

*West Windsor-Plainsboro
Regional School District*

*Gifted and Talented
Program Review*

Internal Report

Spring, 2015

**Framework for Philosophy and Programming
Definitions and Current Practice
K-12**

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This document captures the current Gifted and Talented philosophy and programming, as informed by the District Mission Statement and Gifted and Talented research and best practices. The intent is to provide context for the GT Review and Recommendations.

Glossary of Terms

A&E *Accelerated and Enriched Math* – replacement math class in grades 4-8 for students who test into the program

Beyond the classroom: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM learning experiences are offered at every grade level to meet the academic and affective needs of unique learners. The learning experiences are grounded in developing and applying research, problem solving, and communication skills. The experiences offered are often inquiry-based. (Refer to page 10.)

CML — *Continental Math League* - a math contest where students participate in a 6 question quiz or “meet” 3 times a year. Students take a 6 question pre-assessment to qualify to participate in the meets.

CLUSTERING: CLUSTER grouping is the practice of placing a group of students identified as gifted, high achieving, or high ability together in a heterogeneously grouped classroom with other students. CLUSTER grouping serves to help support learners with social-emotional needs and helps to provide a complement of services by the GT Teacher Resource Specialist. CLUSTERING...”can help integrate the gifted program with the general education program... CLUSTER grouping has the additional benefit of helping all teachers in the school better respond to the differentiated learning needs of all students, and thus improve achievement schoolwide.” (Plucker & Callahan, p.115). (Refer to page 10.)

GT TRS *Gifted and Talented Teacher Resource Specialist:* Teachers who work with students within and outside of the classroom to meet intellectual and affective needs associated with giftedness. Also called GT Specialist and, for Grades 6-8, PRISM Facilitator.

MAGIC *Motivation & Abilities Generate Innovation through Creativity:*

GT TRS, grades 4 and 5, offers MAGIC classes at least once a week for students during recess (or a “flex” time as set in the schedule) that is open to all interested students. These enrichment opportunities have wide appeal with the intention that students may connect with interested peers and build competencies through engagement in learning outside the regular classroom. MAGIC is one more way for the GT TRS to get to know students for identification of abilities, needs, and interests.

NAGC *National Association for Gifted Children:* The organization that establishes standards for gifted education, among other professional services for GT educators and parents. NJAGC, New Jersey Association for Gifted Children, is our state affiliate.

PRISM *Performance Revealing Individual Student Magic*: Open to all interested students in grades 6-8, to self-select participation in beyond-the-classroom activities that engage participants in research, problem solving, and communication skills and strategies towards authentically assessed products.

PULL-OUT: small group/individual enrichment for students who are identified as needing GT services

PUSH-IN: whole group enrichment lessons that all students in the general education classroom.

TALENT POOL: When elements of gifted behavior are noted through multiple criteria the student is added to the Talent Pool, defined by Dr. Renzulli as a target group for participation in a wide variety of supplementary services. Placement in the TALENT POOL does NOT indicate that a child has been labeled “gifted,” but rather identifies potential that the child may develop when offered opportunities beyond regular classroom instruction. Students are not removed from the Talent Pool, but may be noted as “inactive” if they have not participated or produced in the school year. (Refer to page 8.)

TWICE EXCEPTIONAL (2E): Students who are identified with learning disabilities/other disabilities as well as gifted behaviors. (Refer to page 9.)

This we believe...

We must create an openness to fly, to be challenged, to grow for...gifted and talented children.

John F. Feldhusen (1992) "Talent identification and development in education."
Gifted Child Quarterly, 36, 123, p. 49.

We must provide opportunities for all learners to reach for excellence. There are gifted children everywhere, and our responsibility is to find them and ensure that they have access to programs that are challenging and rigorous.

Eric J. Smith, EdD in *Designing Services and Programs for High Ability Learners: A Guidebook for Gifted Education*. Jeanne H. Purcell and Rebecca D. Eckert, Editors (2006). NAGC and Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Robert Sternberg observed that the major factor in whether people achieve expertise is not some fixed prior ability, but purposeful engagement. Even Binet observed, "It is not always the people who start out the smartest, who end up the smartest."

Carol Dweck (2006) *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.

The "new" concept of "The Competencies" or P-21 skills have been GT curriculum and best practices since the 1970s.

George Betts, NAGC conference, Denver, Fall, 2012.

Introduction and Philosophy

District Mission Statement

The mission of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, valuing our tradition of excellence, is to develop all of our students as passionate, confident, life-long learners who have competence and strength of character to realize their aspiration and thoughtfully contribute to a diverse and changing world.

Gifted and Talented Mission Statement

In keeping with the District Mission Statement, the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional District is dedicated to developing all students through appropriate educational experiences. The District also recognizes that some have the capacity for extraordinary learning ability and/or outstanding talent as defined by the U.S. Department of Education (1993) and accepted by the National Association for Gifted Children (2004):

Gifted learners are children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or who have the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.

Recognizing that these students come from all socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the mission of the gifted and talented program, based on research and curriculum development by leading experts in the field of gifted education, particularly Dr. Joseph Renzulli, is to provide opportunities for students to explore their intellectual, creative and artistic gifts and talents within the classroom and with beyond-the-classroom experiences. It is essential to provide diverse, appropriate, and ongoing learning experiences and environments that incorporate the academic, psychological, and social needs of students. It is our responsibility to provide students with educational alternatives that teach, challenge, and expand their knowledge, while simultaneously stressing the development of independent and self-directed learners who continuously generate questions, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas.

WW-P Gifted and Talented Programming Philosophy and Rationale

Definition of Gifted and Talented

West Windsor-Plainsboro School District, through study of theories of intelligence and giftedness, understands the U.S. Department of Education definition of giftedness in light of the three components of Joseph Renzulli's "Three Rings Theory of Gifted Behavior": high ability (*outstanding talent; remarkably high levels of accomplishment as compared to age or grade level peers*), creativity (*remarkably high levels of accomplishment*) and task commitment (*to perform or potential to perform, which is intrinsically motivated.*).

