

**Republika e Kosovës**

**Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo**

***Qeveria –Vlada-Government***

*Ministria e Arsimit Shkencës dhe Teknologjisë*

*Ministarstvo za Obrazovanje Nauku i Tehnologiju*

*Ministry of Education Science and Tehnology*

***Guide to AI implementation for students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talents***

 [Keywords]

 Prishtina

 2019

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**Entry**

This guide is drafted in order to facilitate the work for AI implementation for children with extraordinary intelligence, talent and gift.

The guide is based on comprehensive international literature adjusted specifically to this target group as well as to the relevant documentation and legal infrastructure of our country. Children with extraordinary intelligence, talent, and gift are included in the group of children with special educational needs who require special care and attention in society, starting from the highest state levels, to the local government levels.

Earlier, the provision of special education and training for very smart or talented students was considered undemocratic and elitist action, and today it is acknowledged that talented students are inappropriately treated in almost all public schools and therefore are not treated in accordance with skills and their possessing potentials.

The purpose of the guide is to increase awareness of the needs of students with extraordinary skills, talents and gift, to influence their promotion and advancement by differentiating curricula, developing effective national strategies, providing good practice models that support and nurture the development of students with extraordinary skills.

There are individually identified cases of children with talent and gift, but there is a lack of a national strategy that would help the advancement of these children. Therefore, in the absence of legal infrastructure in Kosova in order to provide these children with adequate and continuous support, AI has been drafted, the leader of which is also this guide.

The guide can be used in any educational environment. It is designed to be used by all educational institutions and should be available to a broader group of professionals who are directly involved in student education. This includes parents / guardians, competent persons who deal with children with special educational needs, management staff, guardians, those who provide support and counseling services etc.

There is no term around which there is universal agreement for students who would generally be described as 'with extraordinary ability, talent, or gift’. Some descriptions include the term genius, with gift, very smart, superior, highly capable and talented.

The term with extraordinary ability, talent, and gift is used in the guide to describe students seeking opportunities for enrichment (advanced programs) and extensions (additional programs) that go beyond those given to ordinary students, their peers. It should be noted that good practice for extraordinary students is also good practice for all students and can improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout schooling.

**Legal infrastructure and principles for the education of children with extraordinary intelligence, gift and talent**

The legal infrastructure for education and support of children with extraordinary intelligence, talent and gift is not that he meets the needs and potentials of this target group at a satisfactory level.

For the moment education and support of this group of children is based on:

* Law No. 04 / L-032 Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosova, Article 39, point 4 as well as Article 40.
* Kosova Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021
* AI/////for talent and gift
* UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Children 1989.
* Salamanca Declaration 1994 etc.
* The curriculum framework of pre-university education of the Republic of Kosova.

 At the same time, upbringing and educating students with extraordinary intelligence, gift and talent in creative and artistic academic fields is based on the international principles of children's rights such as:

Inclusion: is a process of capacity building in the education system to reach all students regardless of the economic situation, gender, ethnicity, language, disabilities and injuries. As general principle, inclusion should guide all educational policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a fundamental human right and basis of a more righteous and equal society.

Inclusive education requires reconstruction of cultures, structures, experiences and methodologies in schools. Schools should be transformed in order to take care for all children in communities and members of community are needed to support schools and to welcome all children in schools.

**Non-discrimination:** discrimination is considered any form of distinction, exclusion, limitation or any preference, with a view to denying or refusing equal rights and protection, as well as presents denial of equality principle and insult to human dignity. Depending on the reason for such treatment, we can talk about discrimination on a racial, national, colour, gender, religion basis, etc.

**Equality**: means visibility, empowerment, responsibility and equal participation for female and male at all public and private life spheres and an equal approach in distribution of resources between female and male.

**Achieving potential** – all people should be given the right to education and full development of the human personality, empowering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and achievements of their full potential.

**Protection -** all people should be guaranteed the right to safe life and well-being, providing protection from possible physical, social and emotional injuries; also in the context of the defence, include the right of access to information and the provision of personal data and to address them only for objective purposes.

All these principles should be respected in order for these students to feel realistic towards their potential.

**The definition and general characteristics for students with extraordinary intelligence, talent, and gift**

Talented children, with gift and / or with extraordinary abilities are children who demonstrate extraordinary levels of gift, extraordinary abilities, or competences in one or several fields. These fields include structured aspects of activities in the scopes of activities, such as: mathematics, music, language or any set of sense-motoric skills, such as: painting, dancing, sports, etc.

Usually in literature review, the same as in various national associations of many states, that address the issue of educating talented and gift children, exist a lot of definitions and distinctive nuances for the terms “talent”, “gift” as well as “extraordinary ability”. Although the three terms are closely interrelated as a concept, some differences exist in content for the definitions:

**Extraordinary ability:** refers to students with more-than-the-norm ability (intelligence) when compared to the same age. The extra-ordinary ability can appear in one or more fields such as: intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or in a specific academic field, etc.

