



The Neenah Joint School District

Gifted and Talented Program
For

High Ability Students

NJSD Gifted and Talented Staff

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Philosophy

Foundations of the Gifted and Talented Program

- Our purpose is to bring about the best match between the student's level of skill or ability and what our curriculum can offer that child.
- Students at all functional levels need to be challenged and provided opportunities to make the most of their learning experiences.
- Gifted and Talented programming is one of many efforts in our school district to better meet students' individual learning needs.
- Our Gifted and Talented faculty serve as advocates, facilitators, resources, planners, and providers of differentiated programming for high ability students.
- Gifted and Talented faculty are always working to keep learning expectations for students as high as possible and to promote differentiated learning experiences for high ability students.

Neenah's Gifted and Talented Program for high ability students reflects the community's support of educational excellence and our desire to individualize learning, to the greatest extent possible, for all students.

A student found to be in need of Gifted and Talented programming is a child, who needs to be challenged and to be taught commensurate with his or her ability and interest levels, needs learning experiences provided at a faster pace, a greater depth or on a broader scope than the regular curriculum, as it is currently being delivered, can provide.

The Gifted and Talented faculty works collaboratively with teachers, administrators, and parents in making sure that identified students are being appropriately challenged to attain their highest level of achievement.

Wisconsin Standard (t)

Wisconsin requires that every school district in the state provide a Gifted and Talented Program for students who have demonstrated evidence of high performance in the intellectual, creative, artist, leadership, or specific academic areas. This requirement is often referred to as the Standard (t).

Each school board shall:

(t) Provide access to an appropriate program for pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Definitions

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Gifted and Talented: The Gifted and Talented student is one who possesses outstanding demonstrated or potential abilities in one or more of the following areas: general/intelligence, academic achievement, creative thinking, leadership, and the performing/visual arts. The GT student also demonstrates a high degree of task commitment.

General Intelligence: These students show the early and rapid development of language ability; large vocabulary; strong powers of reasoning, analysis, or synthesis; and advanced ability in critical thinking and problem-solving. Intellectually gifted students have a high IQ score, demonstrate high achievement, and are capable of being very good at most anything they choose to do. The child possessing general intellectual ability is consistently superior to other students in the school to the extent that he/she often needs specialized programming beyond that provided by the regular classroom.

Creativity: These students possess creative abilities that cut across all areas of endeavor. Typically, such pupils exhibit creativity in oral, written, and nonverbal expression because they tend to produce many original ideas. They are flexible and elaborate in their thinking; tend to resist one-answer solutions; possess strong visualization and imagination abilities; and tend to be different from the norm, resisting conformity.

Artistic Skill: The pupils have demonstrated their ability or show high potential for significant contributions in the visual and performing arts, including, acting, writing, painting, sculpting, singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument or composing. The child possessing visual and performing arts ability demonstrates outstanding aesthetic skill to the extent that he/she often needs specialized programming beyond that provided by the regular classroom.

Leadership Ability: Students possessing leadership ability not only assume leadership roles but are also accepted by others as leaders. These students demonstrate persuasive abilities that enable them to convince or inspire others to follow their directions, orders or commands. They maintain a "power relation" to others in a group that enables them to initiate action and maintain group efforts toward an established goal.

Academic Achievement: These students do extremely well in most subject areas and may excel in some specialties. Their vocabulary is extensive. They are enthusiastic and demonstrate high energy toward school tasks. They have excellent memory and recall, so drill and practice are usually not necessary. Included in this definition are children who appear to have a single dimension ability and excel in one area or subject. Their performance in the subject is far above the work they do in other classes. The child possessing a specific academic aptitude has

consistently superior achievement compared to other children to the extent that he/she often needs specialized programming beyond that provided by the regular classroom.