Gifted behavior reflects an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits — these clusters being above average general and/or specific abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Individuals capable of developing gifted behavior are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Persons who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs. Renzulli (1986)

WW-P also understands that

Giftedness can be viewed as developmental, in that in the beginning stages, potential is the key variable; in later stages, achievement is the measure of giftedness; and in fully developed talents, eminence is the basis on which this label is granted. Psychosocial variable play an essential role in the manifestation of giftedness at every developmental stage. Both cognitive and psychosocial variable are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated. (Subotnik, et.al., 2011).

WW-P further accepts the Theory of Multiple Intelligences as advanced by Howard Gardner (1983) that recognizes multiple ways to "be smart," including intrapersonal, interpersonal ability, musical, and bodily kinesthetic abilities. The District is dedicated to providing a rich array of opportunities for students to explore leadership, music, performance, athletic and other beyond-academic gifts and talents. Music, art, athletics, student government and many more classroom and extracurricular activities are considered worthwhile opportunities for gifted and talented WW-P students. However, for the purposes of this report, the GT Program is dedicated to academic/creative talents in the areas of verbal-linguistic, math-logical, naturalist and spatial "intelligences."

Elaboration of Definition of Gifted and Talented Specific to WW-P

Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences. Annemarie Roeper, 2000 (cited by Delisle, 2015)

West Windsor Plainsboro Schools are populated with many students who are dedicated to being successful in school and who express a love of school and learning. “School-house gifted,” as defined by Dr. Renzulli, is test-taking or lesson–learning giftedness (Renzulli and Reis, 2003). These students require high levels of classroom learning opportunities to meet their learning needs and expectations set by grade level curriculum.

Students who exhibit *creative-productive giftedness* (Renzulli and Reis, 2003), develop original material and products that are designed to have an impact on one or more audiences. Gifted students may show evidence of school-house gifted behaviors, but also are *intrinsically motivated* (Davis, Rimm, Siegle 2011; Garn, et al,2010) to go beyond classroom expectations with interests that are outside the curriculum and exhibit a depth of interest and analysis that is not typical even of high-performing (school-house gifted) students.

From a synthesis of research in the field of giftedness, we recognize that gifted students further differ from academically successful students as they absorb learning at an usually rapid pace, prefer to make their own choices on how to engage in school work or their own work, and seek a purpose for learning that does not relate to classroom grades (Davis, Rimm, Siegle Chapter 2). These students may be well served in the classroom with differentiated instruction and other instructional strategies, but also are critically in need of time with like-minded peers during their school week (Colangelo and Kelly, 1983; Delisle, 1992). Joyce VanTassel-Baska recommends 150 minutes a week — minimum — for contact time for services and program (in Purcell and Eckert, Eds., 2004).

Identification for the Talent Pool

The purpose of programs for the gifted should be the development of latent talents and manifest potential in all areas. The identification process should be a needs assessment whose primary purpose is the placement of students into educational programs designed to develop their intellectual, emotional, and social potential.

E. Susanne Richert (Colangelo, Davis, p. 148. See also, Hunsaker, 2012.)

In keeping with Dr. Renzulli’s concept of “gifted behavior,” and NAGC standards for multiple measures, identification is determined by a range of measures. These measures seek to find students who need experiences that extend beyond rigorous classroom curriculum and then to provide appropriate opportunities to meet unique learning needs. “The intent is to use identification not to bestow status but rather as an assessment process to inform instructional decisions.” (Hunsaker, vi)

Following the Renzulli 3-Ring Model of Gifted Behavior, identified students will exhibit elements of **high ability** (superior classroom work, top tier test scores), **creativity** (unusual levels of thinking and production style as observed by teachers and parents), and **task commitment** (an intrinsic need to go beyond established curriculum expectations that emerges in an intensely focused pursuit of a personal interest or passion). Students are identified at any point in their career in WW-P through multiple measures that include teachers' observation, parents' information and quantitative measures. Most significantly, the identification process considers students' own expression of interests and learning needs. Peer and student self-nomination can also be considered in the identification process.

When elements of gifted behavior are noted through multiple criteria the student is added to the Talent Pool, defined by Dr. Renzulli as a target group for participation in a wide variety of supplementary services. Placement in the TALENT POOL does NOT indicate that a child has been labeled "gifted," but rather identifies potential that the child may develop when offered opportunities beyond regular classroom instruction.

Students are not removed from the Talent Pool, but may be noted as "inactive" if they have not participated or produced in the school year. One purpose of gifted education is to develop creative thinking and creative productivity in students. In order for the gifted programming to be meaningful to the student, he or she must be intrinsically task committed and engaged creatively with his or her interests.

Identification as TWICE EXCEPTIONAL

Another key purpose in providing education opportunities for gifted is to identify those students with unusual learning or social emotional needs. In the cases of twice-exceptional students or underachieving learners who exhibit gifted characteristics, identification criteria are adjusted to emphasize creativity. A student's gifts or talents should not be discounted and programming opportunities denied on the basis of a test score or classroom grades if creative and other gifted characteristics are exhibited. Also, a student with high test scores but low classroom performance may be in need of advocacy as well as programs to support his or her unique learning style.

These strategies include cases where behavior issues and/or social-emotional needs interfere with the student reaching their intellectual potential.

Programming Methodology and Rationale

The intent of GT programming is threefold:

1. To provide opportunities for students to be appropriately challenged in and out of the classroom. These learning experiences extend beyond the core classroom curriculum as appropriate for their learning needs and intrinsic interest.
2. To provide a means to assess students' gifted behaviors in the identification process.
3. To meet the social-emotional needs unique to gifted learners.

