March 31, 2016

Dr. Eugene Casey Wardynski, Superintendent
Huntsville City Schools
Post Office Box 1256
Huntsville, AL 35807-4801

Dear Dr. Wardynski:

Upon careful review of Huntsville City Schools Innovation/Flexibility Zone application, I am happy to approve several requests made in your Innovation Zone plan. These decisions will provide some flexibility to Huntsville City Schools in developing a gifted education model that would assist in identifying students who may have been overlooked in the talent identification process. Attached are decisions for implementing the requests made in Huntsville City Schools Innovation/Flexibility Zone application.

Your continued commitment to innovation in education will provide exceptional opportunities to meet the needs of each of your students and prepare each for college and/or career in the 21st century. It is evident that the Huntsville City Schools plan for innovation ensures increased learning opportunities for accelerating students on a trajectory that will lead to success.

Please remain in communication with us in order to share your successes, challenges, and lessons learned that will be valuable to our moving our state forward and to providing helpful guidance to other districts as they develop innovative plans.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

TRB:KWP:DK

Attachment

cc: Mrs. Sherrill W. Parris
    Mrs. Juliana Dean
    Dr. Jeff Langham
    Mrs. Shantia Washington
    Ms. Crystal Richardson
    Mrs. Karen Porter
Recommendations for Approval of the Huntsville City Schools
2015-2016 Innovation Plan for a Gifted Education Model

Please be advised that whatever is not given waiver status by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) as requested in Huntsville City Schools Innovation Application waiver submitted to the ALSDE and is not part of the request for exemption by Huntsville City Schools from the Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 290-8-9, Special Education Services, will remain in effect.

1. Decision regarding exemption from the state recommended gifted identification matrix:

   It is recommended that as Huntsville City Schools development an identification process and a matrix of criteria with a “nationally known gifted education and programming consultant” that there be inclusion of collaboration with ALSDE Gifted Specialists. When the Matrix of Eligibility is developed for the Enrichment Model Program, Huntsville City Schools must submit the matrix to the ALSDE for approval.

2. Decision regarding Huntsville City Schools seeking the recognition of gifted qualification across the state:

   While it is within the Alabama Administrative Code to allow school districts to develop a district plan for Gifted Education, the Alabama State Department of Education cannot mandate or expect other districts to recognize the Huntsville City Plan and thereby its transfer students.

3. Decision regarding Huntsville City Schools request of access to STISETS to warehouse records of the identification processes:

   Huntsville City Schools may access STISETS to warehouse records of identification processes using the Huntsville City Schools proposed plan only for those students who meet the ALSDE criteria for gifted.

4. Decision regarding Huntsville City Schools request to allow the Huntsville City Schools Identification Committee to meet quarterly:

   Huntsville City Schools plan for convening an Identification Committee to meet on a quarterly basis is approved with the qualification that Huntsville City Schools clearly articulates and communicates a timeline for the gifted identification and referral process so that eligibility for all students is determined in a consistent and timely manner. It is recommended that Second Grade Child Find be completed on all second grade students to observe for gifted behaviors.

5. It is also recommended to Huntsville City Schools that:

   - The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking or other state-approved creativity tests be administered to students with high creative potential before finding a student ineligible for services.
   - Pull-out services include students who are identified in the area of science and social studies in order to broaden the opportunity to serve students who have been historically overlooked.
   - All teachers involved should receive training in co-teaching strategies and monthly common planning time in order to insure successful partnering for meeting the specific differentiation of content needs for all students.
November 10, 2015

Thomas R. Bice, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education
Gordon Persons Building
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Dr. Bice:

I am writing on behalf of the Huntsville City Board of Education to request an exemption to allow the Board to offer a gifted education model implemented in each school to further talent development through the elementary school years and to assist teachers in talent identification among students who may have been overlooked in other identification processes and procedures. This approach envisioned with this exemption addresses the concerns of the United States Department of Justice and consent order outlined in Sonnie Wellington Hereford and The United States of America v. Huntsville Board of Education, and allows the Board to progress toward unitary status. We are obligated by federal court order to seek this exemption from the state recommended gifted identification matrix. Please specifically refer to p. 42, 3, a., c., and 4.; p. 43, 6-7.; and p. 44, 8.b. of the attached consent order pages. Denial of this exemption could be seen as interfering with implementation of the court order.