**Gift:** refers to the possession and usage of a natural extra-ordinary ability, often called/known as “tendency” in a particular field that distinguishes the student from peers.

**Talent**: refers to the mastery of an extra-ordinary ability, which the individual develops in a systematic way, known differently as competence, in a particular field, that distinguishes the child from peers.

Talented students, with extra-ordinary gift and intelligence are not students who learn fast and without much effort. Usually the work of these students is original and more advanced for their age and potentially can have a great importance for the future as well as within multiple intelligences these children can for example, read fluently without struggles from the age of 3 – 4, or can play a musical instrument as if they were grown up or trained, can be very prone to solve various algebra problems, while their peers cannot do simple summations.

This way, the recent concepts broaden the perception of gifts and talents and also consider the attention that has to be given to culture, language and special needs of the child.

In this way, recent concepts have broadened the perspective for gift and talents and also consider the attention to be given to the culture, language, and special needs of the child.

Extraordinary talents are found in children and young people of all cultural groups, all of the economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavour. These new concepts further enable identification and treatment of children in different dimensions and from different perspectives of gift, talent, or extraordinary skills.

The development of extraordinary skills, talents and / or gift is a life process and is influenced by many complex factors, both in terms of strengthening the development of these abilities and in terms of preventing factors for the development and further support of extraordinary skills, talents and / or gift.

There are some general features for students with extraordinary IQ, talent and gift and these features distinguish from their peers, such as: have a developed memory, work independently, quickly learn abstract relationships, different patterns, propose ideas and solutions to certain problems, display curiosity in various areas, etc.

According to studies of the field of education of gift and talented children, the characteristics of talented and gift students can be studied and distinguished in several dimensions:

* Characteristics Related to Learning (Learning);
* Characteristics related to self-regulation;
* Characteristics related to creative thinking;
* Social characteristics and of leadership (leadership);
* Characteristics related to motivation

There are also some distinctive criteria that can be extended to three curves such as:

* pronounced intellectual ability,
* extraordinary creativity,
* greater emotions and sensitivity to different situations and problems in society.

**Duties and responsibilities of educational institutions**

All educational institutions in their annual and long-term development plans and programs should also include talented and gift children.

Talented and gift students are in the same class with other students but the teacher provides instruction to meet their needs based on the modified curriculum and also creates a suitable climate in which students are an active part of the processes within the classroom. Among other things educational institutions should consider and should be focused on:

* Identifying and supporting students with talent and gift and sharing information with colleagues.
* Creating links with partner schools to develop a common strategy for the development of talented and gift children.
* Sharing personal development experiences with staff inside and outside the school.
* Cooperation with governmental and non-governmental state institutions.
* Regular monitoring and reporting on the progress and needs of talented and gift students.
* Use of differential learning forms
* Grouping of talented and gift students together for a common activity.
* The comfort movement of talented and gift students from one class to another class for the realization of their activity.

Educational bodies should ensure that children / students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talent become part of the planning as in:

1. **School Development Plan:** In the framework of development priorities, the identification and forms of support for the students / children with special abilities, gifts and special talents in the academic and creative fields

2. **Annual school plans: -** at school level all children / students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talents should be identified in the academic and creative arts fields and included in the annual school plan, additional activities planned to be organized for these schools students including modification of subject curricula, individualized plans, advanced learning, co-operation with external experts, race organization etc.

3. **Teacher Plans -** Teachers need to identify children / students with extraordinary skills, gift and talent in creative and artistic academic fields and based on their individual needs should bear in mind that planning should include their needs and interests in a way that teaching and learning should be in line with their potentials and consequently these students should maximally benefit from education.

Also, a student's extraordinary ability may not be noticed because he/she may have a physical, intellectual, or disability impairment. Within the group of students with extraordinary abilities are those who, regardless of their extraordinary ability, can achieve consistently below average results due to boredom, lack of interest or perfection that obstructs / paralyzes or even the lack of push from outside.

There are also pupils whose extraordinariness may be masked by the fact that they are not being educated in their mother tongue. Some students from minority backgrounds may not show "traditional" signs of extraordinaryity, given that different cultures are valued different values and skills and teachers may not be familiar with signs of extraordinaryity beyond the norm. Given such diversity, it is not uncommon for students with extraordinary skills, talent and gift to pass unnoticed in school.

**Identification, forms and reference for the identification of students with extraordinary intelligence, talents and gift**

Identification as an initial process, and afterwards the assessment and support of students with extraordinary abilities, talents and gift, should be a continuous, complex process that directly provides information for planning purposes of the measures to be taken in relation to these students.