Accelerated and Enriched Math (A&E)

In keeping with the intent of gifted programming, the District has, since the 1970s, provided programming for students with highly advanced ability in mathematical conceptual thinking. These students are intuitive in their mathematical thinking; tutoring or preparation for the A&E testing is not necessary. The A&E Math program seeks to find students whose sophisticated mathematical thinking and fast-paced ability to learn and process mathematical concepts require a math program that is beyond grade level curriculum. A&E Math is a replacement class; students go to the A&E Math classroom rather than having math with their classroom or team teacher. Currently, students can elect to test for acceptance into the A&E Math program in 3rd grade, with the A&E Math classes beginning in 4th grade.

CLUSTERING: Definition and Rationale

CLUSTER grouping is the practice of placing a group of students identified as gifted, high achieving, or high ability together in a heterogeneously grouped classroom with other students. (Plucker and Callahan, p. 110)

CLUSTER grouping serves to help support learners with social-emotional needs and helps to provide a complement of services by the GT Teacher Resource Specialist.

Important to note: successful CLUSTER grouping programs require support, staff development, and fidelity of implementation. Educators need to implement CLUSTER grouping in conjunction with differentiated practices and with curriculum that is adjusted to address students' skills, readiness, and abilities. (Ibid.) CLUSTER grouping is not a stand-alone variable; rather, it is a programmatic approach designed for implementation in conjunction with differentiated curriculum, regrouping for instruction, and acceleration practices. (Ibid, p. 114).

CLUSTERING...can help integrate the gifted program with the general education program... CLUSTER grouping has the additional benefit of helping all teachers in the school better respond to the differentiated learning needs of all students, and thus improve achievement schoolwide. (Ibid, p.115).

Going beyond the classroom: Definition and Rationale

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM learning experiences are grounded in research, problem solving, and communication skills. The experiences offered are inquiry-based. The National Science Foundation *Standards* (1999) defined inquiry as:

a multifaceted activity that involves making observations, posing questions, examining sources of information to see what is already known in light of experimental evidence, using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data, proposing answers, explanations, and predictions, and communicating the results. (p. 23. Cited in Plucker, Callahan, p. 120.)

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM learning opportunities are by design social learning environments that employ inquiry-driven constructivist pedagogy in order to build on students' intrinsic motivations. Research and experience advise that the cognitive characteristics of unique learners need interaction with like-minded peers, guided by trained GT specialists who facilitate an environment that goes beyond a grade and seeks authentic audience and purpose for student work. Flexible PULL-OUT groups, MAGIC at the 4-5 level, and PRISM at the 6-8 level provide opportunities for students to engage in work with students who share their interest and motivation.

Because gifted learners need time with like-minded peers sometime during their school week, and because gifted learners need purposeful work that is intrinsically driven, it is essential that BEYOND THE CLASSROOM programming is available to provide opportunities within these criteria.

These opportunities are open to all students who exhibit the abilities, needs, and interests that can be served in a BEYOND THE CLASSROOM environment.

Karen Rogers (2007) expressed a synthesis of research on educational practice in "four lessons," three of which relate directly to programs outside of the classroom. Strategies such as differentiation, compacting, and forms of acceleration are employed to meet the needs of gifted learners within the classroom realm. Rogers maintains that gifted learners also need "a structured program of independent learning supervised by a gifted resource teacher..." Further, gifted learners should also have the means to pursue "work in their areas of passion and talent" and, importantly, should have "opportunities to socialize and to learn with like-ability peers."

There are arrays of state and national programs geared to gifted learners that are based on this knowledge of giftedness. The middle schools' PRISM program has been involved for almost thirty years with state and national programs that offer opportunities for independent research and problem solving, with authentic assessment of the product to an outside audience. In particular, the district has a strong record of success with the Future Problem Solving and FPS Scenario Writing programs, and with the National History Day program. These programs are well aligned with the Common Core standards as well as the 21st Century Competencies.

The BEYOND THE CLASSROOM experiences provide at the K-5 grades develops the skills and strategies that scaffold students' capacity for self-directed learning and self-efficacy in the middle and high school grades.

Professional Development and Parent Outreach

The Gifted and Talented Teacher Resource Specialists provide a range of professional development for K-8 staff, and with articulation with high school guidance and Child Study Team staff. All GT TRSs conduct staff meetings as initiated by building administrators, and small group share sessions that they initiate through teacher and administrator contacts. GT TRSs support teachers individually in regards to gifted and talented best practices and differentiation, which helps to raise awareness of GT issues.

All GT TRSs conduct PTA meetings and offer parent "open house" sessions to raise awareness of best practice and unique needs of GT students.

Summary

The impetus for all GT programming is to "cast a wide net," which is in keeping with the WW-P mission to "...develop all of our students as passionate, confident, life-long learners...." Accepting that some students have intellectual abilities and/or artistic and/or social talents that are extraordinary, WW-P recognizes the need to provide resources and learning opportunities to develop these unique gifts and talents in order to sustain students' passions, nurture their confidence, and support their growth as life-long learners and achievers as relates to the core competencies embraced by WW-P.

CURRENT GT PROGRAMMING K-12

NAGC 2010 Gifted Programming Standards

2.1.1 Educators develop environments and instructional activities that encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness.