As you are aware, Ala. Admin. Code 290-8-12(5)(c)2 specifically authorizes a school district to develop its own matrices for use in making gifted eligibility determinations. Ala. Admin. Code 290-8-12 (4) a) 1-4 provides the areas of information that must be included in a school district’s designated matrix. The proposed matrix of the Huntsville City Board of Education specifically addresses each of those areas.

The Huntsville City Board of Education believes that the requested exemption will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve academic achievement of students by using screening tools and procedures that are reliable, valid, and sensitive to cultural bias. The Huntsville City Board of Education will establish an Identification Committee to review student data as part of the identification process. Individuals appointed will be diverse in terms of race, geography and professional role. The referral process will occur on a quarterly basis and be grounded in the well-established Response to Intervention Model. New policy in identification enabled by the waiver will contribute to improving student achievement.

The Huntsville City Board of Education believes that the implementation of a talent development model over the whole school, including talent development in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade and differentiated instruction and academic enrichment for third through fifth grade will improve the likelihood of identifying, enriching, and accelerating gifted students who are members of populations who have been previously overlooked. Ultimately, allowing this board to offer more services to more students beyond the state guidelines for gifted caseloads may help more students within the district to surpass the State’s proficiency objectives.

This exemption will allow the Board to ensure the equitable identification and provision of Special Education Services to eligible Gifted Students and advanced learners of all races and socio-economic statuses. More importantly, the proposed plan allows the Huntsville City Board of Education to create an equitable and improved educational program for Gifted Students throughout the district. The Huntsville City Board of Education hereby assures that, if it is granted the requested exemption, it will submit to the Alabama State Department of Education, information related to this exemption that will be requested periodically during the school year.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

L. Casey Wardynski, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Enclosures

c Dr. Barbara Cooper
Dr. Catherine Vasile
Amosene Sledge

Laurie McCaulley - District 1
Beth Wilder - District 2
Elisa Ferrell - District 3
Walker McGinnis - District 4
Mike Culbreath - District 5
Assurance Statement

The Huntsville City Board of Education assures the Alabama State Department of Education that if granted the waiver of Gifted Code items 290-8-9.12(2)(c)(d) and (e); 290-8-9.12(5)(c); 290-8-9.12.(6)(a) and (b); 290-8-9.12.(8)(d) and (e); and 290-8-9.12,(9)(a), the Board will provide consistency in leadership and a commitment to state standards, assessments, and academic rigor. This will be evidenced by the Huntsville City Board of Education’s continued reporting to the Alabama State Department of Education and to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, Northeastern Division.

Signed: 
10 Nov 2015

Date:
Huntsville City Board of Education Resolution for teaching and enrichment of Gifted and Talented Students in Grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

With the waiver of Gifted Sections listed below of the AAC (Code), Huntsville City Board of Education will adopt a formal board resolution addressing the importance of equity in identifying and serving gifted and talented students of all races and socio-economic statuses by pursuing a Flexibility Contract with the Alabama State Department of Education.

WHEREAS the Huntsville City Board of Education believes that the requested waiver will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve the academic achievement of students by using screening tools and procedures that are reliable, valid, and sensitive to cultural bias. Huntsville City Board of Education will establish an Identification Committee to review student data as part of the identification process. Individuals appointed will be diverse in terms of race, geography and professional role. The referral process will occur on a quarterly basis and be grounded in the well-established Response to Intervention Model. New policy in identification enabled by the waiver will contribute to improving student achievement.

AND

WHEREAS the Huntsville City Board of Education believes that the implementation of an enrichment model over the whole school, including talent development in Kindergarten through second grade and differentiated instruction and academic enrichment for third through fifth grade, will improve the likelihood of identifying, enriching, and accelerating gifted students who are members of populations who have been previously overlooked. Ultimately, allowing the Huntsville City Board of Education to offer more services to more students beyond the state guidelines for gifted caseloads may help more students within the district to surpass the State’s proficiency objectives.

AND

WHEREAS the Huntsville City Schools Board of Education has given their district the opportunity for full discussion and public input as evidenced by proceedings surrounding the Proposed Consent Order:

Sonnie Wellington Hereford, IV, et al, Plaintiffs, and United States of America, Plaintiff-Intervenor,

v.
Huntsville Board of Education, et al., Defendants.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Huntsville City Board of Education supports and believes strongly in the importance of the waiving of the attached items from the Gifted Code AAC 290-8-9.12.

