MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education
    City and County Special Education Coordinators
    City and County Gifted Education Coordinators

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
      State Superintendent of Education

RE: Protected Reading, Math, and Response to Instruction (RtI) Intervention Time

April 9, 2012

An issue has emerged regarding the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); and Response to Instruction (RtI) concerning protected reading, math, and RtI intervention times.

The ARI, AMSTI, and RtI do not require that gifted students functioning on or above grade level in reading and math remain in the general education classrooms during protected reading, math, or RtI intervention times. One important benefit of sending students to participate in gifted and enrichment pullout programs to work at a higher level is that the general education teachers can use this time to interact with a smaller group of students, allowing for more individualized attention.

When attending gifted or enrichment program pullout classes, students are reading, writing, computing, problem solving, and learning concepts at or significantly above grade level. Therefore, it is acceptable to schedule gifted or enrichment program classes during protected math or reading times or during RtI intervention time. However, great care should be taken in assuring that the general education teacher and the gifted specialist consult to ensure that these students continue to develop skillfully in reading and math.

In the rare cases when gifted/enrichment students have not benchmarked, multiple criteria should be considered in determining whether or not they should attend gifted/enrichment classes during the protected times. These criteria should include comprehension, achievement test scores, grades, class work, reading conference anecdotes, journal writing and reflection, and student enjoyment of reading. These students may be at risk socially and emotionally and require special support offered by the gifted program in order to meet their affective and cognitive needs.
However, the *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) states that “Only the GEP Committee can make the determination to interrupt [gifted] services due to behavioral or academic issues” (290-8-9.12(7)(h)). If, after considering the above, the decision is made to keep an identified gifted student out of gifted education pullout classes during protected reading and/or math times, a new gifted education plan (GEP) meeting must be held with the parent, classroom teacher, gifted specialist, and gifted/special education coordinator. This meeting must take place before gifted pullout services are interrupted. In such cases, alternate gifted services must be provided:

- Curriculum compacting with differentiation of core curriculum, RtI, in the general education classroom.
- When students exhibit mastery of material before it is taught, gifted services will be provided in the form of:
  - Pullout classes with the gifted specialist.
  - Interest-based curriculum with appropriate depth, complexity, and pacing.
  - Independent projects with the general education teacher and the gifted specialist working consultatively.

These alternate services must be written into the new GEP and the *Accommodations for Gifted Students in the General Education Classroom Form*, and documentation and evidence of implementation of these alternate services must be attached to the GEP.

Please contact the Gifted Education Specialists, Ms. Shirley Farrell at sfarrell@alsde.edu or Ms. Nancy Johnson at njohnson@alsde.edu, or call (334) 242-8114 if you have questions concerning this matter. Thank you for your cooperation.

TRB/NJ/LS

cc. Mrs. Sherrill W. Parris  
Dr. Linda Felton-Smith  
Dr. Julie P. Hannah  
Ms. Robin Nelson  
Mrs. Cynthia Brown  
Mr. Steve Ricks  
Ms. Judy Stone  
Mrs. Sara B. Wright  
Mrs. Christine Spear  
Ms. Crystal Richardson  
Mr. Barry Blackwell  
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