

SEPTEMBER 2023



**GIFTED AND TALENTED
EDUCATION**

District Goals

- To challenge gifted and talented students who demonstrate a need for rigor beyond the regular curriculum for their grade level.
- To provide an environment that encourages the development of critical thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and complex problem solving strategies.
- To provide an environment that encourages divergent thinking and supports the development of originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration.
- To develop confidence in expressing ideas in discussions, debates, expository writing, and creative writing.
- To advance the process of inquiry through the application of skills in investigations of real-life problems and research.
- To provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills through positive group interaction.
- To encourage a lifelong commitment to independent learning.

We Believe

- All students can learn. The goals, expectations, and aspirations to be realized through the schools are the same for all students. However, all students are not the same. They have different talents and abilities, interests and emotions, strengths and weaknesses. For each individual, we desire an educational system that will both stimulate and urge the full development of potential. We must, therefore, provide considerable choice and flexibility for each student together with basic requirements.
- All teachers share in the responsibility for developing an educational system that stimulates and nurtures the full development of all students.
- An important purpose of education is to instill a life-long desire to learn. Learning enriches the quality of life.
- Positive attitudes produce positive results.
- High expectations foster greater student achievement.
- Students learn best in a trusting, caring, nurturing, and safe environment.
- Effective teaching provides a variety of learning experiences.
- The acquisition of life skills and higher order thinking is essential to prepare the student for the challenges of adulthood in a technological society.
- Parents, educators, and all community members are partners in the education of the

community's children.

- The understanding and acceptance of diversity contributes to the enhancement of society.
- Education is worth the investment.

Definitions

There are many different definitions of a gifted and talented student. The District's working definition of giftedness mirrors the state definition as well as that more recently cited in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Under these definitions, gifted students are those who:

"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."

New Jersey Department of Education – N.J.A.C. 6A:8

"Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment."

United States Department of Education

"The term 'gifted and talented,' when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities."

No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 (Title IX, Part A)

Other complementary perspectives are provided by groups of respected professionals in the field of Gifted who suggest a definition based on the gifted child's difference from the norm below.

"Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports.)"

National Association for Gifted Children

Regardless of which definition is used, one thing is clear- gifted children are a population who has different educational needs, thanks to their unique intellectual development.

New Jersey Gifted and Talented Requirements

The State Board of Education readopted with amendments N.J.A.C. 6A: 8, Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement, which includes more specific requirements for gifted and talented programs. In addition to the definition on the previous page, a summary of the regulations are highlighted below.

- All public schools must have a board-approved gifted and talented program.
- Students are to be compared with their peers in the local school district.
- District boards of education shall make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures, including but not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, student performance or products, intelligence testing, parent, student and/or teacher recommendation, and other appropriate measures.
- The regulations do not establish state-level criteria for giftedness (such as an IQ score or grade point average). Specific tests are not required to be used to identify gifted and talented students.
- Local school districts should ensure that the identification methodology used is developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered (e.g., use math achievement to identify students for a math program).
- N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5 ii requires local district boards of education to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten.
- The rules require district boards of education to develop appropriate curricular and instructional modifications for gifted students. Programs must address appropriate content, process, products, and learning environment.
- District boards of education shall take into consideration the *Pre-K through Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)* in developing programs for gifted and talented students. The NAGC standards establish requisite and exemplary gifted program standards and can be accessed at NAGC Standard.
- Each curriculum framework developed by the department provides general as well as content-specific information on gifted education (e.g., terminology, examples of appropriate practices). The frameworks can be accessed at <http://www.nj.gov/education/archive/frameworks/> <http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs>.
- Local school districts will continue to be monitored as part of the regular school

district evaluation process. Board-approved policies and procedures must be made available.

MTSD Board of Education Policy

2464- GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS (M)

Section: Program
Date Created: April 2010
Date Edited: June 2017

[See POLICY ALERT Nos. 95, 153, 161, 164, and 211]

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 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.

The Superintendent will develop procedures for an ongoing Kindergarten through grade twelve identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures. Multiple measures may include, but are not limited to: achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; intelligence testing; parent, student, and/or teacher recommendation; and other appropriate measures. The identification methodology will be developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered by the district. The identification procedures will be reviewed annually.

The Superintendent will take into consideration the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Twelve Gifted Programming Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted and talented students. The educational program offered to gifted and talented students will encourage and challenge them in the specific areas of their abilities, but will not replace the basic instructional program of the various grades of this district. The program offered to gifted and talented students may include, but are not limited to: pull-out programs; classroom differentiated instruction; acceleration; flexible pacing; compacted curricula; distance learning; advanced classes; or individual programs infused into the student’s regular instructional program, provided that a written description of the infusion has been prepared and filed in the student’s record.

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 shall be consulted regarding any program designed to address the student's particular needs.

N.J.S.A. 18A:61A-2; 18A:35-4.16

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3; 6A:8-3.1(a)5

P.L. 108-382, Sec. 10201 et seq.

Amended: 22 June 2017

Adopted: 27 April 2010

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Middle Township School District Gifted and Talented Education Program is to provide an educational program which will allow gifted students to develop their talents and skills to as great an extent as their abilities, interests, and available resources will allow.

Services can include both inclusive and pull-out formats. All of the courses and special activities are designed to provide challenge and rigor for students at all levels to expand their learning and creativity in their particular area of interest. When it comes to instruction and learning, one size does not fit all. Gifted children have different abilities, talents, and interests, making them a very diverse group of individuals. What they share in common are advanced abilities, but advanced in different ways.

Middle Township School District will:

- provide opportunities for students to pursue individual interests and develop talents;
- help students determine excellence and be aware of their responsibility to their gifts and talents to improve themselves and society;
- provide for the cognitive and academic development through challenging learning experiences;
- provide support for the social and emotional needs of gifted students;
- provide scheduled opportunities for students to meet with intellectual peers;
- provide a learning environment in which instructional strategies appropriate to the unique learning characteristics of the intellectually gifted are utilized;
- provide opportunities for individuals and/or small groups to utilize advanced research/study skills in designing and conducting independent investigations on topics of student interest.

The Student will:

- acquire advanced competencies in:
 - higher level thinking skills
 - research skills
 - study skills
 - communication skills
 - college and career readiness

Programming Options

Listed below are potential programming options that may be implemented in the education of your child depending on their identification and/or grade level. The utilization of these programs is at the discretion of the district and/or building administration.

Accelerated/Honors classes: Advanced classes offered in any discipline at the middle or high school level.

Alternate assignments: Assignments given to a particular student or small group *instead of* the assignment given to the rest of the class. The assignments are designed to be more challenging and/or to capitalize on a student's special interests or skills.

Change in content/process: Modification of what is taught or studied, or how it is taught or studied, in order to better match the learning styles or needs of talent pool students.

Choice in the content, the process of learning or the product of the learning: Choice may be offered by varying according to different types of intelligence or levels of thinking.

Cluster groups/classes: An arrangement in which a group of students with similar talents and interests is assigned to a classroom teacher in order to facilitate modifications and extensions of the curriculum.

Compacting: Allowing students to spend less time learning a topic, chapter, or unit by either: 1) pretesting for mastery so some material can be eliminated, or 2) creating a study guide or other procedure for students to cover material at a faster pace or in less time than the rest of the class. The purpose of compacting is to move on more quickly to new material or to create class time for more challenging enrichment or accelerated activities.

Creative thinking skills: Specific instruction in techniques that encourage the development of fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality, complexity, curiosity, imagination, and risk taking.

Electives in a talent or interest area: Courses that are not required but which students may choose to take.

Enrichment: A curricular choice that expands the learning beyond the existing curriculum.

Extracurricular activities: Activities that are available outside of the regular school day such as student council, debate, school newspaper, art clubs, math clubs, etc.