Signed: [Signature]
President of the Huntsville City Board of Education

Dated: November 10, 2015
290-8-9.12 Gifted

290-8-9.12.(2) Referral

(c) Second Grade Child Find. All second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist provided by the State Department of Education.

(d) Standard Referral. A student may be referred for consideration for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. Standard referrals may occur at any time for students six years of age and older. Parents must be informed when students are referred.

(e) Gifted Referrals Screening Team (GRST). Each LEA must establish a team(s) to review referrals to determine if further assessment is indicated. Each team should consist of at least three individuals including someone knowledgeable about the student and someone knowledgeable about gifted education.

290-8-9.12.(5) Eligibility Determination

(c) Eligibility Criteria. Two methods of eligibility determination are available. The student may not be determined ineligible without having the matrix applied.

1. Automatic Eligibility. A student may be determined automatically eligible for gifted services when the obtained full scale/composite IQ score on an individually administered test of intelligence (NOT a screener) is two standard deviations above the mean or higher; or either the Verbal Average Standard score or Figural Creativity Index of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking is at or above the 97th national percentile.

2. Matrix of Multiple Criteria. The matrix of multiple criteria developed by the State Department of Education, requires information in the areas described above in (4)(a)1-4 of this section.

   (i) Use of other matrices must be approved by the State Department of Education.

   (ii) Students with environmental, cultural, economic, or language differences may not be determined ineligible until both verbal and nonverbal abilities have been assessed.
For the above AAC items, Huntsville City Board of Education proposes an identification process created in consultation with a nationally known gifted education and programming consultant.

Timeline for implementation: August 1, 2015

Action Steps:

a. Provide Gifted Teachers professional development in administration of CogAt
b. Using the CogAt as the universal screener, the CogAt will begin to be administered in every second grade classroom by 1/31/16.
c. The identification process will also involve a review of the following evidence:
   a. Work Samples from the areas of Math, Creativity, and Language Arts
   b. Creativity Scales
   c. Aptitude scores
   d. Grades
   e. Standardized test scores
d. Convene an Identification Committee comprised of Psychologists, Counselors, Administrators, a Psychometrist, the Gifted Coordinator, and a Regular Education Teacher to meet on a quarterly basis to review referrals, test scores, and evidence to determine eligibility.

Staff Responsible:

- Gifted Teacher
- Gifted Coordinator
- Special Education Director
- Psychometrist

Evidence of Completion: Eligibility meetings will be held quarterly with documentation of committee membership and attendance to be submitted to the court.

290-8-9.12.(6) Placement and Service Delivery Options.

LEAs must utilize a variety of service delivery options that may include but are not limited to resource room pull-out, consultation, mentorships, advanced classes, and independent study. Gifted students' need for complexity and accelerated pacing must be accommodated for in the general education program. Accommodations may include strategies such as flexible skills grouping, cluster grouping with differentiation, curriculum compacting, subject and grade acceleration, dual enrollment, and advanced classes. Each LEA must establish and implement a procedure for considering any requests for subject or grade acceleration. The procedures must be approved by the State Department of Education and will be included in the LEA Plan for Gifted.

(a) Modes of service delivery may vary by grade and/or grade level cluster but must be consistent from school to school. In addition, services must be comparable in quality and duration from school to school within an LEA.
(b) Modes of service delivery to each grade level or grade level cluster or the intent to utilize general education staff to teach advanced classes must be approved by the State Department of Education in the LEA Plan for Gifted. In the event that general education staff are utilized, they must be knowledgeable of gifted learners, trained in differentiation, and demonstrate a willingness to address the needs of diverse learners. Exceptions to the modes of service delivery for any grade or grade level cluster require prior state approval.

290-8-9.12.(8) Administration.

(d) Child Count.
Gifted students must be included in the LEA’s Child Count when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Student is identified by state approved standards
2. Services can be documented as of the State capture date for Child Count.

(e) LEA Plan for Gifted Services.
LEAs must develop and implement, according to state guidelines, a written plan for serving gifted students. The plan will include:

1. Philosophy,
2. Child Find activities,
3. Screening/eligibility criteria,
4. Service delivery options for each grade level or grade level cluster,
5. Subject and grade acceleration procedures,
6. Teaching assignments and other responsibilities of gifted specialists,
7. Professional development for gifted specialists and general educators,
8. Other information as required by the State Department of Education.