Kindergarten ½ day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten screening in June • Diagnostic Reader Assessment/ Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment • Reader/Writer workshop for differentiation • Teacher observation with checklist of gifted characteristics • Extraordinarily gifted (math, reading, and/or thinking ability) as assessed qualitatively by teacher and GT specialists observation with parent information. As needed, Child Study Team review (includes IQ screening.) • Acceleration or program modified as needed (by case) • Renzulli Learning System provided for enrichment as needed • District GT specialist with teacher evidence, recommend students for CLUSTER grouping in first grade <p>2.2. Identification. Each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided.</p> <p>2.4. Learning Progress and Outcomes. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate advanced and complex learning as a result of using multiple, appropriate, and ongoing assessments.</p>
1 st grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLUSTER students identified in Kindergarten with GT trained teachers in heterogeneous classrooms for social-emotional needs and access to GT TRS <p><i>1.6. Cognitive and Affective Growth.</i> Students with gifts and talents benefit from meaningful and challenging learning activities addressing their unique characteristics and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GT TRS and teacher observation and student evidence records - ongoing • Parent Input Form (only one needed, accepted anytime) • Renzulli Learning System Wizard projects with targeted groups • GT specialist maintains records of products from Renzulli and other projects • GT specialist identifies students with teacher evidence/Parent Input Form • GT specialist plans and provides BEYOND THE CLASSROOM opportunities for targeted students based on abilities, needs, interests (research, problem solving, communication based). <p>These experiences include but are not limited to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading partners ○ Extension math where students can explore concepts taught in many different ways ○ Creative thinking process as determined by student needs ○ GT specialist recommends students for CLUSTER grouping ○ Renzulli Learning System for ALL 1st graders and available to students over the summer <p>2.2.4. Educators have knowledge of student exceptionalities and collect assessment data while adjusting curriculum and instruction to learn about each student’s developmental level and aptitude for learning.</p> <p>+special cases as determined by District GT specialist with building administration/child study team and accelerated or modified as needed</p> <p>3.1.3. Educators adapt, modify, or replace the core or standard curriculum to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents and those with special needs such as twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English language learners.</p>
2 nd grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLUSTER students previously identified with GT trained teachers to support social-emotional needs and access to GT TRS ● GT TRS and teacher observation and student evidence records - ongoing ● Parent Input Form (submitted anytime unless already submitted) ● Renzulli Learning System for ALL 2nd graders; accessed through summer ● GT TR Specialist works with Type III Renzulli (Wizard) projects ● The GT Teacher Resource Specialist provides resources and support for classroom teachers in meeting the needs of gifted learners through common planning and push into the classroom to provide model lessons and support differentiated grouping. <p><u>NAGC Standards the address primary through 12th grade:</u></p> <p>1.7 <i>Cognitive and Affective Growth.</i> Students with gifts and talents recognize their preferred approaches to learning and expand their repertoire.</p> <p>1.1 <i>Self-Understanding.</i> Students with gifts and talents demonstrate self-knowledge with respect to their interests, strengths, identities, and needs in socio-emotional development and in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, and artistic domains</p> <p>3.4 <i>Instructional Strategies.</i> Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators. (an ongoing objective through 12th grade)</p> <p>4.1 <i>Personal Competence.</i> Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk taking.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GT specialist provides BEYOND THE CLASSROOM opportunities for targeted students based on abilities, needs, interests (research, problem solving, communication based). <p>These experiences may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ extension math labs where students are introduced to math labs where they can explore concepts taught in many different ways ○ creative problem solving where students may work through logical steps to solve a problem with multiple answers ○ STEM activities where students work collaboratively with a partner to build a solution to a proposed problem where focus is on the process. These extension projects are inquiry based and students work to answer their own questions about topics within and BEYOND THE CLASSROOM curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • InView (test of cognitive abilities) given to all 2nd graders; full battery of scores maintained on the District student record system (Genesis) • GT specialist recommends students for CLUSTER grouping <p>+special cases as determined by District GT specialist with building administration /child study team and accelerated or modified as needed</p>
3 rd grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLUSTER students previously identified with GT trained teachers to support social-emotional needs and access to GT TRS • GT TRS and teacher observation and student evidence records - ongoing • Parent Input Form (only one needed, at any time) • Renzulli Learning Systems for ALL 3rd graders; accessed through summer • GT specialist works with Type III Renzulli projects (Wizard) • The GT Teacher Resource Specialist provides resources and support for classroom teachers in meeting the needs of gifted learners through common planning and push into the classroom to provide model lessons and support differentiated grouping. • GT specialist provides BEYOND THE CLASSROOM opportunities for targeted students based on abilities, needs, interests (research, problem solving, communication based). <p>These experiences may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ extension math labs where students are introduced to math labs where they can explore concepts taught in many different ways ○ creative problem solving where students may work through logical steps to solve a problem with multiple answers ○ STEM activities where students work collaboratively with a partner to build a solution to a proposed problem where focus is on the process. These extension projects are inquiry based and students work to answer their own questions about topics within and BEYOND THE CLASSROOM curriculum.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic writing sample using NJ Holistic Scoring for all students • GT specialist identifies students for TALENT POOL moving into Upper Elementary. • GT Specialist articulation with GTTRS Upper Elem to support transition from elementary to upper elementary to assist in CLUSTER placement <p>+special cases as determined by District GT specialist with building administration /child study team and accelerated or modified as needed</p>
Accelerated and Enriched Math (A&E)	<p>In keeping with the intent of gifted programming, the District has, since the 1970s, provided programming for students with highly advanced ability in mathematical conceptual thinking. These students are intuitive in their mathematical thinking; tutoring or preparation for the A&E testing is not necessary. The A&E Math program seeks to find students whose sophisticated mathematical thinking and fast paced ability to learn and process mathematical concepts require a math program that is beyond grade level curriculum. A&E Math is a replacement class; students go to the A&E Math classroom rather than having math with their classroom or team teacher. Currently, students can elect to test for acceptance into the A&E Math program starting in 3rd grade, with the A&E Math classes beginning in 4th grade. . Students may test for acceptance every year through the end of 7th grade. Once students are accepted into the program, they do not need to retest from year to year.</p>
4 th grade Upper Elementary	<p><u>NAGC Standards related to Upper Elementary through 12th grade:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 <i>Self-Understanding</i>. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate self-knowledge with respect to their interests, strengths, identities, and needs in socio-emotional development and in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership, and artistic domains. 1.2 <i>Self-Understanding</i>. Students with gifts and talents possess a developmentally appropriate understanding of how they learn and grow; they recognize the influences of their beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2.1 Educators develop activities that match each student’s developmental level and culture-based learning needs. 1.3 <i>Self-Understanding</i>. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of and respect for similarities and differences between themselves and their peer group and others in the general population. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3.1 Educators provide a variety of research-based grouping practices for students with gifts and talents that allow them to interact with individuals of various gifts, talents, abilities, and strengths.