While there are many different approaches toward identifying and evaluating students with extraordinary skills, it is important to note that the most comprehensive approach is one that involves a series of methods.

Early identification of students with extraordinary abilities is important to prevent achievements below their potential in the future. However, identification and evaluation procedures for students with disabilities are not as clearly defined as in other areas of special education.

While there are some common aspects regarding talent, gift, and extraordinary skills, the same approach to all categories would not be the most appropriate approach. The talented, gift, or extraordinary students exhibit different characteristics, features and different ways of expressing their talents or gifts, so different issues should also be considered throughout the identification phase and should be supported by some principles during identification phase as well;

* Gift is dynamic aspect, not static therefore even the
* The gift is a dynamic, not static aspect, so the issue of identification should be done in different time periods, offering numerous opportunities to express the gift;
* Identification and evaluation through a single test should not be used as a main tool to conclude whether the child has the gift, talent, or extraordinary ability**.**
* The gift is present in all races, ethnicities, economic levels, and marginalized groups. Identification should be made in diverse populations, including cultures and contexts
* The gift may appear in the context of a specific interest or category: Professionals making identification should look for ways to collect examples across different fields and contexts, such as using "multiple identification procedures”;
* Early school identifications increase the likelihood of gifts to develop into talents. The identification of students with extraordinary skills, talent and gift is related to the context in which each school will have a group of students who seek enhanced educational opportunities, regardless of how they compare with students with extraordinary skills from others schools. Taking this into consideration, approximately 5-10% of the school population can be of exceptional abilities and will show very high achievement levels in one or more of the following areas:
* general intellectual ability or talent,
* specific academic abilities or talent,
* visual and performing arts and sports,
* leadership skills,
* creative and productive thinking,
* mechanical wisdom,
* special skills in empathy, understanding and negotiation.

***Initial identification:***

Initial identification in the house environment is initially made by the parent / guardian of the child. Parents / guardians are more likely to have detailed knowledge of their children's skills and can be a very valuable source of information for identifying a student with extraordinary abilities. Parents / guardians, by observing their child from birth, usually look at the ability long before the child goes to school. At school, teachers are the ones who should be able to recognize a student with extraordinary skills who may need more depth and complexity in the lesson or to refer to further assessments and services.

Teachers can become aware for an extraordinary student in their classrooms through its performance in the assessment tests or exams. They may be aware of a student's unusual approach to a problem or to displaying skills or behaviors beyond his age in a particular subject.

Therefore, all teachers should consider that:

* To recognize differences in learning, developmental aspects and cognitive / affective characteristics of students with extraordinary and talented skills, including those of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and identification of their academic and social-emotional needs.
* Design, modify for learning and performance of students with extraordinary abilities and talents that enhance creativity, acceleration, depth and complexity in academic subjects and in specialized areas;
* Select, adapt and use a variety of evidence-based learning strategies to advance students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talent

***Identification form and mechanisms***

**Observation** is one of the first forms of identification of children with talent and gift.

The belief that a student may have extraordinary ability may come from different sources and may occur throughout the various phases of its development from early childhood toward adulthood, for example:

* parents can notice that their child is developing skills faster than other children of the same age.
* rapid development in early childhood can be observed and recorded during developmental controls by personnel of relevant fields
* Society may observe early childhood speech development, physical development, and / or use of its broad vocabulary.
* teachers at the gaming group / basic level may see that the newly enrolled child is capable of performing tasks far beyond the normal expectations of its peer.
* teachers at other levels and some specific subjects may notice that challenging tasks are easily accomplished along with a request for further challenge, which if not fulfilled, is quickly replaced by boredom.

Teachers and others can have easier observation if they are assisted by checklists.

Identification also relies on some of the standardized instruments and techniques which includes;

* **Knowledge tests**
* **Skills and intelligence tests**
* **Competitions at the school level**
* **Competitions at the commune level**
* **Competitions at the state level**

**TESTING:** represents one of the objective and systematic ways to identify children with gift, talent, or extraordinary ability. Tests of skills and knowledge enable the provision of numbers and outcomes to describe student performance in relation to others. Tests are usually used as initial requirements for inclusion in specific programs or if large discrepancies are foreseen in learning. However, formal evaluations through tests are only an instrument to determine gift, talent, or extraordinary ability.

It is very important that the tests match the characteristics of gifted or talented students within a certain / specific field. In this way, the variety of features, such as: the features related to learning, intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership or specific academic fields require that identification be made through many estimates.

Usually the quantitative instruments use the results to describe students' performance in relation to others, or the extent to which students possess special features in relation to the standard performance level.