Flexible grouping: Grouping talent pool students together within a classroom or between classrooms in order to provide instruction or activities at an appropriate level for the students' talent areas. Groupings may be short-term or long-term and will change depending on the educational needs of the students.

Higher level thinking: Activities or assignments that require the students to operate at the levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The activities may be enhanced by teaching students the differences between the levels of thinking and by discussing the thinking levels/skills used in various activities.

Independent projects: Projects that provide the opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest to the student when the classroom content is already mastered. These may be accompanied by a learning contract that indicates the goals of the learning, how they will be accomplished, and the expected product that serves as evidence of the learning.

Independent study: A programming option in which students pursue an extensive study of an area of interest, or complete a course independently rather than by attending a class. In some cases, students may earn credit for the independent study program.

Individual groups/guidance: An arrangement through which the student receives individual guidance related to issues of talent, including, for example, help with underachievement, college and career planning, and social/emotional issues arising from giftedness.

Mentorship: An option in which students are paired with a teacher, parent, or community volunteer in an area of expertise or interest. It is usually done on a one-to-one basis for an extended period of time to enable a student to develop knowledge and skills in a specific area and/or to develop a product from the experience.

Open-ended projects: Projects that allow students to create their own options and that encourage problem-solving, higher level and/or creative thinking.

Pretesting for mastery: Assessment in which students demonstrate mastery of basic skills, knowledge, and concepts that are planned for instruction with the regular class in order to eliminate some work and allow students to move on to new, more challenging material.

Pull-outs: Programming in which students meet once or twice a week over a period of several weeks to a year to participate in specific enrichment activities in their talent areas.

Research projects: Activities in which students may identify a topic or subject for study, narrow the focus of study, gather resources, locate information through reading or other means (e.g., surveys, interviews, audiovisual material) and/or create a product or presentation. Such projects may be used to pursue an area of interest either related or unrelated to the grade-level curriculum.

Social/emotional groups: A school-based discussion and/or counseling program that provides small groups of students with the opportunity to interact and discuss issues that specifically pertain to giftedness. These may be facilitated by a guidance counselor.

Youth options: Opportunity to access college classes once the student has exhausted the curricular opportunities the school has to offer.

School Based Programming

Elementary #1 and #2

The programming at Elem #1 and #2 is for students who demonstrate above grade level math and reading skills. The purpose of the program is to enhance math and ELA concepts. Students will be provided with the opportunity to build their math skills through participation in activities requiring higher level thinking skills. The purpose of the ELA programming is to expose students to a broad selection of literature, expand vocabulary, and stimulate critical thinking skills.

Middle School

The middle school offers differentiated curricula for gifted students. Students will be identified for their eligibility and will be cluster grouped with other identified students and placed in an exclusive accelerated class for English Language Arts (ELA) and/or Math based on their eligibility. Teachers have been extensively trained in differentiating instruction for all learners, including the accelerated learner. Their lessons and instruction will be differentiated and accelerated to meet the needs of the students.

High School

Students will be placed in Advanced, Honors or Advanced Placement (AP), and/or dual credit classes if they meet the District's placement criteria for those classes. For more information on those classes and their criteria, please contact your child's academic advisor at the high school. Other experiences and opportunities will be investigated and utilized as deemed appropriate by the staff and administration.

Is My Child Gifted?

All children are special and have their own areas of strength. However, some children have unusually advanced abilities that benefit from special adjustments at home and school to help them grow and learn to their fullest potential. As you watch your child grow and develop, you may notice skills or characteristics that are quite different from those of other children the same age. For example, your child may:

- Be very curious and observant
- Use adult-sounding words and reasoning
- Think of many unusual ideas
- Recognize complex patterns or relationships
- Come to surprising solutions to problems
- Show a strong memory
- Ask unusual questions
- Demonstrate advanced talent in a certain area (such as mathematics, language, art, writing, music, or drama)
- Learn letters or numbers early and read before being formally taught

Children can demonstrate giftedness in a variety of ways, and often parent(s)/guardian(s) are the first to notice special abilities. If you are seeing a number of these traits, skills and behaviors in your child(ren), it might be a signal that their development could be advanced.

Characteristics of Gifted Students

Gifted students represent from three to five percent of the entire population, for general intellectual abilities. They are individuals, with unique qualities, but still sharing some common characteristics.

From an early age, gifted and talented students demonstrate exceptional ability. They tend to walk and talk earlier than other children. They are generally more independent. They show a better than average ability to evaluate facts and arguments and to solve complex problems and puzzles. They learn to read easily, try more complex reading materials, and tend to read higher quality books. They are more likely to have collections, multiple hobbies, and play complex games. They see unusual relationships and combine ideas into new relationship patterns. They are easily bored with repetition and need only 60% of the time that average children take to master material. Gifted and talented children do not possess all of the above characteristics to the same degree, but most demonstrate these traits to a greater extent than do other children.

IS MY BRIGHT CHILD A GIFTED LEARNER?

"Talent is something rare and beautiful and precious, and it must not be allowed to go to waste."
– George Selden, said by Tucker Mouse in *The Cricket in Times Square*

Both parents and educators know that all children have special talents, but it can be difficult to determine whether a child is a bright, hardworking student who is being challenged effectively within his/her learning environment or a gifted child who would benefit from something beyond the level of their learning environment. Making all "A's" isn't always an indicator of giftedness- it indicates hard work and motivation and other factors but not necessarily what is recognized as "giftedness."

The following table of characteristics is helpful in distinguishing between bright learners and gifted learners. These descriptions may overlap and are not mutually exclusive. The bright learner may be more readily identifiable in the classroom setting and considered to be "gifted." The gifted learner may well be underachieving and not readily recognized. It is important to remember that no child will demonstrate all of the traits listed below nor will they demonstrate them all of the time. This table is meant to give you an idea of what these two types of learners are like.

Original source: Szabos, J. (1989). Bright child, gifted learner. Challenge, 34. Good Apple.

<i>Bright Child</i>	<i>Gifted Learner</i>
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 new design.
Enjoys school.	Enjoys learning.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.
Technician.	Inventor.
Good memorizer.	Good guesser.
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation.	Thrives on complexity.
Is alert.	Is keenly observant.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is highly self-critical.

Bright Learners

Bright learners are students that have a strong motivation to perform well and succeed in school. These types of students usually enjoy school, get A's, memorize information easily, give complete and accurate answers, have advanced knowledge and are at the top of

their class. They tend to be satisfied with their knowledge and skills, but they will receive new information with willingness and interest when required. High achievers are usually emotionally and socially on track, and they relate well to peers of their own age.

Gifted Learners

Gifted learners are students that have a strong motivation to learn and expand their intellectual capacity. They prefer self-directed learning, may or may not be motivated by grades, are excellent at making inferences and connections, pose complex questions, generate abstract concepts and are beyond their class. They are not satisfied with a straightforward answer, preferring to examine a problem's intricacies and underlying implications. They tend to be self-critical and are constantly seeking to expand their knowledge. Gifted learners may be emotionally and socially behind, on track or advanced. Most tend to connect with peers on the basis of shared intellectual interest rather than similarity in age.

Traits, Aptitudes and Behaviors of a Gifted Child

It is important to remember that no child will demonstrate all of the traits listed below nor will they demonstrate them all of the time.

Motivation: Intrinsic desire to learn.

- Demonstrates persistence in pursuing and completing self-selected tasks.
- Expresses enthusiasm about learning.
- Aspires to be somebody or something.

Interest: Intentness, passion, concern, or curiosity about something.

- Demonstrates unusual or advanced interest in a topic or activity.
- Self-starts.
- Pursues an activity unceasingly.

Communication: Highly expressive and effective in use of words, numbers and/or symbols.

- Demonstrates unusual ability to communicate in one or more ways (verbally, physically, artistically, and symbolically).
- Uses particularly apt examples, illustrations, or elaborations.