SUMMER: GT specialist checks placement of TALENT POOL for access to GT TRS.

- Articulation with K-3 GT TRS
 - InView data
 - Student work with GT TRS
 - Teacher input
 - Parent Input Form (only one needed if not already submitted)

GT Teacher Resource Specialist, 4-5, interacts with students for the purpose of ongoing identification. This interaction in four ways:

- PUSH-IN programming: GT TRS works in classrooms (by invitation) to provide enrichment for ALL students. GT TRS and classroom teacher collaborate with collection of qualitative observations and other data to inform instruction and program modifications.
- MAGIC – *Motivation & Abilities Generate Innovation through Creativity* GT TRS provides an introductory lesson in the fall for EVERY 4th and 5th classroom. The themes (4th – the competencies and creative thinking, 5th – different ways of being smart and “grit”) are important and appropriate for every student. MAGIC is introduced to all students through these lessons. GT TRS offers MAGIC classes at least once a week for students during recess (or a “flex” time as set in the schedule) that is open to all interested students. These enrichment opportunities have wide appeal with the intention that students may connect with interest-peers and build competencies through engagement in learning outside the regular classroom.
- PULL-OUT programming: 6-10 week (Creative Problem Solving, Research) This element of programming is targeted to TALENT POOL students as an opportunity for them to develop self-awareness, critical and creative thinking skills, and competencies through work with like-minded peers outside the regular classroom. These interactions also allow the GT TRS to know TALENT POOL students better in order to assess their needs and work more effectively with their classroom teachers. This programming also provides a scaffold for students to develop an awareness of their own interests and needs so that they may develop as self-directed learners.
- GT TRS offers targeted students (one-on-one, small groups) for students with unique needs, meeting students new to the District. Qualitative assessment data in the form of inventories or student work gathered and used to inform instruction and programming decisions.
- In the spring, GT TRS may recommend identified students for CLUSTER groups based on observed cognitive and social-emotional needs.

<p>5th grade Upper Elementary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 4th grade and... • GT TRS, in late spring, provides an assembly for all 5th graders with the theme of applying competencies in the middle school. This includes information about middle school activities, including PRISM, and how to get involved • GT TRS articulation with middle school administration/guidance and PRISM facilitators to share information about specific students' unique learning needs, and information about TALENT POOL students (in written narrative and shared in meetings) in order to facilitate purposeful placement and targeted support.
<p>6-8 Middle School</p>	<p>SUMMER: GT TRS checks placement of identified GT learners and TALENT POOL students based on observed cognitive and social-emotional needs and recommendations from 4-5 GT TRS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLUSTER students with trained GT teachers with attention to students 'subject area strengths • PRISM program facilitated by GT specialist during FLEX times • Self-awareness introductory curriculum for grades 6,7,8 is offered from September through November for all identified GT learners, highly able interested students as recommended by parent, counselor, teacher, student him/her-self. Offered during FLEX. • GT TRS push –in: All 6th graders are exposed to PRISM philosophy/creative thinking during Social Studies team class time, one lesson in October. • PRISM Enrichment programs (begin September through October) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FPS (grades 6,7,8) ○ Scenario writing (grades 6,7,8) ○ National History Day (grades 7,8) ○ Inquiry Project (grades 6,7,8) ○ Community Problem Solving (as students initiate) <p>Programming offered with the intent of having a range of appeal for intellectual interests. Through PRISM time, students connect with like-minded peers, facilitating social-emotional growth. PRISM also builds competencies through engagement in learning outside the regular classroom as students apply research, problem solving, and communication skills to BEYOND THE CLASSROOM learning that is authentically assessed.</p> <p>4.2. <i>Social Competence</i>. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions (ongoing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GT TRS facilitates 8th grade elective for high-level writers: <i>Writing for the Real World</i>. <p>3.1.4. Educators design differentiated curricula that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content for students with gifts and talents.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acceleration from college prep to honors or AP based on eligibility, ie mid-year average in current course.• On line or college course work as approved/Option ii• Senior Option• Routes for obtaining a state endorsed HS diploma<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Early graduation option (120 credit hours in 3 years)○ Early departure option (college credits to fulfill 120 credit hours)○ Alternative Route – 30 college credits option
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NAGC Position Paper on Twice-exceptionality

<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/twice%20exceptional.pdf>

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Internal Team Recommendations

Identification

Objective

To establish and communicate identification procedures that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to G&T program goals at each grade-level (K-3,4-5,6-8, and 9-12).

NAGC Standards:

2.1. Identification. All students in grades PK-12 have equal access to a comprehensive assessment system that allows them to demonstrate diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness.

2.2. Identification. Each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided.

2.3. Identification. Students with identified needs represent diverse backgrounds and reflect the total student population of the district.

Definitions:

Giftedness is the manifestation of performance or production that is clearly at the upper end of the distribution in a talent domain even relative to that of other high-functioning individuals in that domain. Further, giftedness can be viewed as developmental, in that in the beginning stages, potential is the key variable; in later stages, achievement is the measure of giftedness; and in fully developed talents, eminence is the basis on which this label is granted. Psychosocial variables play an essential role in the manifestation of giftedness at every developmental stage. Both cognitive and psychosocial variables are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated. (Subotnik et al., 2011)

NJ DOE definition: 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.