### Achievement / knowledge tests

These types of tests usually enable us to determine what the learner is capable of, and whether these knowledges are more advanced than of its peers at the same level. These tests can be academic in specific fields, such as in math, language, or art, or may be standardized knowledge tests. Usually, knowledge tests designed for gifted and talented populations include math skills tests for talented and gifted students or examining the evaluation for talented primary students.

**Skills tests**

Results of tests related to the intelligence coefficient or the results of cognitive ability tests are used to provide information on the intellectual field to identify students with gifts and talents. These tests do not help much in providing information to identify students with creative skills, leadership, or any other skill.

**Individual Tests**

Non-verbal tests such as: non-verbal intelligence tests that may be more effective for students from different cultures and different linguistic backgrounds and economic conditions in order to eliminate potential barriers.

**ORGANIZING COMPETITIONS:** is done according to the hierarchy that begins at the school, municipal level and state level and by specialized professional organizations.

Competitions of different types, fields, formats, and different levels are at the same time a way of identifying talents of both motivational and stimulating fields, so that students and children with these talents invest in their talents and to show it, especially if the best and most successful of these competitions are rewarded in various forms suitable for children / students. Therefore, the organization of different competitions is very important and should be done by the institutions (schools, MEDs, MEST) and by specialized non-governmental organizations. They can be organized for different fields and aspects, in different formats, in accordance with tuition levels, in individual and group form, etc.

In this group of competitions there are several types of competitions where the manner of their organization will be briefly described below:

* **Knowledge competitions**
* **Competitions on artistic fields**
* **Competitions for creativity and innovation**
* **Debate competitions**
* **Competitions organized by specialized organizations**

**KNOWLEDGE COMPETITIONS**

Knowledge competitions for specific fields / subjects are organized for students of different classes and levels of education, individually, from the school level to the country level.

Depending on the classroom and the level of student education, they include social and exact sciences, such as:

- albanian language,

- english language,

- history,

- geography,

- civic education,

- math,

- physics,

- chemistry,

- biology,

- ICT

- etc.

Knowledge competitions are organized from the school level to the country level as follows:

***School-level knowledge competitions***

Every school year schools organize individual school-level competitions for the above-mentioned fields / subjects. Teachers of the school, of same courses and levels, compile instruments (tests) with request (questions, assignments) for each subject and each class, which are administered same for all participating students.

The competition is organized at school level, on different days for different subjects. Each student is offered the opportunity to take part in its classroom level competition and in any subject that wants to participate.

After the competition, the three most successful students (the first three places) are announced for each subject and each class level, which is awarded, promoted and rewarded by the school. In addition, all these students are then included in the school-level support activities and programs provided by schools, in line with the talents, interests, needs and characteristics of these students.

Then, the students who take the first place for each subject and each grade level in school are sent from school to MED to participate in municipal level competitions organized by the MED.

Also, based on the highest number of points achieved during the school-level competition, the school also announces the 3 best and most successful school students (the top three places at school level) regardless of the subject's class. These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by the school.

***Knowledge competition at municipality level***

Each school year MEDs organize individual competitions at the municipal level for the above mentioned fields / subjects, including all students who have taken up the first place at the school level (for each subject and each grade level at school).

MED establishes special commissions at the municipal level, by engaging teachers of various schools, for all subjects and grades, who draft instruments (test) with requests (questions, assignments) for each subject and each grade, which are administered the same for all participating students.

The competition is organized at municipal level, on different days for different subjects. After the competition, each of the three most successful students (the first three places) at the municipal level are awarded for each subject and each class level, which are recognized, promoted and rewarded by the MED. In addition, all these students are then included in the activities and support programs provided at the municipal level organized by the MED, in accordance with the talents, interests, needs and characteristics of these students.

Then, the students who take the first place for each subject and each grade level at the municipal level are sent by the MED to the MEST to participate at the national level competitions organized by MEST.

Also, based on the highest number of points achieved during the competition at the municipal level, the MED also announces the 3 best and most successful students of the municipality (the first three places at municipal level) regardless of the grade subject. These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by the MED.

***Knowledge competitions at national level***

Each school year MEDs organize individual competitions at the municipal level for the above mentioned fields / subjects, including all students who have taken up the first place at the school level (for each subject and each grade level at school).

MEST creates special professional commissions at the country level, engaging independent subject experts, university professors and teachers of various schools, for all subjects and grades, who compile instruments (tests) with requests (questions, assignments) for each subjects and each grade, which are administered the same for all participating students.