For the above AAC items, Huntsville City Board of Education proposes to use an enrichment model developed with a nationally known consultant which cultivates talent in Kindergarten and First Grade students with the purpose to develop and promote the identification of gifted students, particularly previously under-identified students; incorporating principals of cultural responsiveness; and leading to the success of gifted students of all racial and socio-economic groups. Gifted teachers will collaborate with general education teachers at their school to tailor the enrichment model described above.

Timeline for implementation: by August 1, 2015

Action Steps:

a. Research training activities available in the areas of recommended curriculum, new identification process, and new GATE plan.
b. Convene curriculum committees to develop materials for enrichment, talent development, and gifted pull-out services.
c. Convene a committee (Gifted Advisory Committee) to provide oversight of program.
d. Check with Finance to secure funds (if necessary) to hire speakers/trainers and obtain materials by 2/15/15.
e. Complete requisition forms by 2/20/15.
f. Schedule training and work sessions to be held on the following tentative dates:
   a. 2/27/15
   b. 3/20/15
   c. 4/24/15
   d. 5/15/15
   e. 6/15/15

Staff Responsible:
- Gifted Coordinator
- SPED Director

Evidence of Completion: Sign-in sheets/professional development attendance to be submitted to the court and documentation of completed curriculum

First Monitoring Date: 2/15/15


The following numbers are considered to be appropriate when determining caseloads for gifted specialists:
   (a) Elementary - 45 total, no more than 15 at one time.

For the above AAC item, Huntsville City Schools proposes to assign Gifted Teachers according to whole school populations rather than gifted populations in order to adequately address the enrichment and talent development needs of the entire school.

Timeline for implementation: by August 1, 2015

Action Steps:
   a. Conduct population count of each elementary school in the Huntsville City District.
   b. Assure each school has dedicated classroom space and at least one dedicated gifted teacher in place.

Staff Responsible:
- Gifted Coordinator
- SPED Director

Evidence of Completion: Assignment of Gifted Teacher at each school, assurance statement from each elementary school principal of dedicated space for GATE program.
Provide greater flexibility in meeting the educational needs of a diverse student population

Improve educational performance through greater school autonomy and managerial flexibility to administer programs and budgetary matters

Provide greater control to local decision making

Leverage new methods and tools to improve outcomes and solve persistent problems

Challenge to make important choices

Enable an entirely new way of thinking
An Innovative School System

Pursuant to the *Alabama Accountability Act* 2013-64, to be considered as an innovative school system shall successfully comply with the requirements and procedures set forth by the State Department of Education flexibility contracts.

### Innovative School System Components

**Flexibility Contract:** “A flexibility contract between the local school system and the State Board of Education wherein a local school system may apply for programmatic flexibility or budgetary flexibility, or both, from state laws, regulations, and policies, including regulations and policies promulgated by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education.”

**Innovation Plan:** “The request of a local school system for flexibility and plan for annual accountability measures and five-year targets for all participating schools within the school system.”

The **Flexibility Contract** and the **Innovation Plan** - The Flexibility Contract sets forth the local school system's request for relief from specific mandates in state law, regulations, and policies. In exchange for the requested flexibility, the local school system proposes an Innovation Plan to meet annual accountability benchmarks and its five-year targets.

### Flexibility Contract and Innovation Plan Requirements

**Contract Requirements:**

The proposed Innovative School System shall:

1. Submit to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) a letter of intent to pursue a flexibility contract.
2. Submit to the ALSDE a Resolution adopted by the local board supporting the intent to pursue a Flexibility Contract, the proposal, and the anticipated timeline of the local school system. (The submitted resolution indicates that an opportunity for full discussion and public input, including a public hearing, was provided before submitting a Flexibility Contract proposal to the ALSDE.)
3. Submit to the ALSDE a document of assurance stating the local board shall provide consistency in leadership and a commitment to the state standards, assessments, and academic rigor.
Innovation Plan Requirements:
The proposed Innovative School System shall:
1. Submit to the ALSDE the school year that the local school system expects the Flexibility Contract to begin.
2. Submit to the ALSDE the list of state laws, regulations, and policies that the local school system is seeking to waive in its Flexibility Contract.
3. Submit a list of schools included in the innovation plan of the local school system.
4. Submit to the ALSDE the final Innovation Plan, as recommended by the local superintendent of education and approved by the local board of education.