NAGC: "Giftedness, intelligence, and talent are fluid concepts and may look different in different contexts and cultures. Even within schools you will find a range of beliefs about the word "gifted," which has become a term with multiple meanings and much nuance."

See link for the white paper "Redefining Giftedness for a New Century" (NAGC, 2010)

<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/Redefining%20Giftedness%20for%20a%20New%20Century.pdf>

What works well and why?

- **Multiple Measures:** In accordance with NAGC standards, we currently have a practice of ongoing identification K-5 through multiple measures, which include parent input from the optional form found online, teacher input from the guided observation instrument, InView test data (Grade 2), and observations by G&T teacher resource specialists. Through collaborative relationships, additional input is provided by administrators, guidance counselors, and CST, as appropriate. Starting in 4th grade, students also have the

opportunity to self-identify through open-access to enrichment opportunities during recess (4-5) and flex (6-8). These self-selected programs become the main vehicle for identification and programming at the 6-8 level.

- Talent Pool: Given our wide range of high-achieving students, it is appropriate to have inclusive identification practices that seek to identify a range of characteristics, rather than seeking to limit the number of students who might qualify for gifted services. Further, as per NAGC, “giftedness is dynamic, not static” and “can be considered developmental in nature” (Subotnik et al, 2011) In other words, gifted behaviors may emerge “in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all the time), under certain circumstances (not all circumstances).” (Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness, Renzulli, 1998) The TALENT POOL allows for flexibility in identification and allows for appropriate modifications to programming based on students’ abilities, interests, and needs.
- No “gifted” label: Our commitment to deemphasizing the “gifted” label as applied to children is supported by the current research by Carol Dweck on growth mindset, gifted education leader Joe Renzulli - “label the services, not the child,” as well as researchers in general education and psychology - This approach also is supportive of the district motto Whole Child, Every Child, and serves to ease the pressure on parents and children to seek the “gifted” label as a means to advance their academic futures. It rejects the notion of using “identification to bestow status rather than as an assessment process to inform instructional decisions.” (Identification: The Theory and Practice of Identifying Students for Gifted and Talented Education Services, Hunsaker, 2012). We have seen evidence over the past five years that fewer parents are seeking how to get their child “into the gifted program.”
- GT Teacher Resource Specialists - The role of the GT specialists in making observations and providing professional development for the purpose of identification is critical to identifying our most at-risk and underserved populations. The research is clear that untrained teachers maintain biases that inadvertently screen students out of gifted programming. Empirical evidence from providing professional development over the past five years in our district suggests that this training must be ongoing and recursive. In the absence of a “gifted” label, GT specialists work as advocates to ensure that students’ GT needs are being addressed. (<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/newsletter/spring00/sprng005.html>)
- Identification as a developmental progression - Insofar as “giftedness can be viewed as developmental” (Subotnik et al., 2011), our systems for identification focus more on potential and aptitude in the early grades, with a sliding increased emphasis on achievement and self-direction as students move through the grades. Our intention is to provide opportunities for students to develop self-awareness and self-efficacy as they move toward adulthood. With this end goal in mind, the identification process seeks to find students who need modifications to their programming to achieve appropriate cognitive and affective growth at each level.
- PUSH-IN intro lessons for all students - At 4-5 and 6-8 levels, GT specialists go into every classroom to introduce opportunities that are open to all students, through developmentally appropriate lessons about different ways of being smart, the value of the Competencies and to build self-efficacy.

What doesn’t work well and why?

- K-3 and 4-5 respective caseloads are unmanageable across buildings - The K-3 GT specialist serves 20-25% of the population in each of the four buildings (approximately 525) and the 4-

5 GT specialist serves 25-30% (approximately 450 students) across 2 buildings. Fidelity to our identification practices simply cannot be adequately supported by the current staff.

- K-5 PUSH-IN programming is highly dependent on CLUSTERING for access to GT TRS, teachers' readiness to have GT specialists come in to work with students, as well as teachers' readiness to apply structures and strategies that are modeled.
- K-5 PULL-OUT programming is highly dependent on schedules and teachers' willingness to allow students to come out of class. As a result, not all students who are identified have equal access to this programming.
- The TALENT POOL is appropriately large and inclusive, but procedures for identifying smaller subsets of students for CLUSTERING and targeted programming remain largely informal or undefined. This ambiguity creates a problem as it is not well documented or sustainable through staff turnovers. Additionally, stakeholders remain confused about how students are "selected" for programming opportunities K-8.
- Communication with stakeholders continues to be a concern. There are many misconceptions about if and how we identify students for GT programming, among teachers, administrators, board members, and parents. While it has been intentional to actively deconstruct old perceptions of our GT programming, this has left a void that should be replaced with a new comprehensive plan for identification and communication K-12.
- While we continue to forge partnerships together between GT, guidance, and CST, there are currently no formal procedures for identification of students new to the district and twice-exceptional. Sometimes GT specialists cannot get to classrooms in a timely manner to observe and subsequently begin working with recommended students.
- There are currently no formal procedures for locating and assessing the needs of students with uneven profiles and/or TWICE EXCEPTIONAL or students who are English language learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Hire additional GT specialists (one for upper elementary, one for K-3) to ensure identification occurs more efficiently and comprehensively through greater contact with students. Working with a wide range of students and getting to know them well is a key element in identification of GT needs.
2. Continue conversations with administrators regarding student placement with consideration of social-emotional needs, including the provision for unique modifications to programming as needed. The GT team should continue to work collaboratively with administrators, classroom teachers, guidance, and Child Study Team to develop intervention plans for students with special social-emotional needs.
3. Develop procedures for regular and frequent articulation between and among GT specialists, administrators, classroom teachers, guidance and CST that includes scheduled meeting times and ongoing professional development opportunities for articulation of GT identification and services.