The competition is organized at the country level, on different days for different subjects. After the competition, for each subject and each grade level, the 3 most successful students (the first three places) are declared at the country level, which are acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

Also, based on the highest number of points achieved during the competition at the country level, MEST announces the 3 best and most successful students of the country (the first three places at the country level) regardless of the subject's class. These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

*Additional clarification:* Due to the large number of students and schools, large municipalities such as Prishtina and Prizren send the first three places at national competitions, while other regional municipalities: Mitrovica, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Gjilan send to national level competitions the first two places. A similar principle can also be used by MEDs to decide that some schools with a large number of students can send two or three first places to municipal level competitions.

**COMPETITION FOR ARTISTIC FIELDS**

Competitions for artistic fields are organized for students of grades and different levels of education, individually, from school to country level.

Depending on classes and the level of student education, they include the fields of art, such as:

- painting,

- sculpture,

- literature,

- acting,

- music,

- animation,

- design,

- photography,

- etc.

Competitions for artistic fields are organized from the school level to the country level as follows:

***Competitions for artistic fields at school level***

Every school year, schools organize individual school-level competitions for the above-mentioned artistic fields. This is done by opening competitions within the school and by encouraging students with talents and interests for these fields in order to compete with their works, creations, products and their performances within a certain timeframe for any of these fields, or in some fields at the same time.

Schools with teachers of the field/art subject form evaluation commissions that evaluate these works, creations, products and performances of all competitive students.

After evaluation, for each field and each grade level are announced 3 students with most qualitative and original works, creations, products and performances (first three places), who are acknowleged, promoted and rewarded by schools. In addition, all these students are then included in the school-level support activities and programs provided by schools, in line with the talents, interests, needs and characteristics of these students.

Then, the students who take the first place for each art field and each grade of the classroom together with their works, creations, products and their artistic performances are sent from school to MED to participate in municipal level competitions that is organized by the MED.

Also, based on the highest appreciation for most qualitative original works, creations, products and performances at school level, the school also announces the 3 best school students (first three places at school level) for art field, regardless of the class field.

These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by the school.

***Competitions for artistic fields at municipal level***

Every academic year, MEDs organize individual competitions at the municipal level for the above-mentioned artistic fields, including all students who have taken the first place at the school level (for each field and each grade of the school), respectively their works, creations, products and performances.

MED creates special commissions at the municipal level, by engaging art teachers from various municipal schools, who will make evaluation of works, creations, products and artistic performance (sent by schools) of competitive students at the municipal level. If municipal commissions have sound reasons to suspect that any work, creation or artistic product of students is not original from the student, but taken or made by someone else, they have the right to request additional evidence asking the students to make any similar artwork, creation or artistic production, so that the student's ability or talent can be ascertained for that field.

After the evaluation, for each field and each class level are announced 3 students with the most qualitative and original works, creations, products and performances (the first three places) at the municipal level, which are recognized, promoted and rewarded by the MED. In addition, all these students are then included in the activities and support programs that are provided at the municipal level organized by MED, in accordance with the talents, interests, needs and characteristics of these students.

Then, the students who have taken the first place for each field and each class level at the municipal level are sent from MED to MEST, together with their works, creations, products and their artistic performances, to participate at the national level competitions organized by MEST.

Also, based on the highest assessment for the most qualitative works, creations, products and artistic performances at the municipal level, the MED also announces the 3 best students in the municipality (the first three at the municipal level) for the art field, regardless the subject of the class. These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by the MED.

***Competitions for art fields at country level***

Every academic year, MEST organizes individual competitions at the country level in the fields mentioned above, including all students who have taken the first place at the municipal level (for each field and each class level).

MEST creates special professional commissions at the country level, by engaging independent field artists, university professors and art teachers of various schools who will evaluate works, creations, products and artistic performances (sent by MEDs) of competitive students at the country level. If commissions have sound reasons to suspect that any work, creation or artistic product of students is not original from the student, but taken or made by someone else, they have the right to request additional evidence asking the students to make any similar artwork, creation or artistic production, so that the student's ability or talent can be ascertained for that field.

After evaluation, for each field and each class level are announced 3 students with most qualitative and original works, creations, products and performances (the first three places) at the country level, which are recognized, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

Gjithashtu, bazuar në vlerësimin më të lartë për punimet, kreacionet, produktet dhe performancat artistike më cilësore dhe më origjinale në nivel vendi, MASHT shpallë edhe 3 nxënësit më të mirë në nivel vendi (tri vendet e para në nivel vendi) për fushat e artit, pavarësisht lëndës e klasës. These students are also acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

*Additional explanation:*

1. Due to the large number of students and schools, large municipalities such as Prishtina and Prizren send the first three places in the national competitions, while the other regional municipalities: Mitrovica, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Gjilan send to the national level competitions the first two places. A similar principle can also be used by MEDs to decide that some schools with a large number of students can send first two or first three places to municipal level competitions.