Problem Solving: Effective, inventive strategies used to recognize and solve problems.

- Demonstrates unusual ability to devise or adapt a

systematic strategy for solving problems.

- Changes strategies when the employed strategy is ineffective.
- Creates new designs or inventions.

Memory: Retains and retrieves information.

- Already knows something that is assumed to be new knowledge.
- Needs few repetitions for mastery.
- Has a wealth of information about school and/or non-school topics.
- Pays attention to details.
- Manipulates information.

Inquiry: Questions, experiments, explores.

- Asks unusual questions for age.
- Plays around with ideas.
- Demonstrates extensive exploratory behaviors directed at

eliciting information. **Insight:** Grasps new concepts, makes connections, and senses deeper meanings.

- Demonstrates exceptional ability to draw inferences.
- Appears to be a good guesser.
- Is keenly observant.
- Sees unusual and diverse relationships.
- Integrates ideas and disciplines.

Reasoning: Uses controlled, active, intentional, goal-oriented thought.

- Makes generalizations.
- Uses metaphors and analogies.
- Thinks things through.

Creativity: Produces many and/or highly original ideas.

- Shows exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials.
- Has wild, perhaps silly ideas.
- Produces ideas fluently or flexibly.
- Is highly curious.

Humor: Brings heretofore unrelated ideas together in a recognizable relationship.

- Uses a keen sense of humor.
- Has a large accumulation of information about emotions.
- Sees unusual relationships.
- Demonstrates unusual emotional depth.
- Demonstrates sensory awareness.

Intensity: Extreme responses to stimuli; emotional, intellectual, sensory, psychomotor, and/or imagination.

- Intense passionate feelings.
- Identification with others' feelings.

- Heightened awareness of injustice and hypocrisy.
- High level of emotional energy.
- Heightened sensitivity to the environment. (e.g. light, noise, movement)
- High levels of empathy.
- Keen self-awareness.

The Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Children

To a large degree, the needs of gifted children are the same as those of other children. The same developmental stages occur, though often at a younger age. Some needs and problems, however, appear more often among gifted children. It is helpful to conceptualize needs of gifted children in terms of those that arise because of the interaction with the environmental setting (e.g., family, school, or cultural milieu) and those that arise internally because of the very characteristics of the gifted child. Several intellectual and personality attributes characterize gifted children and should be noted at the outset. These characteristics may be strengths, but potential problems also may be associated with them.

Possible Problems that may be Associated with the Characteristic Strengths of Gifted Children

Strengths	Possible Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquires/retains information quickly• Inquisitive; searches for significance• Intrinsic motivation• Enjoys problem solving; able to conceptualize, abstract, synthesize• Seeks cause-effect relations• Emphasizes truth, equity, and fair play• Seeks to organize things and people• Large facile vocabulary; advanced broad information• High expectations of self and others• Creative/inventive; likes new way of doing things• Intense concentration; long attention span and persistence in areas of interest• Sensitivity, empathy; desire to be accepted by others• High energy, alertness, eagerness• Independent; prefers individualized work; reliant on self• Diverse interests and abilities; versatility• Strong sense of humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impatient with others; dislikes basic routine• Asks embarrassing questions; excessive interests• Strong-willed; resists direction• Resists routine practice; questions teaching procedures• Dislikes unclear/illogical areas (e.g. traditions of feelings)• Worries about humanitarian concerns• Constructs complicated rules; often seen as bossy• May use words to manipulate; bored with school and age-peers• Intolerant perfectionist; may become depressed• May be seen as disruptive and out of step• Neglects duties or people during periods of focus; resists interruption; stubbornness• Sensitivity to criticism or peer rejection• Frustration with inactivity; may be seen as hyperactive• May reject parent or peer input; nonconformity• May appear disorganized or scattered; frustrated over lack of time• Peers may misunderstand humor; may become "class clown" for attention

– Adapted from Clark (1992) and Seago (1974)

Misconceptions and Realities of Gifted Children

Misconception: All children are gifted. Many principals and teachers assert that all children are gifted, meaning that all children have some areas in which they have strengths or that all children have equal potential for learning.

Reality: While all children have relative strengths and weaknesses, some children have extreme strengths in one or more areas. Students who are gifted may require special education, just as students who have cognitive disabilities do. The belief that all children are gifted leads to a lack of identification and service to students who are gifted.

Misconception: Gifted kids have it made and will succeed in life no matter what. They can make it on their own because they're smart. They don't need any special help in school or anywhere else.

Reality: Gifted students may drop out of school because they don't find it challenging, interesting or relevant. They often feel "different" because of their unique thinking processes and thus become alienated from other students. Too many of them try to fit in and do not reach their potential.

Misconception: Gifted kids love school, get high grades, and greet each new school day with enthusiasm. The gifted student is the one who is most enthusiastic about school and schoolwork.

Reality: Most schools and classroom teaching methods are geared for average students which make it hard for gifted students to get excited about going to school. Some of the most capable students end up not using their academic potential unless they are appropriately challenged and their social and emotional needs are understood and addressed.

Misconception: Teachers love to have gifted students in their classes.

Reality: Some do, but some don't. Some teachers feel uncomfortable with the unique learning needs of gifted students and are unsure of how to meet the students' needs. They may also have the responsibility of meeting the needs of a very wide variety of student abilities.

Misconception: Gifted children have intellectual capabilities that allow them to be outstanding in all subjects and areas.

Reality: Academic giftedness is often concentrated in a

particular area, including the "hands-on" or manipulative strengths that are not common practice in most classrooms. Most gifted children have a combination of academic strengths and weaknesses. Children can even be gifted in one academic area and learning-disabled in another.

Misconception: High-IQ children are popular, well-adjusted, exceptionally moral, and glowing with psychological health.

Reality: This perception was based on results by Terman's study in 1922 which defined gifted children not only as academically superior, but also as superior in physique, health and social adjustment, marked by superior moral attitudes. Gifted children are often socially isolated and unhappy unless they are fortunate enough to find others like themselves. Gifted children may face ridicule and taunts about being nerds or geeks. Most children easily pick out the awkward, un-athletic loners, or the "show-offs" who have strange interests and vocabularies that are out of touch with those of their peers. (13-14 Gifted Services Programming Overview Page 23)

Misconception: Gifted kids are equally mature in all areas - academic, physical, social and emotional.

Reality: Gifted children tend to have "asynchronous" development. That is, their intellectual, social and emotional abilities often develop at different rates. An 8-year-old gifted child may sound like a teenager but act like a 6-year-old. These differences in development can be frustrating for the children and adults around them.

Misconception: Nearly all gifted students come from upper-, middle-class, professional families. Teachers won't find them coming from the lower economic and social levels.

Reality: There are just as many gifted children from families with a low socio-economic status as there are in the suburbs. Intelligence knows no income, race or socio-economic levels. One of the challenges of school systems is to implement identification methods that are appropriate for all children, including those who do not have strong English-language skills or have not had experiences that more affluent families can

afford.

Misconception: Gifted children are destined to become eminent adults.

Reality: Many gifted children are more susceptible to emotional and physical problems from being "stressed out" and thus burn out early or choose to hide or deny their abilities. Some, while extremely successful as adults, never do anything genuinely creative. Besides a high level of ability, personality, motivation, family and school environments, opportunity, and chance play important roles. The Terman studies and the Stanford studies showed, however, that an unusual proportion of gifted individuals became lawyers, doctors, engineers, college professors, and leaders in government, business, and industry.

Misconception: Some people assert that gifted children are "made" by overzealous parents' intent on their children's stardom. Parents are cautioned not to push or label their children, to let them have a "normal" childhood. Otherwise, they are told, their children will resent them and lose interest in achieving.

Reality: Parents of gifted children are often highly involved in the nurturance of their children's gifts. A high degree of investment and involvement is not a destructive force. It is necessary for a child's gift to be fully developed. Emotional support and understanding from the family are also important for gifted children. Nature and nurture both play a role in determining whether there is the ability for high levels of intelligence to develop.