Upon receipt of the Innovation Plan/Flexibility Contract by the ALSDE, a letter of confirmation of receipt will be sent to the local superintendent and the process for review will begin. Within 60 days, the innovation plan will be placed on an Alabama State Board of Education work session and regular meeting agenda for discussion and final determination. The school system will receive written notification of approval or non-approval. Should the innovation/flexibility plan be denied, an outline of procedures and necessary steps to amend and resubmit will be communicated to the local superintendent.

Innovation Plan Assurances

The following are requirements that cannot be waived:
- Those imposed by federal law
- Those related to the health and safety of students or employees
- Those imposed by ethics laws
- Those imposed by open records or open meetings laws
- Those related to financial or academic reporting or transparency
- Those designed to protect the civil rights of students or employees
- Those related to the state retirement system or state health insurance plan
- Those that would compensate an employee at an annual amount that is less than the amount the employee would otherwise be afforded through the State Minimum Salary Schedule
- Those that would involuntarily remove any rights or privileges acquired by any employee under the Students First Act of 2011, Title 16, Chapter 24C, Code of Alabama 1975
- Those that would deny any right or privilege granted to a new employee pursuant to the Students First Act of 2011
- Those that would authorize the formation of a charter school

Certifying Signatures of the Local Superintendent and Local Board President

To be considered as an Innovative School System, we certify that we comply with the requirements of Act 2013-64 and procedures set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education regarding Flexibility Contract requirements and Innovation Plan requirements.

Please sign below:

[Signature]
Local Superintendent (Date)

[Signature]
Local Board President (Date)
Section 1 - Applicant Information

Indicate the intended school year for implementing the Innovation/Flexibility Plan: 2015-16

Please complete the following information:
School System Applying: Huntsville City Board of Education
School System Superintendent: E. Casey Wardynski, PhD.
School System Contact’s Name & Title (if different than superintendent): Amosene Sledge
Contact’s Telephone Number: 256 428 6872
Contact’s E-Mail Address: Amosene.sledge@hsv-k12.org

Please complete the chart below for system leaders responsible for supporting the plan (add rows as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Casey Wardynski, PhD.</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Barbara Cooper</td>
<td>Deputy Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Catherine Vasile</td>
<td>Director of Elementary Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Pickens</td>
<td>Strategy and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amosene Sledge</td>
<td>Director of Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy G. Graham</td>
<td>Gifted Services Coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete the chart below for each school involved/impacted by the plan (add rows as needed):

Schools Impacted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy for Arts and Academics</td>
<td>Amy Van Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy for Science and Foreign Language</td>
<td>Jeanne Greer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blossomwood Elementary School</td>
<td>Jamie Burton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaffee Elementary School</td>
<td>Brad Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger Elementary School</td>
<td>Michele Wallace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapman Schools P-8</td>
<td>Glenn Bryant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Dawson Elementary School</td>
<td>Deana Henson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farley Elementary School</td>
<td>Towana Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsmith Schiffman Elementary School</td>
<td>Jennifer Douthit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Cove Elementary School</td>
<td>Autumn Bray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name</td>
<td>Teacher Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Elementary School</td>
<td>Tim Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>JE Williams Elementary School</td>
<td>Stewart Thorson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones Valley Elementary School</td>
<td>Taunya Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood Elementary School</td>
<td>Fredrick Barnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School</td>
<td>Lynette Alexander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonnell Elementary School</td>
<td>Laura Worshim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monte Sano Elementary School</td>
<td>Melissa Lindsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montview Elementary School</td>
<td>Lisa Monte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Gap P-8</td>
<td>Heather Bardwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Elementary School</td>
<td>Patty Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence Elementary School</td>
<td>Paul Bonner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ridgecrest Elementary School</td>
<td>Peggy Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Hills Elementary School</td>
<td>Hovet Dixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Place / Sonnie Herford Elementary School</td>
<td>Mark McCrory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weatherly Heights Elementary School</td>
<td>Debra West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitesburg P-8</td>
<td>Barbara Little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2 - Specific Waiver Requests

Indicate the specific type(s) of policy or code that prohibit or constrain the plan from which you wish to request a waiver.

Indicate in the table below the waiver request type(s) that apply:
- ALSDE Policy Waiver Request (Specify memorandum, etc., outlining policy)
- Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) Statute Waiver Request (Specify AAC Rule No., etc.)
- Code of Alabama 1975 Waiver Request (Specify law, etc.)