2. Artistic performances such as acting, music, singing, etc., can be sent from school to municipal level and then at country level in the form of qualitative video footage. But, as needed, professional commissions, whether at municipal or national level, may require direct performance from competitive students.

**COMPETITIONS FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION**

Competitions for creative and / or innovative projects or ideas are organized every year by MEST in cooperation with MEDs and schools and include students from the sixth grade.

This is organized in the form of a competition announced by MEST every year. MEST establishes a professional commission with independent and competent experts from different fields who compile the content of the competition, specifying the conditions and criteria that must meet an idea or project of students to be qualitified as a creative and / or innovative idea or project.

Then, MEST through the MEDs informs the schools, respectively students, about the contest, so that each interested student can apply within this competition. After the closing of the competition, the MEST commission will evaluate all creative and / or innovative projects or ideas that are submitted by students through schools and MEDs.

After the evaluation, the commission selects and announces 10 students with most qualitative and most original creative and / or innovative projects or ideas a (the first 10 places ranked from 1 to 10) at country level, which are recognized, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

Also, in accordance with the financial possibilities, MEST will financially support the practical realization of the first 3 creative / innovative ideas / projects.

**DEBATE COMPETITION**

Debate competitions are organized annually by MEST in cooperation with MEDs and schools and include students from the eighth grade. For these contests are used standardized debate formats such as the format "Karl Popper - KP" or the format "British Parliamentary - BP”.

For the organization of these competitions, MEST announces a competition every year and engages specialized and certified organizations for these format of debates, which compile the contents of the competition so that schools and students are informed about the rules of these forms of debate and opportunities for participation in these competitions.

Then, MEST through the MEDs informs the schools and students about the competition, so that each interested school can apply with some of its teams within the debate competitions. After this, specialized organizations (with the support and under the patronage of MEST) will organize basic training on these forms of debate for all students / teams that are presented in the competition.

After the training, specialized organizations (with the support and under the patronage of MEST) will organize a separate debate tournament for LSSch (grades 8-9) and HSSch level (grades 10-12), including all teams presented in the competition. The tournament takes place at various stages until the final.

After the end of the debate tournament, the three tournament winning teams (the first three places) for the LSSch level (grades 8-9) and three winning tournament teams (the first three places) are selected and announced for the HSSch level (grades 10-12 ). In addition to the teams, three best speakers (the top three places) for the LSSch (grades 8-9) and the best three speakers (the first three places) for the HSSch level (grades 10-12).

All winning teams and the best speakers are acknowledged, promoted and rewarded by MEST.

**COMPETITIONS ORGANIZED BY SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

Different competitions offered to students from specialized professional organizations are organized independently from these organizations and without interference from state and public institutions. Nevertheless, when these organizations organize competitions, competitions or evaluations that have an international character, that are standardized and which are internationally recognized and evaluated or that enable qualification and participation for students in competitions abroad, then MEST, MEDs and schools will encourage students to participate in them. Also, MEST and MEDs, in accordance with their competencies and opportunities, will provide different financial and non-financial support to the organizations that organize these competitions, competitions or evaluations as well as for the activities and support programs that these organizations provide for the winning and selected students of these competitions, competitions or awards.

***Referral for Identification;***

Given that students with extraordinary abilities also come from all socio-economic backgrounds and different levels of skills, it is possible that some students with extraordinary skills may be invisible and may not be seen as individuals with unique intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

Some students with extraordinary abilities may have difficulty learning in one or more areas, resulting in failure in some academic assignments and excellent achievements in others. This can lead to ineffective learning strategies, low self-esteem, and disorderly behavior. Teachers and parents often remain confused about the strategies to be followed.

Referral for identification can be made by:

* Referral from the child's parent / guardian
* Referral from teachers
* Referral from the psychologist
* School-wide identification processes
* Referral from classmates
* Referral from the students themselves
* Referral from other individuals or organizations

**Supporting children / students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talent**

Supporting children / students with extraordinary abilities, gift and talent is based on their individual needs and potentials as well as after individual student assessments for their level of achievement in specific and creative areas.

For a special talent it is said when students in one or more fields are significantly ahead of their peers. If this overcoming is manifested in a pronounced extent, then one can speak of pronounced or talented skills. Here are included about 1% to 3% of students according to statistical data and the definition of talent and intelligence.

In many talented children and youngsters, the potential for developing and expanding their talent moves harmoniously. Teaching in the regular classroom can cover their needs, from which teachers deal with their special situation and the talents also find their own ways and solutions. Inadequate loads or problems in the social or emotional sphere may create specially talented pedagogical students.

In this case, additional support from parents and school is needed within the "support of talents". One way of supporting is the promotion of these students. Promotion of children and special talents in creative and artistic academic fields is carried out according to the legislation in force. For students who are highly advanced in an intellectual point of view (eg. those who score 160 or above in individual intelligence tests), the only practical solution may be to accelerate their educational program.