Identification Process

"District boards of education shall make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process of gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures, including but not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, student performance or products, intelligence testing, parent/student/peer recommendations, and other appropriate measures."

N.J.A.C., 6A: 8 - New Jersey
Department of Education

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to identify gifted and talented pupils within the school district and to provide these pupils appropriate instructional adaptations and services. To that end, the Board directs each such pupil in the school district be identified and offered an appropriate educational program and services. For purposes of this policy, gifted and talented pupils will be defined as those "exceptionally able pupils who possess or demonstrate high levels of abilities, 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 District follows the NAGC and USDOE recommendations as well as the NJDOE definition to identify our students within a range of the top 5-10%. All students undergo the identification process. The following is a summary of the identification process which differs slightly at each grade level and in each building.

- All students are evaluated for Giftedness.
- All students are compared with their chronological peers.
- The District identification process is developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered. (e.g. use of math achievement to identify students for a math program)
- Student identification for inclusion in the gifted and talented education program is data driven and evidence based utilizing multiple measures.
- We utilize a minimum of 5 criteria to determine placement. Measures may include but are not limited to:
 - Criterion-referenced Assessment Scores also known as Standardized test scores (NJSLA)
 - Norm-referenced Assessment Scores (e.g. STAR percentile)
 - Curriculum Based Assessment Scores/Performance Samples
 - Common Core Writing Sample
 - Open ended response problems for Math
 - Marking Period/Trimester Grades
 - Teacher Recommendations
 - Any other developmentally appropriate benchmark or assessment

Instructions for Completing

Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale for Students

The gifted and talented program is an instructional program for high achieving students. Curriculum differentiation in the depth, breadth, and pace of instruction is designed to meet the needs of high-ability learners. When determining whether a student needs the services provided by gifted and talented placement, the selection committee uses a holistic approach. No one score on any one measure determines eligibility. The committee considers all data in the screening file, including the child's educational history, progress reports, test data, and observations of the student's classroom behaviors. The *Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale (GBRS)* and the recommended Content Area Rating Scales (CARS) are two of the instruments used in the screening process. It should be completed by a local school committee including at least one teacher who has recently worked with the student.

Please use the following guidelines in completing the *GBRS and CARS*:

- The *GBRS/CARS* should be completed by assigning a single whole number from 1-4 to each category. A rating of 4 should be given to a student who is consistently strong in a particular category. A rating of 2 describes a child who occasionally demonstrates the behaviors that are listed in a particular category. The total score is the sum of the numbers assigned to each of the four categories. **Fractions, decimals, and/or split numbers may not be used.**
- If more than one teacher works with the student, teachers should come to consensus in each category and merge the observations onto a **single** *GBRS/CARS* form. Only **one** completed *GBRS/CARS* may be submitted.
- A student working above grade level in reading consistently accesses reading materials suited for one or more grade levels above the current grade level. A student working above grade level in mathematics works consistently above grade level often knows the material being presented or is rapidly able to move on while others are still learning.
- In the Comments/Summary section, list examples, observations, and/or descriptions of observed behaviors. These may include instructional modifications, inclusion in special programs, or additional information profiling the student's strengths. The comments should support categorical ratings with specific examples illustrating the behaviors.
- The *GBRS/CARS* are a record of **observable classroom behaviors**. It is **not** a recommendation or favorable support for or against gifted and talented placement or for other advanced academic services.
- All screening file documents including the *GBRS/CARS* will be available to parents or guardians if requested.

Student Name _____ School _____

Teacher Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

GIFTED BEHAVIORS RATING SCALE WITH COMMENTARY

A *Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale with Commentary (GBRS)* is required for screening placement.

Review each category and the list of descriptors. Assign an overall rating using the scale below.

Add the four scores and place the sum in the total box.

Behaviors Demonstrated:

1 = rarely

2 = occasionally

3 = frequently

4 = consistently

TOTAL _____

1. Exceptional Ability to Learn

- Exhibits exceptional memory
- Demonstrates in-depth knowledge
- Displays persistent, intense focus on one or more topics
- Is highly reflective and/or sensitive to his/her environment
- Learns and adapts readily to new cultures
- Learns quickly and easily
- Acquires language at a rapid pace
- Learns skills independently and makes connections without formal instruction

2. Exceptional Application of Knowledge

- Demonstrates highly developed reasoning
- Employs complex problem-solving strategies
- Uses and interprets advanced symbol systems in academics, visual arts, and/or performing arts
- Understands, applies, transfers abstract concepts
- Uses technology in advanced applications
- Acts as an interpreter, translator, and/or facilitator to help others
- Makes advanced connections and transfers learning to other subjects, situations, cultures
- Communicates learned concepts through role playing and/or detailed artwork

3. Exceptional Creative/Productive Thinking

- Sees the familiar in unusual ways / Does not conform to typical ways of thinking or perceiving
- Is highly creative and/or inventive
- Demonstrates unusual fluency and flexibility in thinking and problem-solving
- Expresses ideas, feelings, experiences, and/or beliefs in original ways
- Displays keen sense of humor
- Is highly curious
- Generates new ideas, new uses, new solutions easily
- Perceives and manipulates patterns, colors, and/or symbols

4. Exceptional Motivation to Succeed

- Demonstrates ability to lead large and/or small groups
- Meets exceptional personal and/or academic challenges
- Explores, researches, questions topics, ideas, issues independently
- Is poised with adults and engages them in adult conversations
- Exhibits a strong sense of loyalty and responsibility
- Demonstrates exceptional ability to adapt to new experiences
- Strives to achieve high standards especially in areas of strength and/or interest
- Shows initiative, self-direction, and/or high level of confidence.

Student Name _____ Grade _____

GIFTED BEHAVIORS RATING SCALE COMMENTARY

Accommodations provided for the student (check where applicable):	
Working at advanced level	Mathematics
	Reading
Current Status for Level of Service Received	

COMMENTARY (GBRS Rating completed by teacher(s) for student)

In a bullet format, please provide a profile of the student's academic strengths and abilities, citing specific examples.

Commentary should include specific examples to support the GBRS ratings

Please complete the attached scale for mathematics and/or English language arts.

ACADEMIC RATING SCALE: MATHEMATICS

STUDENT: _____

GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

TEACHER: _____ SCHOOL: _____

Read each item and rate the student according to this scale:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Rarely, seldom or never | 3. Quite often or frequently |
| 2. Occasionally, sometimes | 4. Always or almost always |

DK Don't know or have never observed

	1. Generalizes mathematical relationships, relates concepts in various applications.
	2. Organizes data to discover patterns or relationships.
	3. Persistent in learning math, concentrates, works hard, motivated, interested.
	4. Analyses problems carefully, considers alternatives, does not necessarily accept first answer.
	5. Resourceful in seeking ways to solve a problem.
	6. Interested in numbers and quantitative relationships, sees usefulness or applications of mathematics.
	7. Learns math concepts and processes faster than other students.
	8. Good at verbalizing math concepts, processes, and solutions.
	9. Identifies and restates problems, good at formulating hypotheses.
	10. Reasons effectively.
	11. Enjoys trying to solve difficult problems, likes puzzles and logic problems.
	12. Visualizes spatially, can create visual images of problems.
	13. Develops unique associations, uses original methods for solutions.
	14. Sometimes solves problems intuitively, then cannot always explain why the solution is correct.
	15. Recalls relevant information or concepts in solving problems, recognizes the critical elements.

