

Washington Township School District

Talented and Gifted Handbook



Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction to Gifted and Talented Programs and Services (K-5)**
- 2. What is a Gifted Student?**
- 3. Overview of Services for Primary (K-2) Students**
- 4. Identification Process of TAG Services for Grades 3-5 ELEMEnTS**
- 5. ELEMEnTS Units of Study**
- 6. Overview of Services for Middle School (6-8) Students**
- 7. Overview of Services for High School (9-12) Students**
- 8. Gifted and Talented Complaint Process**
- 9. R2464 District Gifted and Talented Policy**

Gifted and Talented Programs and Services, K-5

What is our Program Goal?

To develop the whole child by offering an overall enriching environment that enhances the child's development in a natural school setting, as well as offering experiences beyond the regular classroom.

How Does New Jersey Administrative Code Define a Talented and Gifted Learner?

The regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1) define talented and gifted students as: *Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

How does Washington Township Meet the Needs of our Talented and Gifted Learners at the Elementary Level?

At the elementary level, Washington Township implements school-wide cluster grouping in grades K-5. Cluster grouping within a heterogeneous class teams gifted/high ability students as one group in a classroom to facilitate the implementation of enrichment and differentiation opportunities. Since students are cluster grouped together, teachers can engage students in small group enrichment activities more frequently than if the identified students were assigned into different classes.

What is a Gifted Student?

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, some common characteristics that many gifted individuals share are outlined below.

Traits of Giftedness

No gifted individual is exactly the same, each with his own unique patterns and traits. There are many traits that gifted individuals have in common, but no gifted learner exhibits traits in every area. This list of traits may help you better understand whether or not your child is gifted.

Cognitive	Creative	Affective	Behavioral
Keen power of abstraction	Creativeness and inventiveness	Unusual emotional depth and intensity	Spontaneity
Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts	Keen sense of humor	Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others	Boundless enthusiasm
Voracious and early reader	Ability for fantasy	High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration	Intensely focused on passions—resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests
Large vocabulary	Openness to stimuli, wide interests	Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different	Highly energetic—needs little sleep or down time
Intellectual curiosity	Intuitiveness	Easily wounded, need for emotional support	Constantly questions
Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism	Flexibility	Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions	Insatiable curiosity
Persistent, goal-directed behavior	Independence in attitude and social behavior	Advanced levels of moral judgment	Impulsive, eager and spirited
Independence in work and study	Self-acceptance and unconcern for social norms	Idealism and sense of justice	Perseverance—strong determination in areas of importance
Diversity of interests and abilities	Radicalism		High levels of frustration—particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others)
	Aesthetic and moral commitment to self-selected work		Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure
			Non-stop talking/chattering

Source: Clark, B. (2008). *Growing up gifted* (7th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Below offers a comparison of the bright child and the gifted learner presented by Janice Szabos in *Challenge Magazine*. The information below is guideline.

A Bright Child	A Gifted Learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Top group	Beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good at memorization	Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

Overview of Services for Primary Students (Grades K-2)

Flexible Enrichment Services for Primary Students (K-2)

Kindergarten

Prior to start of kindergarten, students are pre-assessed using the Kindergarten Snapshot to determine each student's ability in the following areas: letter/sound recognition, concepts of print, sight vocabulary, writing, and mathematics. In addition, the Reading Specialist completes this grade level pre-assessment during the first few days of school for late entrants. Students are placed using this data into instructional groups within each kindergarten classroom. Kindergarten students receive small group instruction at the beginning of the school year by the classroom teacher, paraprofessionals, interventionists, and/or the Reading Specialist. In addition to the benefit of small group instruction, benchmarking, formative assessment, and data meetings serve the purpose of providing a functional assessment of the children, which enables the classroom teachers to understand and target the strengths and needs of individual children. After the first nine weeks of the school year, each classroom teacher completes a checklist for each of his/her students that identifies characteristics of gifted learners. The results of these multiple measures are analyzed and used to identify indicators of giftedness in our kindergarten students.