 Teaching methods for talented students should foster abstract thinking, operational and formal thinking, creativity, original text reading, and other tasks, all with higher degree of difficulty, and based on autonomous, independent learning.

Another approach that helps accelerate the educational program, advanced approach, can be learning or enrolling in the environment with other peers who have higher skills.

Promotion strategies can be very simple, eg allowing a gifted or talended student to do math subject with students of a higher class.

Other options for advancement programs can be:

* Summer schools;
* Different courses offered by different institutions, depending on where children exhibit talent, gift or extraordinary ability;
* Additional lessons with artists, musicians, dancers, etc. from different fields;
* Realization of independent projects;
* Selection of teaching hours responding to their interests;
* Additional lessons from different subjects / fields
* Involvement of students in localities / groups of special interest.

 Further measures to be carefully followed and carefully planned are: Early education in kindergarten or first elementary school where it is possible to intervene early.

If there are difficulties in the regular classroom with regard to any significant talent, then teachers and parents together seek a solution. If needed, individual and supporting goals are set within meetings with the school council, as well as the implementation and verification of appropriate measures.

 The support of this category of students should come from the senior government level, namely from MEST, MEDs, schools, and teachers, and should be based on:

* **Modification and adaptation of subject curricula** referring to the selection, adoption, application of models, curricula and lessons based on research and instruction that respond to the needs of students with extraordinary abilities, talents and special gift. This is achieved through the use of evidence-based learning strategies that ensure the achievement of specific student outcomes.

The modification and adaptation of subject curricula based on the student's assessment of the subject content, and then the transition to those objectives that the student has not yet achieved is thought to allow teachers to eliminate about half of the usual program for talented students, without losing any ability, while the time gained in this regard can be utilized to gain sophisticated, new and enhanced knowledge.

* **Individualized Plans** - The individual plan is a written document prepared for a student who specifies the learning goals to be achieved by the learner over a certain period of time as well as the teaching strategies, resources needed to achieve these goals.

Individualized plans represent a framework of the student program, in which there are information that are useful to provide adequate programs and support services. Usually, individualized plans can be an annual summary / document that includes all curriculum areas in which talented and gifted students should follow the education program that is adjusted and modified to enable participation and acceleration or enrichment of individual learning needs.

* **Advanced learning,** is a technique for distinction of teaching that enables teachers to make adjustments in the curriculum for students who have already mastered the curriculum (content) to be taught, by replacing the familiar content with new content, which means the enrichment or other activities. Teachers evaluate the results achieved by the learner in order to determine the expected learning outcomes in terms of content.

(teachers can often apply for enrichment of teaching and student support with additional tasks, project and problem-based learning, challenging and sophisticated tasks, and keeping talented and gifted students in regular classrooms with their peers).

* **Levelled teaching within the classroom,** the teacher develops deep and complex activities for the students with extraordinary skills at the same time. This is a way of planning-providing work at entry, advancement and expansion levels or at different levels of depth of knowledge-which provides a variety of learning ways.
* **Cooperation with external experts (outside the school institution):** the identification of the children is done by the teacher then the student is recommended for evaluation to the school psychologist or a certified psychologist at the municipal level. In cases where the municipality is unable to make an adequate assessment then the child refers to any institution or organization specialized in this matter.
* **Inclusion in school, municipal and country level competitions**
* **Awards and acknowledgments at school, municipal and country level**
* **Psychological services,** based on AI 34/2014, the school psychologist has the duty to conduct research and evaluation of students with extraordinary intelligence, gift and talent, and helps teachers to use the resources and various tools of the teacher for this category of students as well the psychologist also provides services that support the identification process, assessment of children and special talents in creative and artistic academic fields, support and counseling of talented and gifted students in identifying and addressing socio-emotional aspects, designing effective counseling strategies on talented and gifted students, counseling on family issues and strategies for supporting the talented and gifted children, etc.).
* **Career counselling,** are given by career counselors that help learners of all ages to make decisions about their education and career orientation.

Usually, this includes professional advice, which combines the provision of counseling through professional counseling techniques, to support students to make complex decisions and to deal with difficult situations. The focus of career counseling falls on career exploration, career alignment with individual personal features, directional change, personal development, and other career-related and future-related issues.

* **Scholarship:** MEST and MED on the basis of financial planning, scholarships should also plan scholarships as a supportive form for children with extraordinary intelligence, talent and gift.

MEST, MED, Educational Institutions and specialized professional organizations co-operate and plan capacity building of educational staff and professional and supportive counseling services for working with children / students with extraordinary abilities, gifts and talents, and other MEST accredits and supports the development of training programs for teachers.