ACADEMIC RATING SCALE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT: _____

GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

TEACHER: _____ SCHOOL: _____

Read each item and rate the student according to this scale:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Rarely, seldom or never | 3. Quite often or frequently |
| 2. Occasionally, sometimes | 4. Always or almost always |

DK Don't know or have never observed

	1. Interested in words, definitions, derivations; has an extensive vocabulary.
	2. Sees details, is a good observer, sees relationships, makes connections.
	3. Organizes ideas and sequences well in preparation for speaking or writing.
	4. Has a good sense of humor; uses and understands satire, puns, and second meanings.
	5. Reads widely for a period of time in a variety of types of literature; may focus on one type, then switch and focus on another.
	6. Original and creative; comes up with unique ideas in writing or speaking.
	7. Develops convincing characters and situations in writing.
	8. Withholds judgement while investigating a topic; willing to explore a topic in greater depth than other students, curious.
	9. Recognizes author's or speaker's point of view, mood or intentions.
	10. Elaborates well when speaking or writing, uses vivid expressions which make words "come alive".
	11. Visualizes and translates images into written or spoken forms.
	12. Likes to do independent study and research in areas of interest.
	13. Motivated to write even when writing is not assigned; writes stories, poems, or plays; keeps a journal or diary.
	14. Sees relationship between literature and other art forms.
	15. Uses words effectively in writing descriptions and communicating emotions.

Gifted and Talented — Parent/Guardian Nomination Form

The Middle Township School District has multiple measures in place that should identify all students eligible for the math or language arts gifted and talented program. However, parents/guardians should complete this form if they believe their child is performing well above grade level or demonstrating exceptional strengths or talents and would like their child's performance and achievement to be reviewed to determine eligibility for gifted education services.

Listed below are some differences to help you distinguish between a bright child and a gifted learner. (Szabo, 1989)The list below does not describe all the traits and attitudes of gifted children, as all children are diverse in their characteristics; however, it is a good reference of distinguishing characteristics.

Once this form is received, the gifted placement team will consult and analyze test and performance data to determine if additional assessments are warranted and if the criteria for formal identification have been met. The results of the screening process will be communicated to parents through a letter.

Bright Child	Gifted Learner
1. Knows the answers	1. Asks the questions
2. Is interested	2. Is highly curious
3. Is attentive	3. Is mentally and physically involved
4. Has good ideas	4. Has wild silly ideas
5. Works hard	5. Plays around, yet tests well
6. Answers the questions	6. Discusses in detail; elaborates
7. Top group	7. Beyond the group
8. Listens with interest	8. Shows strong feelings and opinions
9. Learns with ease	9. Already knows
10. 6-8 repetitions for mastery	10. 1-2 repetitions for mastery
11. Understands ideas	11. Constructs abstractions
12. Enjoys peers	12. Prefers adults
13. Grasps the meaning	13. Draws inferences
14. Completes assignments	14. Initiates projects
15. Is receptive	15. Is intense

Student's Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Birth date: _____

Parent/Guardian Inventory Checklist

Please check one column after each of the following statements that best describes your child.

When have you observed this characteristic?	Seldom or never	Occasionally	Most of the time	Virtually all of the time
1. Imagines things to be different than the way they actually are. "Wonders what if?" or "What would happen if?"				
2. Has self-stimulated curiosity; shows independence in trying to learn more about something.				
3. Chooses difficult problems over simple ones.				
4. Is selected by peers for positions of academic leadership.				
5. Adapts readily to new situations; flexible in thought and action; not disturbed if the normal routine is changed.				
6. Organizes and brings structure to things, people and situations.				
7. Uses unique and unusual ways to solve problems.				
8. Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things, often going beyond known or conventional limits.				
9. Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics beyond the usual interests of this age.				
10. Reasons things out, thinks clearly, and comprehends meaning.				
11. Expresses interest in understanding self and others.				
12. Possesses the interest of an older child or adult in games and reading.				
13. Is alert and keenly observant and responds quickly.				
14. Strives toward perfection, is self-critical, is not easily satisfied with own speed or products.				
15. Makes generalizations and draws conclusions that summarized complex information easily.				
16. Can perform more difficult mental tasks than peers.				
17. Seems to sense what others want and helps accomplish it.				
18. Tends to direct others in activities.				
19. Is able to work through frustration and maintain focus.				
20. Sees flaws in things, including own work, and can suggest better ways to do job or reach an objective.				
21. Has many different ways of solving problems.				
22. Challenges authority when sense of justice is offended, structures alternative approaches.				
23. Display a mature sense of humor.				
24. Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age level, uses terms in a meaningful way.				

Please check below which area(s) may apply to your child, and give specific examples of behaviors that support this area of nomination. Attach student work that illustrates the ability being considered.

General Intellectual Ability

Processes new information quickly, uses advanced vocabulary, sees connections in concepts, focuses for long periods of time on special interests, or enjoys solving puzzles and problems.

Specific Academic Ability

Shows unusual/advanced ability in: _____ Language Arts _____ Math

Thinks logically and symbolically about quantitative and spatial relationships, can articulate a thorough and detailed response, sees multiple pathways to solve problems, or thinks abstractly and shows insight into novel situations.

Creative Ability

Has a vivid imagination, a keen aesthetic sense, unique ideas in problem solving situations, may be a risk-taker, adventurous, non-conforming, often asks "why" or sees the unusual.

Leadership Ability

Organizes and leads groups, carries responsibility well, tolerant and flexible with peers, possesses good self-confidence, or may be overbearing at times.

Briefly describe your child's major interests, hobbies and other creative endeavors.

What are your main reasons for referring your child to the gifted and talented? Share your insights about his/her talents, abilities, and learning needs. (Please Note: Teachers are expected to challenge every student according to his/her abilities. Therefore, a desire to have your child challenged is NOT a reason for a gifted program referral.)

Please attach any other information which you believe is relevant and would assist us in getting to know your child's interests and abilities. (Ex. exceptional work samples, academic accolades, outside testing results, evidence of participation in outside educational programs)

I understand that tests of ability, aptitude, or achievement may be administered to my child as part of the identification process.

Date _____

Parent or Guardian's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Please submit completed form to your student's principal's office by

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT GIFTED STUDENTS

- 1. Myth: GIFTED STUDENTS ARE GENERALLY WHITE, MIDDLE CLASS CHILDREN.**
Many early academic tests favored this group. Gifted education programs are meant to help all high-ability students. Gifted learners are found in all cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. However, many of these students are denied the opportunity to maximize their potential because of the way in which programs and services are funded, and/or flawed identification practices. For example, reliance on a single test score for gifted education services may exclude selection of students with different cultural experiences and opportunities.
- 2. Myth: BOYS AND GIRLS ACHIEVE EQUALLY.**
At age nine boys and girls show scholastic achievement that is fairly equal, but by age thirteen females have begun to decline in achievement that continues downwards through teenage years and into adulthood. Research suggests this disparity is not the result of different abilities, but the result of stereotyping.
- 3. Myth: I.Q. TESTS ARE THE BEST WAY TO IDENTIFY THE GIFTED CHILD.**
No single criterion can be used to determine giftedness. I.Q. tests measure a limited aspect of intelligence. Gifted behaviors include behaviors beyond intellectual ability.
- 4. Myth: GIFTED STUDENTS CAN ALWAYS BE IDENTIFIED BY TEACHERS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT BECAUSE THEY EARN GOOD GRADES AND ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SCHOOL.**
Although many gifted students earn good grades, others become underachievers, behavior problems, or dropouts. Many gifted students may be so far ahead of their same-age peers that they know more than half of the grade-level curriculum before the school year begins. Their resulting boredom and frustration can lead to low achievement, despondency, or unhealthy work habits.
- 5. Myth: A CHILD WHO PERFORMS POORLY CAN'T BE GIFTED**
Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student's performance and his actual ability. The roots of this problem differ, based on each child's experiences. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers and still others may have a learning disability that masks their giftedness. No matter the cause, it is imperative that a caring and perceptive adult help gifted learners break the cycle of underachievement in order to achieve their full potential.
- 6. Myth: A CHILD WHO HAS A DISABILITY CAN'T BE GIFTED**
Some gifted students also have learning or other disabilities. These "twice-exceptional" students often go undetected in regular classrooms because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear "average." Other twice-exceptional students are identified as having a learning disability and as a result, are not considered for gifted services. In both cases, it is important to focus on the students' abilities and allow them to have challenging curricula in addition to receiving help for their learning disability.

7. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS WILL HAVE SOCIO-EMOTIONAL ISSUES.
Many problems are brought on by the frustration of ability, although special classes for the gifted actually helps most adjust to these frustrations. Academically gifted students often feel bored or out of place with their age peers and naturally gravitate towards older students who are more similar as "intellectual peers." Studies have shown that gifted students tend to be happier with older students who share their interest than they are with children the same age. Acceleration placement options such as early entrance to Kindergarten, grade skipping, or early exit should be considered for these students.

8. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS SHOULD REMAIN IN REGULAR CLASSES TO SERVE AS EXAMPLES OR ROLE MODELS. THEY MAKE EVERYONE ELSE SMARTER.
Average or below-average students do not look to the gifted students in the class as role models. Watching or relying on someone who is expected to succeed does little to increase a struggling student's sense of self-confidence.² Similarly, gifted students benefit from classroom interactions with peers at similar performance levels and become bored, frustrated, and unmotivated when placed in classrooms with low or average-ability students.

9. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT AND DO NOT NEED HELP. IF THEY ARE REALLY GIFTED, THEY CAN MANAGE ON THEIR OWN.
Research negates this myth on several accounts. They may perform at a level far below their intellectual ability and also suffer from anxiety, insecurity, and loneliness.

10. **Myth:** THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GIFTED STUDENT IS AT THE SAME LEVEL AS HIS OR HER INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT, THEREFORE ARE MATURE AND WELL BEHAVED.
Gifted students are asynchronous. Their chronological age, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development may all be at different levels. For example, a 5-year-old may be able to read and comprehend a third-grade book but may not be able to write legibly.

11. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS ARE NERDS, SOCIAL ISOLATES, AND TEND TO NOT BE GOOD AT SPORTS.
There are many types of giftedness and many forms in which it can be expressed. Gifted students can be gifted in areas such as leadership, visual and performing arts and psychomotor. Many gifted students flourish in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, and deep concerns about societal problems. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in isolation or being labeled unfavorably as a "nerd." Because of these difficulties, the school experience is one to be endured rather than celebrated.

12. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS ARE GIFTED IN ALL AREAS. ALL CHILDREN ARE GIFTED.

All children have strengths and positive attributes, but not all children are gifted in the educational sense of the word. "Gifted" in a school setting means that a child has an advanced capacity to learn and apply what is learned in one or more subject areas (or in the performing or fine arts) when compared to others his or her age or grade. This advanced capacity requires modifications to the regular curriculum to ensure these children are challenged and learn new material. Gifted does not connote good or better; it is a term that allows students to be identified for services that meet their unique learning needs.

13. **Myth:** THE GIFTED STUDENT'S FAMILY ALWAYS PRIDES THE CHILD'S ABILITIES. THEY ARE ALSO EASY TO RAISE.

Families may not be aware a child is gifted and be confused or upset by certain behaviors. Families may not know how to deal with a gifted child. Some gifted children can be highly emotional, have volatile temper, talk incessantly, exhibit high levels of energy, and be very impulsive. Other gifted children can be depressed or suffer anxiety as a result of their giftedness – feel as though they don't fit in, aren't understood, or that they are alone.

14. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING THEY PUT THEIR MINDS TO. GIFTED STUDENTS ARE NATURALLY CREATIVE AND DO NOT NEED ENCOURAGEMENT.

Gifted students may prefer to work independently and may not need much guidance, however they still require necessary supports. Not all gifted students are gifted in all areas.

15. **Myth:** GIFTED CHILDREN ARE A WELCOME ADDITION TO ANY CLASSROOM AND ARE ALWAYS EASY TO TEACH.

Gifted students require more time an effort to ensure they are appropriately supported within the class. Teachers of gifted students should receive professional development on working with gifted students.

16. **Myth:** GIFTED STUDENTS ARE ALWAYS RECOGNIZABLE EARLY IN THEIR SCHOOL YEARS.

It may take time before certain gifted students are able to be identified. Teachers must be aware of the clues and realize there maybe students who have fallen through the cracks.

17. **Myth:** Gifted STUDENTS ARE FOCUSED AND COMPETITIVE.

Gifted students can seem distracted. Some may have a long attention span, but only if they are highly interested in the topic. Not all gifted students are competitive. Some may be shy and not wish to have attention placed upon accomplishments.

Appeal Process

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal a placement decision regarding admission or dismissal from the Gifted program. Appeals shall be made in writing and received within fifteen (15) days of the date the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance. Written appeals shall be sent to the building principal and must include the nature of the concern and contain supporting documentation attached. If the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) do not receive the relief requested at the building principal level, the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) may request (in writing) a conference with the Director of Curriculum to appeal the decision. If the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) do not receive the relief requested at the Director level, the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) may request (in writing) a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the decision. At no time will any requests be accepted that circumvent the procedures above. Please note that the identification process is confidential and individual results will not be released. Therefore appeals will not be granted if they are asking to appeal results of any part of the identification process.

Please note that placement decisions are reversed only in instances where extensive documentation is presented providing significant evidence that the child's knowledge, skills and abilities are superior to those measured by school personnel.

While we will consider any external documentation that you may present, please remember that the ultimate decision regarding placement and services lies with the school district.

Exit Policy and Procedures

Probation

Probation is for any student failing to meet the identification process or to meet the expectations of the program. Students will maintain their status in the program during probation for a period up to one (1) year. If their performance improves and they meet the qualifications for identification for the next academic term then they will be fully reinstated. If they fail to meet the qualifications then they will be exited from the program.

Exit

The program exists to provide services to identified students that will develop their unique talents and abilities. Participation in an educational program that goes beyond the services provided by the regular classroom/school program should allow

these students to achieve their potential. Identified students have demonstrated high performance ability or potential and therefore have the right to these additional services. The services provided for identified students match their area(s) of strength(s) through the way a student was identified. Therefore, the District takes very seriously the denial of services to a student who has qualified and will only make such determinations after careful attention and serious consideration.

Removal is defined as discontinuing the participation of a student in the program. Prior to removal, a student must be placed on probation.

Students participating in the program are expected to continue to meet the criteria set for identification and maintain high academic standards. Occasionally there may be a student or students who are identified for the program who do not perform at expected standards in the program. Students shall be removed from the program at any time the building principal determines it is in the student's best interest and after probation has been deemed ineffective. If a parent requests their child be removed, the building principal shall grant the request. Once a student is exited from the program, he/she must adhere to the identification procedures and timelines and exhibit an educational need to be readmitted.

The following guidelines are examples as to why a student may be exited:

- Refusal of services after being notified of identification.
- Repeated failure to complete assigned work.
- Substantial difficulty in understanding work that other students do independently (without parental or tutorial assistance).
- Inadequate performance in an academic subject area/s considered to be two consecutive six weeks grade averages in at least on subject fall below an 80 or failing at least one subject in a six week period.
- Indications of extreme stress or pressure (nervousness, anxiety, depression).
- Behavioral concerns, distractions, etc.
- Parent request in writing.

Please note that a student identified in both ELA and math may be exited from either one or both programs based on individual circumstances.

Miscellaneous

Notification

Parents shall be notified in writing upon selection for the program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The District will automatically place any qualified student into the program. All students undergo the same

testing for placement. In some instances, additional testing for placement may be required. In such an instance, the parent/guardian of record will be contacted before a subsequent round of testing.

Reassessment

All students will be reassessed annually for continuation. Assessments outside of the normal window for all students will not be accommodated and requests for further assessments or re-assessments will not be accommodated for any reason including for the appeals process.