Continental Math League

Objective: To provide greater access to fun math problem solving enrichment for students in grades 3 through 8.

What works well

Many students are challenged by CML type questions. Students are provided answers so they may learn from their mistakes.

What doesn't work well:

- CML questions are formulaic and students can be prepped or drilled to perform well on CML tests without having deep mathematical understandings and problem solving abilities.
- CML is limited to students that pass a district designed screening test.
- The process breeds competition in young students which has led to anxiety for some students.
- High scores and inclusion in the CML competitions in grades 3-5 are perceived as criteria for participation in the A&E math program. Students who participate in CML may also be in the A&E math program, but CML is not a criterion for selection for A&E and it is misleading to assume inclusion in CML will result in admittance to the A&E math program.
- Due to the use of middle school staff, instructional time and use of facilities, we have been unable to accommodate many parent requests for AMC 8 test.

Recommendations:

1. Replace CML competition in grades 6-8 with the AMC 8. This competition “promotes the development and enhancement of problem solving skills” (Mathematical Association of America American Mathematics Competition 8). Further, the test promotes ideas that are present in the curriculum and is viewed as a more rigorous test.
2. Discontinue the CML competition in grades 3-5. Teachers will have CML problems available for enrichment, along with other math enrichment materials to stimulate conceptual mathematical thinking. This will expose more students to problem solving experiences not considered routine classroom instruction.

MAA (2015). AMC 8. Retrieved from <http://www.maa.org/math-competitions/amc-contests/amc-8>.

A&E Math

Objective: The A&E Mathematics Program is designed to meet the needs of those rare students who have exceptional talents in mathematics.

Defining “exceptional talents”:

These students — because of their extraordinary mathematical talents and gifted abilities — learn mathematics quickly. This does not mean they are merely fast learners, but rather that they exemplify the nature of gifted minds by thinking at a rapid pace, which is evidenced in making connections quickly and problem solving, often intuitively.

These students learn concepts and procedures through problem solving and discovery, rather than learning and drilling skills. The content in the A&E math curriculum is both accelerated and enriched to include topics that may not be covered in other courses, which is appropriate to the students’ awareness of mathematical concepts and need to work beyond the grade level curriculum.

What works well:

- Students in the program are provided with an enriched mathematical program that
 - supports deep content knowledge
 - provides a foundation for problem solving, proof and mathematical thinking
 - is appropriate in content and pace to meet beyond the curriculum learning needs

What doesn’t work well:

- Identification of students for the program begins with a self-selected pool rather than a talent pool
 - creates anxiety for some students who feel the pressure of a high stakes test that is a full grade level above his or her abilities.
 - potentially eliminates some talented students because their parents do not sign them up for the test
- The perceived importance of the A&E test
 - has created an industry of test preparation in the community
 - has led to outside-of-school test preparation is not aligned with the math curriculum, the Standards for Mathematical Practice, and the Competencies.
 - has produced a cohort of highly skilled students who lack the problem solving ability and conceptual understandings needed to be successful in the A&E program

Recommendations:

1. Eliminate the A&E identified program in grades 4 & 5 and provide math resource specialists to assist in the development of deep mathematical thinking and understanding for all students.

- a. Data collected shows no statistically significant difference in students starting the program in grades 4 & 5 versus students who start the program in middle school.¹ Therefore the A&E program in middle school and high school sequence of courses will remain the same, culminating with Multivariable Calculus.
 - b. This solution will afford more students the opportunity to experience rich problems, explore math concepts, and study historically important events in mathematics. It will prepare all students for math success by laying a broader and deeper foundation.
 - c. Provide Math Resource Specialists to work within classrooms and with targeted pull-out groups to meet beyond-the-curriculum learning needs
2. Teachers should be provided with professional development that targets strategies for providing enrichment for all students.
 3. We recommend that the District investigate establishing new criteria that will better identify students for the A&E math program. Identification of students should take place in grade 5 for admittance into an A&E program starting in grade 6. An entrance criteria should be established that uses multiple data points and, if possible, over the course of multiple years. This allows for the consideration of all students. The talent pool should be bigger to allow the district to grow the program.

¹ Comparing the semester grades of 9th and 10th grade H&A (A&E) students: students who started the A&E program in grades 4 or 5 average 91.3% at the end of the first semester. Students who entered the program after 5th grade averaged 92.3%. There is no statistically significant difference between the two groups. If WWP were to start A&E math at the 6th grade level, students would meet with the same success.

Twice Exceptional

Objective: To raise awareness of the unique learning needs of TWICE EXCEPTIONAL (2E) students; to help parents understand the expectations of GT programming: i.e., grade level specific goals, clarifying district philosophy, while incorporating 2E students.

NAGC Position Paper on Twice-exceptionality

<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/twice%20exceptional.pdf>

What works:

- Continued collaboration with school based support groups i.e., PTA, SEPTSA to increase awareness and support the needs of TWICE EXCEPTIONAL students.
- Continued collaboration with guidance, CST, and parents to define realistic expectations that public schools can offer and validate parental concerns by partnering with parents in providing opportunities for their child.
- Continued collaboration with guidance, CST, and parents to present realistic strategies that may work in the classroom and help parents understand the process of such implementation.
- Continued collaboration with guidance, CST, and parents (through I&RS and IEP meetings, and informal conversations) to support parents' understanding of their child's giftedness and/or disability by focusing on the child's potential in order to help create a positive school-home partnership that supports the child.
- Provide training to parents (currently limited) - Focus on defining and identifying G & T and 2E students, as well as using best practices in servicing/programming them
- Continued meetings and conversations between parents and CST to educate parents on their rights under NJ Sped. Code; i.e., appropriate accommodations/modifications that can be implemented in school
- Continue support by CST for parents to understand the need to evaluate and revise IEP/504 plan accommodations/modifications as their child continue their educational journey.
- Knowledgeable college counselors and case managers who help students to find 'best fit' college opportunities.(high school level)
- In general, collaboration with guidance and CST has led to more twice-exceptional students being referred to GT TRS as part of their intervention plan (informal/outside of the IEP).