After having analyzed the student data and checklists, teachers differentiate instruction in literacy and mathematics to challenge the gifted students as well as support the struggling students. In addition, the Reading Specialist models periodic small group, differentiated lessons in the classroom and provides ongoing consultation with the classroom teacher to ensure and support appropriate instruction for the advanced/gifted child. As needed, the school media specialist selects and provides high interest, level-appropriate reading options and materials from the library, borrowing resources from the elementary schools, as appropriate.

The gifted/talented teacher at the student's home school serves as a resource at the request of the classroom teacher. The gifted/talented teacher meets with the classroom teacher to identify and/or provide resources that ensure appropriate depth and rigor for the gifted/high ability students through a consultative model, and the gifted/talented teacher provides support to small flexible groups, as applicable. In addition, other specialists provide instruction in art, music, and physical education.

Grade 1

Students entering first grade are placed in instructional groups according to the total school-wide cluster grouping model based upon kindergarten data. In September through October, students are assessed with the STAR in Reading and Mathematics. The classroom teacher meets the needs of the high ability/gifted children through differentiated instruction. In addition to the benefit of small group instruction, benchmarking, formative assessment, and data meetings serve the purpose of providing a functional assessment, which enables the classroom teachers to understand and target the strengths and needs of individual children. The gifted/talented teacher meets with the classroom teacher to identify and/or provide resources that ensure appropriate depth and rigor for the gifted/high ability students through a consultative model, and the gifted/talented teacher provides support to small flexible groups, as applicable. In addition, other specialists provide instruction in art, music, and physical education.

Grade 2

Students entering second grade are placed in instructional groups according to the total school-wide cluster grouping model based upon first grade data. Students are assessed with STAR in Reading and Mathematics early in the year. Students are administered the OLSAT group ability test as a future indicator. The classroom teacher meets the needs of the high ability/gifted children through differentiated instruction. In addition to the benefit of small group instruction, benchmarking, formative assessment, and data meetings serve the purpose of providing a functional assessment, which enables the classroom teachers to understand and target the strengths and needs of individual children. The gifted/talented teacher meets with the classroom teacher to identify and/or provide resources that ensure appropriate depth and rigor for the gifted/high ability students through a consultative model, and the gifted/talented teacher provides support to small flexible groups, as applicable. In addition, other specialists provide instruction in art, music, and physical education.

- TAG Services for Students (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- ELEMEnTS (Elementary Learners Engaging In Mathematics, Engineering, new Technologies, and Science)
- The program is designed to challenge our gifted learners with relevant activities to meet their academic needs. Identified students in grades three, four, and five are invited *to* participate in a program of weekly pull-out classes. Students are engaged in both critical and creative thinking activities created to provide an emphasis on research through an in-depth study of differentiated learning strands. Learning activities focus student discovery on relationships, systems, and structures that exist all around them. Topics are broad in scope, embracing the tenets of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programming. Problem-based learning activities and assessments draw on students to conduct and apply research and predict future trends in technology, education, and economics. The program addresses the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at an advanced level; aligns with the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards; and focuses on creative problem solving, research, critical thinking skills, communication skills, and leadership skills within a highly engaging format.
- Student selection is based upon multiple measures from within the following categories:
 - Cognitive abilities testing
 - Otis Lennon SAT (Grades 2 and 5)/ Slosson Intelligence Test
 - Convergent thinking (analogies)
 - Divergent thinking (unique ideas)
 - Analytical screening
 - Standardized test scores
 - STAR Reading and Mathematics
 - Reading Level –Developmental Reading Assessment /Columbia Reading Assessment
 - Ratings pertaining to characteristics of the gifted student (e.g., inventiveness; creativeness; intuitiveness; curiousness)
 - Renzulli Scale Form completed by teacher
- Student progress will be reported after each semester to communicate each student's growth relative to the program objectives. Students' overall performance will be evaluated annually; program participants must demonstrate a high level of performance in order to continue in the program.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELEMENTS PROGRAM

UNITS OF STUDY

GRADE 3

- SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- SIMPLE MACHINES
- ELECTRICITY

GRADE 4

- SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- BRIDGES
- ENERGY
- ROCKETRY

GRADE 5

- SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- MOCK TRIAL
- ROBOTICS

Humanities Program Grades 6-8

The humanities program is designed to challenge our gifted learners with relevant activities to meet their academic needs. The program addresses the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies at an advanced level. It aligns with the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards and focuses on creative problem-solving, research, communication skills, and leadership skills within a highly engaging format.