Transfer Students

When a student identified as gifted by a previous public school district transfers into the District, the student's records shall be reviewed by the building principal. Students entering with a gifted/talented identification from another public school district shall receive services if appropriate documentation is provided. Upon receipt of documentation they will be placed in the program and will follow the normal course and timelines for the annual re-evaluation.

Continuance Procedures

Placement into the program during any academic year does not mean that the student will automatically qualify for services in subsequent years. Time in the school system is the only method for evaluating appropriateness of the placement into the program. All students will be reassessed annually.

Probation

Students that fail to maintain the academic expectations of the program will be placed on probation. In addition, any student that is currently in the program but fails to qualify for the program for the following year will maintain their status in the program for a probationary period of one (1) year. At the end of the probationary year the student will either qualify and be fully re-instated or will not qualify and will be exited from the program.

Exit Provisions

Student performance in the program shall be closely monitored. A student shall be removed from the program at any time that the District determines it is in the student's best interest and a probationary period has been ineffective. The teacher shall make a recommendation to the Principal for exiting the student.

Appeals

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal. All appeals will be sent to the building principal and must follow the appeals procedures outlines in this handbook.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation and assessment of the program is important to the success and development of
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the program. Members from the district committees will annually evaluate the program. The evaluation data will be presented to the Director of Curriculum and used as a needs assessment to be addressed in the district's annual instructional program.

Professional Learning

The New Jersey Department of Education requires professional learning for all teachers and the District further requires additional training for teachers who are assigned to teach students who have been identified as Gifted and Talented.

Parent Resources

What Should I do if I Believe My Child is Gifted?

Family members play an important role in providing learning experiences for children. There are many ways in which you can recognize and build on the strengths and talents you see in your child(ren). For example:

- Encourage your child(ren)'s curiosity and creativity
- Help your child(ren) find activities they love
- Give your child(ren) opportunities to take healthy risks as they explore the wonder around them

What Gifted Students Want from Their Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Sometimes it's hard to know what to do to support your child who has gifts or talents. Galbraith and Delisle's research informs us what students themselves requested.

- Be supportive and encouraging; be there for us; be on our side
- Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection
- Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard
- Help us with our schoolwork and homework
- Help us develop our talents
- Be understanding
- Don't expect straight As
- Allow us some independence; give us space
- Trust us, because chances are we know what we are doing
- Talk to us; more importantly listen to us
- Let us try alternative education and special programs

How Can I Be an Effective Advocate for My Child?

- Know the facts and be informed. If you're not sure, ask questions to learn what you need to know.
- Educate yourself on educational terminology, especially the vocabulary related to gifted education.
- Become familiar with the state guidelines and national guidelines to deepen your own knowledge base about giftedness.
- Be willing to give your child's school or classroom your time and talents - not just your critiques and suggestions.
- If you wish to talk with your child's teacher, make an appointment and tell the teacher in advance what you wish to discuss, being as specific as possible. Remember, in the hallway right after school is never the best time and place for a serious conversation. Help ensure that your advocacy will make the most difference by allowing your teacher to give you his/her full attention.
- Network with other interested parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers and community members to discover what has worked for them, what has not worked, and who in the community has been most helpful.
- Be willing to listen to other perspectives.
- Bring your sense of humor - everyone, including your child, will appreciate it.
- Be respectful of the professionals who are doing their best to educate every child, just as you are doing your best as a parent.
- Avoid becoming a hovering or "helicopter" parent - even gifted children need to develop their own sense of independence and the ability to speak for themselves in a tactful manner.
- Focus on your main issue and be willing to collaborate and compromise in order to move the conversation and next steps forward.
- Focus on your student's needs, not the "gifted" label. Teachers teach youngsters, and each student has a unique array of gifts and challenges.
- Be assertive, not adversarial - remember that you are modeling how to interact with the world for your child.
- Join gifted organizations, attend gifted education conferences, and subscribe to gifted education resources - all of these will help reassure and challenge you as well as move you in a constructive direction.

Supporting Your Gifted Child

There are many things that parent(s)/guardian(s)/guardians can do to encourage children with gifts and talents to grow more able, more curious, more compassionate and well-adjusted. You will see from these examples that these are things we want for all our children!

At Home

- Set an example; model life-long learning.
- Collect examples of your child's work and creativity in a portfolio.
- Encourage and model good communication.
- Create an accepting environment and encourage your child to share his/her feelings, questions, comments.
- Be a good listener.
- Be a facilitator and a guide - share in the adventure of learning new things.
- Allow childhood to be a part of your gifted one's life; do not expect him/her to feel and act like a miniature adult.
- Avoid comparing your child with others - don't lose sight of his/her individuality.
- Make free time a regular pastime - don't over-schedule your child.
- Set clear and consistent expectations and consequences; involve your child in the process.
- Help your child believe in him or herself.
- Emphasize your child's strengths; be positive.
- Supplement your child's learning at home; nurture your child's passions, interests, and creativity.
- Model respect for others.
- Value risk-taking, hard work and the satisfaction of achievement.
- Discuss effective problem-solving techniques and strategies to cope with failure.
- Encourage independence by giving your child responsibility.
- Provide opportunities for your child to interact with other gifted children, older children and stimulating adults.
- Check out special-interest classes and camps -- apply early.
- Encourage self-awareness.
- Remember the value of humor.

In School

Successful partnerships between home and school largely depend upon common knowledge, direct and honest communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

- Develop rapport with your child's teacher.
- Share your child's "at home" work and creativity with the teacher at appropriate times.
- Ask your child's teacher for suggestions to encourage and nurture a particular talent, interest, or ability.
- Be a volunteer in your child's classroom or school.
- Keep written documentation of meetings with school staff so you can be more helpful if there is a question in the future.
- Offer to assist school staff in designing a Differentiated Educational Plan (a

document that identifies the student's strengths and weaknesses, personal goals, indicators of academic growth, and avenues of parental support).

- Take time to thank your child's teacher and other school staff.

Organizations/References

The **National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)** is an organization of parents, educators, professionals, and community leaders to address the unique needs of gifted children and youth. www.nagc.org

The mission of **National Society for the Gifted and Talented** is to advance the development of gifted, talented, and high potential youth, in the United States and abroad, through opportunities, advocacy, and exemplary programs and practices. www.nsgt.org

The **Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students (AEGUS)** provides a forum for ideas and interventions aimed at helping twice-exceptional students reach their full potential. www.aegus1.org

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page is a resource guide for the education of gifted children with links to many gifted education resources available on the Internet. www.hoagiesgifted.org

Montclair State University Academically Gifted and Talented Youth Program provides engaging courses designed to meet the unique intellectual and social needs of high-ability students. Gifted students in grades K-11 have an opportunity to enroll in courses delivered over nine weekends in the fall and spring, as well as a six-week summer camp. www.montclair.edu/GiftTalent/

John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth identifies and develops the talents of the most advanced K-12 learners worldwide. As part of Johns Hopkins University, CTY helps fulfill the university's mission of preparing students to make significant future contributions to our world. <http://cty.jhu.edu/>

The **Gifted Child Society** is a non-profit organization in northern New Jersey. Its mission is to provide educational enrichment and support services specifically designed for gifted children and to provide assistance to parents in raising gifted children. <http://giftedchildsociety.com/index.php>

The **New Jersey Association for Gifted Children** is the state affiliate to the National Association for Gifted Children. Its mission is to promote excellence and leadership in gifted education through appropriate programs, resource networks and community advocacy. www.njagc.org

The **American Association for Gifted Children** is affiliated with Duke University and has resources related to gifted education and students. www.aagc.org

The **Association for the Gifted (TAG)** is a division of the Council for Exceptional Children. They promote scholarly research, advocacy and professional development. www.cectag.org

The **Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development** is sponsored by the University of Iowa and conducts talent searches and educational programs for gifted students. www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/