What does not work:

- Dictating specific programming for general education and 2E students — the “one size fits all” mindset — does not effectively meet students' needs
- Gifted needs may be overlooked when IEPs focus, by law, on the disability — 2E students may not be identified because they have an IEP and receive special services, therefore, their giftedness may be overlooked due to being classified
- Teachers indicate need for more PD on 2E nature and needs and ideas for how to build on strengths as they support learning needs
- Students express the need for a “PRISM” type program at the high school level to focus on student's strengths and to consider post-secondary goals.
- Students express the need for more support with developing social skills

- Parent communication suggests a need for increased outreach to parents on defining terms and needs , sharing ideas on how to support their children (how to foster strengths and how to overcome challenges), and helping parents with the social aspects of 2E - learning social cues, etc.
- GT specialists are not typically included in I&RS and IEP meetings regarding gifted and twice-exceptional students. Appropriate modifications and interventions to address behaviors related to giftedness may be missed as a result.
- 504 plans and IEPs typically do not reflect modifications to programming that would support cognitive and social-emotional needs related to giftedness.
- Misdiagnosis of learning disabilities and/or twice-exceptionality continues to be a concern for the gifted education community. (See NAGC white paper on twice-exceptionality) Behaviors associated with ADHD and ASD, for example, overlap with behaviors associated with giftedness and have the potential to be misinterpreted.

Recommendations:

1. Continue with training opportunities for parents, teachers, supervisors, counselors, CST on the nature and needs of TWICE EXCEPTIONAL students.
2. Continue to improve collaboration between CST case managers and GT TRSs who should work closely together to provide appropriate academic and social emotional support for TWICE EXCEPTIONAL students.
3. GT TRSs collaborate with guidance and building administrators regarding careful placement of TWICE EXCEPTIONAL students in order to support social-emotional needs.

Professional Development for Staff and Administrators

Objective:

- To ensure the professional development of all staff as to the nature and needs of gifted students
- To guide professional development in grouping and differentiation practices
- To guide professional development in philosophy and opportunities available through GT programming

What works well:

Overall, movement towards GT awareness has developed across the District in the K-12.

- One-on-one conversations initiated by the GT TRS with administrators and teachers
- GT TRS collaborations with classroom teachers and other staff to align and integrate various initiatives (e.g., technology resource specialists, Literacy Resource Specialist, supervisors, etc.)
- GT TRS collaboration with guidance and/or Child Study with I&RS and other meetings
- During department meetings, supervisors present new topics and information, intentionally asking teachers to think about how the material pertains to all learners in the class, struggling, gifted, etc.
- PRISM teachers will articulate with high school counselors/guidance departments regarding unique rising 9th graders

What doesn't work well:

Overall, GT articulation and professional development is limited resulting in perpetuation of misconceptions and preconceived ideas regarding giftedness and GT programming.

- While staff meetings have been provided (faculty meetings, share sessions), these have been limited and do not provide for the follow up needed in order to develop a deeper understanding of GT learners.
- Staff training needs to be recursive
- No systemic GT training for administrators
- Limited training for new teachers
- Limited awareness of District GT philosophy and programming leads to miscommunication with parents
- Wide-spread misunderstanding of TWICE EXCEPTIONAL learners

Recommendations:

1. Provide for a consistent and cohesive approach to professional development to raise awareness of GT definitions, District philosophy and programming, and rationale in order to address the needs of WW-P gifted students and forge effective communication regarding GT with parents.
2. Professional development should be provided for teachers and administrators who are new to the District and recursive professional development provided for teachers, child study, guidance, and administrators in order to maintain an understanding of the District's GT philosophy and programming.

Parent Outreach

Objective: To communicate and partner with parents regarding the support of gifted students. The purpose of parent outreach is to communicate the goals of GT programming, to inform about the philosophy and programming opportunities in WWP, and to provide education about how to support students through challenges sometimes associated with giftedness. (i.e., perfectionism, underachievement, multi-potentiality, twice-exceptionality)

NAGC Standards:

1.5. Awareness of Needs. Students' families and communities understand similarities and differences with respect to the development and characteristics of advanced and typical learners and support students with gifts and talents' needs.

What works well:

- GT specialists maintain websites with information regarding GT programming, including a link to a 43-minute video that details the guiding philosophy and levels of programming K-12, as well as contact information.
- Parent Input Form is available online with guiding questions for providing information about students' unique learning needs.
- K-8 GT specialists provide one-page overview of GT programming for distribution at Back-to-School night.
- GT specialists attend district-wide orientation for parents new to the district in August, applicable orientations for parents entering new buildings in the spring, and various other district-wide parent outreach events to communicate about GT practices.
- GT specialists present information about GT programming and share ideas for supporting success in all students at PTA meetings and GT Parent Meetings. These smaller groups allow for greater discussion of key issues and lead to fewer follow-up phone calls and emails.
- GT specialists maintain that students will move in and out of flexible groups based upon their needs at that time.
- K-8 specialists attend additional parent meetings and conferences as requested by classroom teachers.

What doesn't work:

- Because GT support is flexible and based upon students' needs, parents are often unaware that their child is receiving support. This leads to misunderstandings about how students are being supported through GT programming.
- Many parents lack an understanding of how Gifted & Talented is defined in our district, as well as of the goals for GT programming to support students' cognitive and affective growth vs. merely accelerating academic progress.
- As families move in and out of the district at an increasing rate, it is very difficult to maintain good communication about GT philosophy and programming.

Recommendation:

Continue and expand outreach to parents to impart awareness of GT philosophy and programming in light of research and best practices, and to explain identification processes and the role of the GT specialist both in and beyond the classroom.