(Insert additional rows as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waiver Request Type</th>
<th>Flexibility Requested (List specific law, regulation, or policy from which relief is sought.)</th>
<th>Impact of the Waiver (What will the waiver enable the school to do differently, etc.?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>AAC 290-8-9.12.(2)(c-e) AAC 290-8-9.12.(5)(c)</td>
<td>Waiver will allow HCS to revise identification process (referral and Eligibility Determination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>AAC 290-8-9.12.(6)(a-b) AAC 290-8-9.12.(8)(d-e)</td>
<td>Waiver will allow HCS to implement talent development model PreK-5th grade, identification of under-represented populations, collaboration in regular classroom, and culturally responsive gifted classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>AAC 290-8-9.12.(9)</td>
<td>Assigning teachers according to school population rather than caseload number will facilitate talent development school wide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3 - Vision

Creative Vision for the Plan

Please describe the plan's vision, goals, and innovative features for student success that will be addressed. Share the purpose and expected outcome for students. Also include the intended impact of the flexibility requested in the innovation plan. Include how the proposal reflects Alabama’s PLAN 2020 and/or the system’s strategic plan. If applicable, share data, best practices, and any community and stakeholder support that support the plan.
Huntsville City Board of Education proposes revisions to the current gifted and talented program as directed by a Board hired, nationally renowned consultant. These revisions will not only establish equity in programming but will also close the excellence gap that exists for Huntsville's under-represented student community. These revisions also address the concern of the United States Department of Justice and allow Huntsville City Board of Education to achieve unitary status.

Huntsville City Board of Education's identification process will become more equitable to ensure all students who are eligible will receive gifted services by using instruments that are valid, reliable, and sensitive to cultural bias (CogAT and Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students). After screening, a committee diverse in terms of race and professional role will decide on placement of students. The Committee will hold eligibility meetings quarterly. Huntsville City Schools requests that ALSDE recognizes student gifted qualification within the state as designated by the Huntsville District. Additionally, we request Huntsville City Schools be granted access to STI SETS to warehouse records of identification processes.

Closely grounded in the CCRS and based on an RtI model, students who are identified as gifted, advanced learners, and students who are high achievers will receive services according to three tiers. Tier I (universal) will receive differentiated classroom curriculum, enrichment options, and grouping by ability and in clusters. Tier II (strategic) will receive advanced pull-out programming, curriculum compacting, cross grade grouping, and grade acceleration. Tier III (Intensive) will receive intensive subject or grade acceleration. All tiers will have access to project-based studies.

Identified Gifted and Talented Students will receive pull-out services grounded in the CCRS, specifically in Language Arts and Mathematics. Additionally, identified students will pursue independent, student-driven, problem-based study projects facilitated by the gifted teacher. All curriculum facilitated by the gifted teacher to advanced and gifted students will provide rigor and challenge, extending the Common Core Standards and student process and products beyond that of the regular curriculum, leading to the success of gifted and talented students of all races and closing the excellence gap that exists for under-identified students. Every identified student will receive an Advanced Education Plan (AEP), individualized to the student, based on strength area and interest, to be reviewed by the AEP team (Gifted Teacher, Classroom Teacher, and Parent) every year. The Gifted Classroom environment will be culturally responsive and rigorous with high expectations for all students supported by Mindsets Education embedded in all curriculums.

Huntsville City Board of Education will provide a unified Talent Development Program for Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade to ensure equitable access and closing of the excellence gap by preparing all high aptitude students for identification.

Huntsville City Board of Education will document and monitor the Gifted Program via a data warehouse created specifically to track progress of gifted and talented students related to their demographics.

Huntsville City Board of Education will provide student and home support through outreach with specifically targeted outreach to under-represented populations.

All Gifted Teachers in Huntsville City Schools will be qualified by Alabama State Department of Education Standards.

All Gifted Teachers will receive comprehensive Professional Development in the areas of Cultural Responsiveness, structuring classroom activities in response to pre- and formative assessment, and collaborating with the general education classroom teacher with ongoing Professional Development for established Gifted Teachers. Professional Development will be ongoing with an emphasis on new teacher education. All principals will receive professional development regarding support of the Gifted Program within the Elementary School Setting.

Huntsville City Board of Education is referred to as HCS in the rest of this document.
Aspirations, Expectations, and Communicating Outcomes

Please specify measureable goals, objectives, activities, and a timeline for meeting the identified outcomes of the plan. Please specify any alternative accountability measures/benchmarks to be put in place as a result of the flexibility requested. Share how the Innovation Plan will be monitored and evaluated, and how results will be reported. Indicate how the impact on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives will be shared within your school system and beyond (e.g., students, teachers, parents, community, MEGA, CLAS). Share how implementation of this Innovation Plan will be sustained by current leadership.