This gifted and talented program enriches the regular Social Studies curriculum through extended readings, activities that foster critical thinking, and community service projects. Students are expected to participate in Junior Model United Nations, Law Adventure Competition, and other academic programs.

Student selection is based upon multiple measures from within the following categories:

- Cognitive abilities testing
 - Otis Lennon (OLSAT) -Grade 5

- Standardized test scores
 - STAR Reading
 - NJSLA ELA
 - Columbia Reading Assessment (Grade 5)

- Academic performance
 - Report cards

- Ratings pertaining to characteristics of the gifted student (e.g., inventiveness; creativeness; intuitiveness; curiousness)
 - Renzulli Scale Form completed by teacher

Student progress will be reported after each semester to communicate each student's growth relative to the program objectives. Students' overall performance will be evaluated annually; program participants must demonstrate a high level of performance in order to continue in the program.

Advanced Placement Courses (Grades 9-12)

We are proud to offer approximately 30 CollegeBoard-approved Advanced Placement courses and exams for our students:

- In addition to published course prerequisites, students should consider their [AP Potential](#) in helping them to decide if an AP course is a good fit. AP Potential is a tool that assists schools with identifying students who are likely to score a 3 or better on a given AP Exam, based on research that shows strong correlations between PSAT scores and AP Exam results. When applicable, counselors will discuss students' AP Potential as part of the scheduling advisement process. For more information about AP courses and exams, visit the [CollegeBoard AP](#).
- It is highly encouraged that students who enroll in AP courses will sit for the course AP Exams in May.
- Students not currently enrolled in an AP course are eligible to sit for an AP Exam as well - Speak with your counselor for more information.
- Students and parents are encouraged to visit the [AP Credit Policy](#) specific to each college or university.

Benefits of AP:

- Standing out during the college admissions process with your transcript.
- Taking AP exams help students get a clear understanding of what will be needed to succeed on college level exams.
- Entering college with AP credits gives students the time to move into upper-level courses in their field of interest.
- Students who take a corresponding college course, whether by choice or because it is required, will have an advantage over their peers if they take the AP course and exam.
- Considering your AP scores for the most competitive scholarship awards.
- Research by the CollegeBoard consistently shows students who are successful in AP courses and on AP exams typically experience greater academic success in college compared to similar students who do not participate in AP courses and AP exams. The CollegeBoard reports that AP students who earn credit for introductory college courses tend to earn higher final GPA than non-AP students and are more likely to graduate from college in four years.

List of AP courses offered

1. AP 2-D Art
2. AP 3-D Art
3. AP Biology
4. AP Calculus AB
5. AP Calculus BC
6. AP Chemistry
7. AP Computer Science
8. AP Drawing
9. AP English Language
10. AP English Literature
11. AP Environmental Science
12. AP European History
13. AP French
14. AP German

15. AP Human Geography
16. AP Macroeconomics
17. AP Microeconomics
18. AP Music Theory
19. AP Physics 1 Algebra Based
20. AP Physics C E&M
21. AP Physics C Mechanics

22. AP Psychology
23. AP Spanish
24. AP Statistics
25. AP US Government & Politics
26. AP US History
27. AP World History

Gifted & Talented Procedural Complaint Process

Washington Township Public Schools District Policy for Gifted and Talented Students amendments will be forthcoming inclusive of the protocols outlined below:

Pursuant to A4710 1R: Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act, the following protocol must be used to file a complaint alleging that Washington Township Public Schools is not in compliance with the provisions of the Act. The alleged occurrence of noncompliance must have taken place within one year of filing the complaint. Please note: the complaint process is different from an appeal for placement of a student. The complaint process only deals with alleged procedural compliance as outlined in the Act. This process will yield no change to prior student placement decisions.

The complaint shall include in writing:

- The name, address, and contact information of the complainant; and
- A statement that the identified school district is not in compliance with the provisions of this act, and the specific facts on which the allegation of non-compliance is based.

