.

Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

Standard #9: The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher engages in continuous professional learning to more effectively meet the needs of each learner.
2. The teacher uses evidence to continually evaluate the effects of his/her decisions on others and adapts professional practices to better meet learners' needs.
3. The teacher practices the profession in an ethical manner.

Leadership and Collaboration

Standard #10: The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Progression Indicators:

1. The teacher collaborates with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth.
2. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning and to advance the profession.

Delivery Model

When requested, the Gifted Endorsement Program may be taught fully face-to-face. The more frequently employed model, however, is for the first course to be taught face-to-face in the summer with subsequent courses taught online in either a fully online or blended/hybrid format, utilizing both online and face-to-face instruction. Online course participation does not require teachers to be online at a fixed, given time; rather, the online work is asynchronous and may be accessed at any time. West Georgia typically utilizes a blended delivery model.

Field Experiences

To maximize the job-embedded nature of the work, the Gifted Endorsement Program has embedded field experiences and key assignments for each course. Therefore, since there will be times when the candidate will submit student work samples, personal reflection papers, and/or short videos of their teaching, endorsement candidates must hold a current teaching position in order to have access to gifted learners for Field Experiences and/or other assignments.

- Each course will consist of one at least one required field experience designed to allow the application of course content in an authentic working environment.
- Field experiences will be assigned and monitored by the course instructor. The experience will be assessed and feedback will be provided to participants.

Monitoring and Assessing Progress of Gifted Endorsement Candidates

- A syllabus will be provided to each candidate at the beginning of each of the four courses. Course expectations and the evaluation process for all assignments will be outlined within the syllabus.
- Appropriate assessments will be established to assess each candidate's demonstrated knowledge and mastery of the standards that govern the gifted endorsement program.
- Each course will have one numerically graded key assignment. All assignments must be completed to reflect understanding and mastery of the content and standards of the program. Feedback will be provided for assignments, yet only one key assignment per course will be graded numerically per a performance rubric.
- Performance on standards will be collected and analyzed, utilizing both formative and summative assessments throughout the endorsement program.
- Improvements to the program design and delivery will be made as a result of candidate assessment data.

Late Work

In order to be successful in a hybrid or fully online course, participants must be actively engaged and diligent with assignments. Although West Georgia RESA understands that situations beyond participant control may arise, participants are expected to submit all assignments by the specified due dates. Should a situation occur, it is the participant's responsibility to notify the instructor immediately to communicate anticipated completion of work.

In cases wherein the instructor has difficulty contacting an enrolled participant, the instructor will refer the situation to the Endorsement Director who will consider disenrollment on a case by case basis.

Instructional Staff

- Instructors will have relevant experience in the field of gifted education.
- Instructors will possess a teaching certificate, as well as an advanced graduate degree.
- Instructors will have relevant successful experience in methods specific to the teaching of adult learners.
- Evaluation data will be collected from participants and instructors.
- Instructors will support West Georgia RESA's beliefs, commitments, and protocols.

Quality of Instruction

- Appropriate syllabi for all courses will be developed by the course instructor either by or in partnership with West Georgia RESA staff.
- Technology will be integrated into course activities and assignments.
- The needs of all learners will be addressed through the use of instructional strategies that are diverse and appropriate for adult learners.
- A course evaluation will be completed at the end of each course to provide West Georgia RESA with feedback regarding course materials and instruction. This data will be used for continuous improvement.

Transfer Credit and Course Completion

- Gifted candidates may submit syllabi and transcripts from other approved Georgia programs for requested transfer of credit. WGRESA will evaluate submitted materials for a decision regarding credit. Only courses completed within the prior five years may be considered for credit.

Endorsement Qualification

West Georgia RESA, an approved GaPSC Endorsement Provider, is authorized to conduct instruction and assessment of the four Gifted Endorsement courses in order to recommend teacher candidates who successfully complete these courses to the GaPSC for their endorsement qualification. However, the Gifted Endorsement add-on is officially allocated by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and is intended to accompany a clear, renewable Georgia teaching certificate. Therefore, while WGRESA can assure all candidates that they will be recommended to the GaPSC upon successful completion of the four courses, **WGRESA CANNOT ensure that any given candidate's teaching certificate is sufficient to accompany the Gifted Endorsement add-on. In other words, any candidate who does not hold a clear, renewable Georgia certificate has the responsibility to contact the GaPSC to inquire about the eligibility of the Gifted Endorsement add-on should an endorsement provider, such as West Georgia RESA, submit a recommendation that reflects successful completion of the four course sequence.**

Upon completion of the four courses, WGRESA will provide a copy of your transcript and GaPSC recommendation form to you and your district office via email (if you are employed in one of the following systems: Carroll County, Carrollton City, Coweta County, Harris County, Heard County, Meriwether County, Troup County). If candidate is outside of the WGRESA service area, it will be the candidate's responsibility to forward documentation to their district office and follow the district's instructions to upgrade their Teaching Certificate to reflect receipt of the Gifted In-Field Endorsement.