



Gifted and Talented Identification and Funding Implications

September 1, 2020

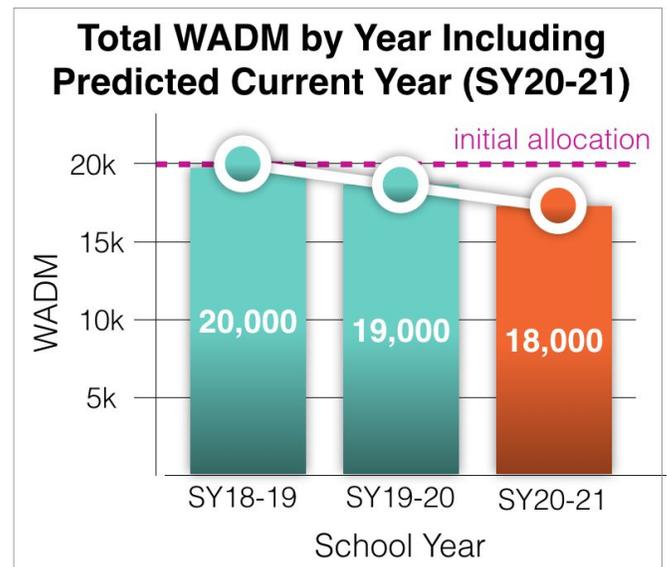
Given the difficulties many districts face in conducting the identification of gifted and talented children as required by Oklahoma state statute,¹ school administrators have indicated a concern for how such delays may impact the Gifted and Talented (GT) weighted allocation provided for in the Weighted Membership of School District for Calculation of Foundation Aid.²

While the information provided here is generalized and intended to be applicable for all districts, variables beyond the scope of this memo may impact the actual allocations in your district. Please review your own local policies to evaluate impact more accurately.

Evaluating Funding Impact

To evaluate how GT Student Counts impact district allocations, it is essential to understand that those allocations are **based on the two-year high weighted average daily membership (WADM)**. WADM comprises many factors, so the examples provided here exaggerate the effect of the under-identification of GT students to highlight the minimal risk to funding.

In the sample case shown to the right, the SY20-21 Initial Allocation is based on the highest weighted average daily membership (WADM) from the previous two years. In this case, the SY20-21 Initial Allocation would be based on a WADM of 20,000.



Even if the current year GT Student Count is much lower, thereby causing the WADM to drop to 18,000, the Initial Allocation is still based upon the highest WADM from the previous two years. The mid-year adjustment would only increase funding if the current WADM rose beyond 20,000. The

¹ [70 O.S. § 1210.307\(C\)\(1\)](#) Each board of education shall submit a plan for gifted child educational programs which shall include “a written policy statement which specifies a process for selection and assessment of children for placement in gifted and talented programs that is consistent for grades one through twelve.”

² [70 O.S. § 18-201.1\(B\)\(2\)](#) “The weighted pupil category calculation shall be determined by assigning a weight to the pupil category as follows: [...] g. Gifted .34.”



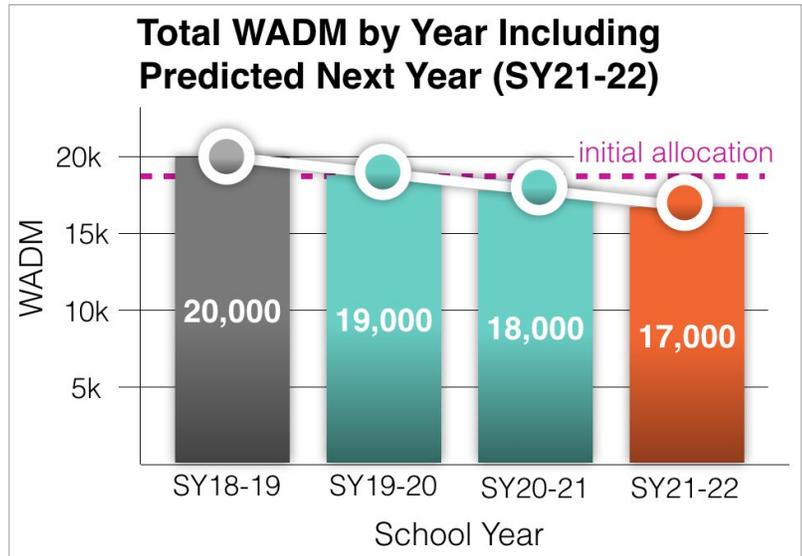
mid-year adjustment would not ever require that state aid funds be reimbursed to the state if the numbers remained low.

If the SY21-22 WADM were to decrease drastically to 17,000 due to ongoing issues as a result of COVID-19, the SY21-22 Allocation would still be based on the highest WADM from the previous two years, which would be 19,000 in the example shown to the right. If the WADM were to return to “normal” levels at any time, the mid-year adjustment would increase to ensure the full weighted allocation was applied.

Key Takeaways

The following takeaways should be considered by each district’s GT Coordinator as they plan for the current and subsequent school year:

- District allocations for GT will likely not be impacted if districts are unable to complete the universal screening processes identified in their Gifted Child Education Plan in the near term.
- District and Site Coordinators should implement screeners only in a manner that is safe for all parties. Not including new students in the October 1 student count and GT Report this year will not negatively impact mid-year adjustments.
- While all funding is calculated in the WADM, any possible decrease in funding that may occur next year will only occur if last year’s WADM is lower than the WADM from two years ago. If next year’s October 1 GT Student Count were to include all identified GT students accurately, next year’s mid-year adjustment would bring funding levels, as it relates to GT funds, back to the appropriate level.
- The law requires district identification methods are consistent and equitable for grades one through twelve. Thus, intermittent screening using ONLY nationally standardized tests of intellectual ability would be inadequate. Districts should implement comprehensive staff training on Category 2 identification methods identified in the [District GT Coordinator’s Manual](#).



Resources

- Access the State Aid Gifted and Talented Weight Allocation reports for the current and all previous years at <https://sde.ok.gov/gifted-talented-generated>.

Contact

If you have questions, please email [Levi Patrick](#), Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, or [Ashley Moore](#), Director of Gifted and Talented Education Programs.