# The parent’s role

Often there is the conviction that students with extraordinary abilities are blessed with qualities and advantages that will help them succeed and which will facilitate their lives. Recently, has started the awareness that for many of these students this skill carries challenges in terms of social and emotional development, and these students are in the same need for support as all their peers when it comes to emotions, self perception, their behaviors and prospects for the future.

The parent / guardian individually consults and collaborates with the teacher and the school's professional staff for the predispositions, the distinctive signs that his child shows at various stages during growth and development, with the purpose of identifying, evaluating and supporting the achievement of the full potential of the child. A form for collecting this information from parents / guardians may be questionnaires filled by parents, providing more detailed information about the child's characteristics, motives and interests By supporting and accompanying them in school affairs and in creating leisure time, parents give their contribution so that the child can expand and utilize its potential. As parents of a significant talented and gifted child, they should often put themselves in front of various claims. For example, parents often ask themselves: Is a special education appropriate? How can we best support our child? How can we behave in families with this particular situation? These or other questions recommend a consultation through a specialized person.

First of all, children's interests and expectations remain and care should be taken to ensure that parents and children are not burdened and remain under the pressure of high results.

Children should be helped to recognize their skills and weaknesses should be supported to know their abilities and weaknesses should be supported to behave well with their emphasized talent and if parents have a special request for the school or if problems arise, then a timely interview with the class teacher should be sought. Secondly, another person you need to communicate is the school directorate and the staff in general.

 Given the important school decisions and support measures that are associated with additional expenses, is recommended the path through the school psychological services because it is important for your child to take part in decisions so that he or she can strengthen their own responsibility.

**The teacher’s role**

There is no single formula that can be applied by all schools, therefore there is no approach on which only the teacher can influence. Each of the developed and discussed strategies above in the Guidelines will emanate from the strengths of staff / teachers, student needs as well as opportunities created by the activities within the community.

Teachers play an important role not only in identifying and supporting talented children, but also in mentoring and adapting existing programs / curricula, to create opportunities for talented and gifted students to have the opportunity to express their potential and to be further supported through their development and education.

Some teachers are of the opinion that talented and gifted students should have accelerated lessons or have to pass rapidly from class to class and from subject to subject.

Meanwhile, another approach shows that other teachers prefer the enrichment of teaching and student support with additional tasks, students based on projects and problems, challenging and sophisticated tasks, and keeping these students in regular classrooms with their peers. Studies show that, in fact, both approaches may be appropriate for addressing the issue of extraordinary talents, gifts and abilities.

An approach that has been supportive in relation to the role of teachers, teaching and learning for talented and gifted children is the **method of the program** **compression** - assessing the student's knowledge about the subject matter, and then passing on those goals that the child has not yet reached.

 Based on the applied experiences, this method is said to allow teachers to eliminate about half of the ordinary program for talented students without losing any ability, while the time gained in this regard can be used to get sophisticated, new and enhanced knowledge.

Though there are many opposite opinions regarding the classrooms acceleration, the transition to higher classes for talented and gifted children, another option is tht a student to speed up work on one or two subjects and be allowed to enroll in higher class subjects, thus keeping the student in class with its peers for the rest of the subjects.

Teachers can be aware of a student with extraordinary ability in their classroom through its performance in assessment tests or exams. They may be aware of a student's unusual approach to a problem or to show ability or behaviors beyond its age in a particular subject. Careful enrollment and observation is recommended to determine the need for further research.

Teachers need to be careful in selecting what is appropriate for the student's age and the circumstances of the observation.

**The psychologist’s role**

The psychologist contributes to the identification of specially gifted children and special talents in creative and artistic academic fields.

The psychologist supports and assists the process before the assessment and evaluation of children and special talents in creative and artistic academic fields.

Also, the psychologist plays an important role in supporting and counseling talented and gifted students in identifying and addressing the socio-emotional aspects of gifted and talented children, creates effective counseling strategies for talented and gifted students, supports counseling on various family issues; provides counseling to families of talented children, to increase the skills and competences of parents to support talented and gifted children, etc..

* The psychologist contributes to the identification of children with special gifts and special talents in creative and artistic academic fields.
* The psychologist supports and assists the assessment process of children with special gifts and talents in creative and artistic academic fields.
* Advises students and identifies their strengths and guides them to develop their powerful potentials.
* Evaluates the students cognitive potential
* Develops a system to work with talented students.
* Participates in designing and implementing the documents, plans and strategies for talented and gifted students.
* Participates in systemic changes in adapting the way of teachers work towards the needs and opportunities of students.
* Is a member of professional teams on creating approaches to work with talented students.
* Participates in designing and adopting the instruments for identifying talented and gifted students.
* Observes the progress of talented and gifted students