An individual who believes that a school district has not complied with the provisions of this Act may file a complaint using the following chain of command:

Gifted & Talented teacher - This is your first point of contact for clarification of policies and procedures for the G&T program; to

- Supervisor of Gifted & Talented and the Director of Elementary/ Secondary -This is the first written complaint (stated above). A statement that the identified school district is not in compliance with the provisions of this act, and the specific facts on which the allegation of non-compliance is based. An individual who believes that a school district has not complied with the provisions of this Act may file a complaint with the Supervisor of Gifted and Talented and the Director of Elementary / Secondary. Based on the decision to affirm, reject, or modify the District's action in the matter, the individual may file a petition of appeal of the written decision of the Superintendent in the following order utilizing the same above described format; to

- Board of Education - Based on the decision of the Board of Education to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter, the individual may file a petition of appeal of the written decision; to

- Executive County Superintendent (investigation must be completed within 60 days) - Based on the decision of the Executive County Superintendent to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter, the individual may file a petition of appeal of the written decision; to

- Commissioner of Education via Office of Controversies and Disputes in accordance with N.J.S.18A:6-9 and the procedures set forth in State Board of Education regulations.

Should the District be found in non-compliance with the Act, remediation of the Gifted and Talented Program will take place.

2464 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to identify gifted and talented students within the school district and to provide these students with appropriate instructional adaptations and services. To that end, the Board directs that each such student in the school district be identified and offered an appropriate educational program and services.

For purposes of this Policy, “gifted and talented students” means students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

The Superintendent will develop appropriate curricular and instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environments.

For the purpose of this Policy, “instructional adaptation” means an adjustment or modification to instruction enabling a student who is gifted and talented to participate in, benefit from, and demonstrate knowledge and application of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in one or more content areas at the instructional level of the student, not just the student’s grade level.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall ensure that the appropriate instructional adaptations are designed for students who are gifted and talented.

The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures for an ongoing Kindergarten through grade twelve identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity, or a specific academic area. The district shall ensure equal access to a continuum of gifted and talented education services. The identification process shall include consideration of all students, including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans.

The Superintendent or designee will develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environments, and including, but not limited to, additional education activities such as academic competitions, guest speakers, and lessons with a specialist.

The Superintendent or designee will take into consideration the Gifted Programming Standards Position Statements, and White Papers of the National Association for Gifted Children in identifying and serving gifted and talented students.

The district will provide the time and resources to develop, review, and enhance instructional tools with modifications for helping gifted and talented students acquire and demonstrate mastery of the required knowledge and skills specified by the standards at the instructional level of the student.

The district will actively assist and support professional development for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders in the area of gifted and talented instruction.

The district shall file with the New Jersey Department of Education Coordinator for Gifted and Talented Services a report by October 1, 2020 and thereafter on a schedule that coincides with the school district's New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) review pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-11. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the gifted and talented continuum of services, policies, and procedures implemented in the school district; the total number of students receiving gifted and talented services in each grade level Kindergarten through grade twelve disaggregated by race, gender, special education designation, and English language learner designation; the professional development opportunities provided for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders about gifted and talented students, their needs, and educational development; and the number of staff employed by the school district whose job responsibilities include identification of and providing services to gifted and talented students. Programs for gifted and talented students will be periodically evaluated for their continuing efficacy and adjusted accordingly.

The parent of any student identified as gifted or talented will be consulted regarding any program designed to address the student's particular needs.

An individual who believes the district has not complied with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-34 et seq. may file a complaint with the Board of Education. This procedure for filing a complaint shall be linked to the homepage of the Board's Internet website. The Board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter. The individual may then file a petition of appeal of the Board's written decision to the Commissioner of Education through the Office of Controversies and Disputes in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-9 and the procedures set forth in State Board of Education regulations.

The district shall make detailed information available on its website regarding the policies and procedures used to identify students as gifted and talented and the continuum of services offered to gifted and talented students. The information shall include the criteria used for consideration for eligibility for the gifted and talented services, including the multiple

POLICY

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Program
2464/Page 3 of 3
GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS (M)

measures used in the identification process to match a student's needs with services, and any applicable timelines in the identification process.

N.J.S.A. 18A:61A-2; 18A:35-4.16; 18A:35-34 through 39
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3; 6A:8-3.1(a)5
P.L. 108-382, Sec. 10201 et seq.

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