College Admissions Services - Resources and information about college admissions including financial aid, scholarships, studying for the SAT, writing application essays, and the college admissions process. <http://www.go4ivy.com/resource.asp>

Davidson Institute for Talent Development - Supports profoundly gifted young people and opportunities for development of talents. <http://www.ditd.org/public/>

Kids Links - Gifted and Talented Education Program - Resources for students to use. Web resources, games and activities for students in elementary and middle school are posted on this site. There are links for parent resources as well.
www.stockton.k12.ca.us/gate/kids-links.htm

Stanford University Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY) - Computer-based distance-learning courses for high-ability students of all ages in an individualized educational experience in a variety of subjects from kindergarten through advanced-undergraduate. <http://epgy.stanford.edu/>

Jacob K. Javits Fellowships Program - U.S. Department of Education sponsored programs for gifted and talented education funding for elementary, high school, and college students; local educational agency grant programs, and university research.
www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRCGT) - The NRCGT promotes and publishes research on gifted education related to current and emerging issues in education of gifted and talented students, including GATE students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups. <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html>

Odyssey of the Mind - An international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college; involving regional, state, and international competitions. <http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/>

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) - Fosters education and research to support the unique social and emotional needs of gifted individuals.
<http://www.sengifted.org/>

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children - A worldwide network of educators, scholars, researchers, parents, educational institutions, and others interested in research and information on the gifted. <http://www.worldgifted.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does *New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.)* define a student who is gifted and talented?

New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:8-3.1 defines students who are gifted and talented 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.

2. How should districts identify students who are gifted and talented?

The *N.J.A.C.* requires that students be compared to their chronological peers in the local school district. The New Jersey Department of Education has not established state-level criteria for identifying students who are gifted, such as mandated tests or assessments, grade point averages, or IQ scores. Local school districts must use **multiple measures** to identify students.

3. What does *N.J.A.C.* mean by "multiple measures?"

According to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:8-3., district boards of education must make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process for gifted and talented students that includes **multiple measures**. Some examples might include, but are not limited to, the following: achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; intelligence testing; and parent, student, and/or teacher recommendation. Local school districts should ensure that the identification methodology is developmentally appropriate, nondiscriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered (e.g., using math achievement to identify students for a math program).

4. When should districts identify students for giftedness?

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)5 ii requires district boards of education to **provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students**. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten or upon entrance to the school or district. Local school districts are not obligated to identify students prior to their enrollment in the public

school (e.g., three-year-olds, students enrolled in community early childhood programs or private kindergartens) or students attending nonpublic schools.

5. Since standardized assessments are not administered until grade three, how can we identify students in grades K-2?

District boards of education are required to identify students in grades K-12. The state does not require the use of standardized tests as part of the identification process. Local districts should use multiple measures to identify students who are gifted and talented (refer to question 3).

6. Must pre-k students be identified? Must a district identify students who are not age-eligible for school entrance?

The regulations are applicable to students in grades K-12 who are enrolled in a public school.

7. How can we learn more about the identification of English language learners who are gifted and talented?

The identification of English language learners as students who are gifted and talented may present some challenges. Districts should use multiple measures to identify *all* students who may be gifted and talented (refer to question 3). The National Association for Gifted Children has published a position statement regarding the [identification of culturally and linguistically diverse students](#) that might provide useful guidance for districts.

8. How can we learn more about the identification of students with unique learning needs who are also gifted and talented?

Students who are identified as "twice-exceptional" may have learning disabilities that mask their giftedness. These students may require different identification methods and program modifications to reach their full potential. It should not be assumed that students with disabilities cannot participate in gifted and talented programs. The National Association for Gifted Children has published a position statement regarding the [twice-exceptional students](#).

9. Can parents/guardians refer their child for gifted and talented services?

All public school districts must have a board-approved gifted and talented identification process and provide services for identified students enrolled in the

grades of that school district. Parents/guardians should contact their local school district to find out more information about the referral process.

Services / Programs

10. What services must a district provide?

According to *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1*, all public school districts must have a board-approved gifted and talented identification process and provide services for identified students enrolled in the grades of that school district. The regulations require that identification and services be made available to students in grades K-12.

11. What types of instructional accommodations must be made for students identified as gifted and talented?

N.J.A.C. requires that district boards of education provide appropriate K-12 services for students identified as gifted and talented. This includes appropriate curricular and instructional modifications indicating content, process, products, and/or learning environments. District boards of education must also consider the [PreK-Grade 12 National Gifted Program Standards](#) of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted and talented students. The standards are available at www.nagc.org.

12. Does the state require districts to use a specific program or model for elementary or middle-level students?

The state does not require a particular program or model. Program models might include, but are not limited to, pull-out programs, classroom-based differentiated instruction, acceleration, flexible pacing, compacted curricula, distance learning, advanced classes, or individualized programs.

13. As part of an accelerated approach, can middle school students take high school courses and receive credit towards high school graduation?

This is a local district decision. Every school district in New Jersey is required to have an

Option 2 policy. According to *N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-5.1 a (2) ii* district boards of education must establish a process for granting of credits through successful completion of assessments that verify student achievement in meeting or exceeding the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) at the high school level. Such

programs or assessments may occur all or in part prior to a student's high school enrollment.

14. Can honors, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses be used to satisfy the requirements at the high school level?

Honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes typically move at a faster rate than other classes, and they tend to have more advanced content. Enrollment in an IB, AP or honors class does not automatically show that a student's level of learning is being addressed. Whether a specific honors, AP or IB course meets the needs of a student identified as gifted in a district should be based on the student's unique needs and interests. The NJDOE does not define what constitutes an "honors" course.

15. Must gifted services be offered during the school day?

N.J.A.C. requires that district boards of education provide appropriate K-12 services for students identified as gifted and talented. This includes appropriate curricular and instructional modifications indicating content, process, products, and/or learning environments. Afterschool programs or clubs may provide exciting opportunities for students who are identified as gifted and talented but do not fulfill the expectations put forth in *N.J.A.C.* 6A:8-3.1.

16. Does the state or federal government provide funding for gifted programs?

The state does not provide specific, dedicated funds for gifted programs. However, district boards of education are required to provide identification and services using state aid and local revenues.

17. Are local school districts obligated to accept the evaluation of a student's giftedness from another state, school district, or independent service?

N.J.A.C. does not set requirements regarding the identification of gifted and talented students. The measures that are used for the identification process are determined by the local school district. Therefore, a school district is not obligated to accept the evaluation from another state, school district, or independent service.

18. If I am moving to New Jersey from another state, how can I find out what programs are offered in a specific school or district?

All public school districts in New Jersey are required to identify gifted and talented students and provide services. The types of services may differ from district to

district. For information regarding services available in a particular district, please contact the district or check its website. Contact information on schools and districts is available in the [school directory](#). You may also find out more about gifted education in New Jersey on the [NJ Association for Gifted Children's website](#).

19. How should gifted services be documented on a student's transcript or report card?

Student performance should be documented as in any other course using grades, narratives, or other means.

20. What should a parent/guardian do if he or she is not satisfied with the services that his or her child is receiving?

A parent/guardian may want to begin by reviewing the information that the district has provided regarding the gifted and talented services that it offers. This information may be found in the student handbook or district website. To ask questions or discuss the services currently being provided, a parent/guardian may want to reach out to his/her child's teachers or school counselor. If there are further concerns, he or she can contact a school or district administrator. If the issues are still not resolved, a parent/guardian can put the concerns in writing to the district administration with a copy to the [county superintendent](#).

22. Does the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* provide specific funding for students who are identified as gifted and talented?

ESSA funding goes directly to districts. The NJDOE will provide guidance support to help districts use *ESSA* funds to better meet student and educator needs, which may include supporting or expanding gifted and talented programs or providing professional learning opportunities to teachers of students identified as gifted and talented.