The objective of this project is to allow the HCS to offer a gifted services model implemented in each school to provide direct services to gifted students, further talent development through the elementary school years, and to assist teachers in gifted identification among students who may have been overlooked in other identification processes and procedures. This waiver will allow HCS to ensure the equitable identification and provision of Special Education Services to eligible Gifted Students of all races and socio-economic statuses and to address concerns of the United States Department of Justice as identified in Sonnie Wellington Hereford, IV, et al and The United States of America v. Huntsville Board of Education. The Huntsville City Board of Education will provide the following evidence for each of the following items on the specified timeline:

Huntsville City Board of Education proposes an identification process created in consultation with a nationally known gifted education and programming consultant.

Timeline for implementation: August 1, 2015

Action Steps:

a. Provide Gifted Teachers professional development in administration of CogAt
b. Using the CogAt as the universal screener, the CogAt will begin to be administered in every second grade classroom by 1/31/16.
c. The identification process will also involve a review of the following evidence:
   a. Work Samples from the areas of Math, Creativity, and Language Arts
   b. Creativity Scales
   c. Behavioral Scales
d. Aptitude scores
e. Grades
   f. Standardized test scores
d. Convene an Identification Committee comprised of Psychologists, Counselors, Administrators, a Psychometrist, the Gifted Coordinator, and a Regular Education Teacher to meet on a quarterly basis to review referrals, test scores, and evidence to determine eligibility.

Staff Responsible:

- Gifted Teacher
- Gifted Coordinator
- Special Education Director
in place.

b. Each school has dedicated classroom space and at least one dedicated gifted teacher.

c. Conduct population count of each elementary school in the Huntsville City District.

Action Steps:

Timeline for Implementation: By August 1, 2015

School:

Addition to gifted populations in order to adequately address the talent development needs of the entire Huntsville City Schools population.

First Monitoring Date: 2/15/15

Evidence of Completion: Sign-in sheets/professional development attendance to be submitted to the court.

Staff Responsible:

- Director
- Gifted Coordinator

Staff Responsible:

- 2/15/15
- 3/15/15
- 4/15/15
- 5/15/15
- 6/15/15

Schedule training and work sessions to be held on the following tentative dates:

- Complete requisition forms by 2/20/15.
- Complete requisition forms by 2/20/15.
- Complete requisition forms by 2/20/15.
- Complete requisition forms by 2/20/15.

Research training activities available in the areas of recommended curriculum, new identification

Action Steps:

Timeline for Implementation: By August 1, 2015

To follow the Talent Development model described above:

a. Gifted teachers will collaborate with general education teachers at their school and socio-economic groups. Gifted education will focus on enrichment and talent development principles of cultural responsiveness and leading to the success of gifted students of all racial backgrounds.

b. Curriculum committee to develop materials for enrichment, talent development, and process, and new grant.

c. Research training activities available in the areas of recommended curriculum, new identification.
Staff Responsible:

- Gifted Coordinator
- SPED Director

Evidence of Completion: Assignment of Gifted Teacher at each school, assurance statement from each elementary school principal of dedicated space for GATE program.

Section 5 - Assurances, Documentation, Submission

Flexibility and Innovation Plan Submission Requirements

In order to assure that the application is complete, verify that:

- All assurances, documents, resolutions, and certifying signatures, or any other requirement as specified in the Alabama Accountability Act 2013-64, and any outlined within the application, are included (pages 2 and 3, An Innovative School System).
- Specific waiver requests for relief from rules, policies, code, etc., have been included (page 5, Specific Waiver Requests).
- The innovation plan reflects the vision and goals of Alabama PLAN 2020 and/or the school system strategic plan (page 5, Waiver Summary).
- Any data collected or disseminated does not violate the privacy rights of any student or employee.

Submitting the Innovation Plan:

- It is requested that the Innovation Plan/Flexibility Contract be submitted electronically. The superintendent will receive a letter confirming the date of receipt of the Innovation Plan. Within 60 days, the approval or non-approval status will be communicated to the local superintendent.
- Communication and collaboration during the process is welcomed and encouraged. All questions regarding the Innovation Plan/Flexibility Waiver should be directed to Mrs. Karen Porter (kporter@alsde.edu or 334-242-8154).