Program Overview

Individual differentiation, which is the most important part of the Gifted and Talented program, may occur in three ways:

- Content Modification - Content modification may involve curriculum extensions or supplements (sometimes called enrichment) and or curriculum compacting (see glossary for a definition of curriculum compacting).
- Extended Learning Experiences - A new learning experience is developed to match the student's ability and interest levels. Programs include HOT Problems, Book Circles, College Day for Kids, NUMATS, Destination Imagination, Project Citizen, etc.
- Academic Acceleration - The pupil is placed appropriately within the existing curricular or extracurricular scope of programming offerings.

Elementary Home-School Gifted and Talented Program

To better address Gifted and Talented (GT) students' learning needs, students are grouped within a regular classroom in what is called a "cluster group." Cluster grouping is used for identified Gifted and Talented (GT) students in grades 3 – 5. Purposely placing all identified gifted students into the same classroom provides social-emotional support, subject modifications and differentiation as needed, continuous progress monitoring, and continuity. Additionally, cluster grouping places students with teachers experienced in working with gifted learners.

Differentiated education plans (DEPs) are used to document any of the individual differentiation activities in which a Gifted and Talented (GT) student may be involved. A DEP will be composed as appropriate for GT students as needed. Modifications or changes within a DEP during the same school year may be reflected in the same form. The finalized DEP will be shared with parents, teachers, and administrators.

The primary resource for gifted students is the regular classroom teacher with the support of the building Principal and LST Team. The Gifted and Talented Facilitator provides further support through parent and teacher consultation, teacher training, materials, general enrichment experiences, academic workshops, and special skill competitions.

Secondary Home-School Gifted and Talented Program

Individual program differentiation at the secondary level occurs the same three ways as the elementary level, through academic acceleration, content modification, and/or extended learning experiences. Individual Differentiation Education Plans (DEPs) are constructed to reflect how learning will be tailored to the skill and achievement levels of GT students.

One option that is considered when a student provides evidence of unusually high ability in one or more curriculum areas is acceleration into an out-of-grade level placement. A growing number of middle school students are finding it necessary to participate in high school coursework. This coursework may be offered at the middle school site or, in rare circumstances, at Neenah High School.

The Gifted and Talented Facilitator works specifically with 6th-grade gifted students in a weekly small group format. At the 7th grade, 8th grade, and high school level, the Gifted and Talented Facilitator is available for individual consultation on an as-needed basis. The expectation is that, by the secondary level, Gifted and Talented students are better able to identify and advocate for their own differentiation needs. The Gifted and Talented Facilitator works with these students to select courses appropriate to their ability and to modify their programs when needed. Independent study projects, community education experiences, mentorships, and placements in off-campus learning environments are all examples of secondary program differentiation.

4/5 Magnet Class

Housed at Horace Mann Middle School, the 4/5 Magnet Class is a multi-age, self-contained program for students with exceptionally high abilities. Differentiated content and process of instruction utilizing inquiry-based, hands-on learning strategies offer students opportunities to work at a greater depth, breadth, and/or faster pace than in the regular education classroom. Student product choices allow for differences in ability and learning styles. The curriculum emphasizes advanced content knowledge within the disciplines of study, provides higher order thinking and processing, and focuses learning experiences around major issues and themes related to real-world applications within and across disciplines.

The goal of the 4/5 Magnet Class is to challenge students to:

- Develop the skills and desire to acquire knowledge in a constantly changing world
- Use critical, creative, and analytical thinking to ask questions and solve problems
- Develop an appreciation for the arts and literature
- Be productive members of the community and world

- Appreciate diversity and relate to others with respect and understanding

6th and 7th Grade Magnet Classes

The 6th-grade Magnet Class housed at Horace Mann Middle School and the 7th-grade Magnet Class housed at Shattuck Middle School are structured around core blocks of time in language arts, reading, and social studies within the magnet classroom. These core blocks allow for the magnet teacher to easily integrate content material and weave broad-based themes through the workday. Independent learning contracts, small and whole group investigations, and inquiry-research-based learning provide the opportunity to work at a greater depth, breadth, and/or faster pace than in the regular education classroom. Students attend other coursework, lunch, physical education, and specials outside of the magnet block as needs dictate. This blend of core Magnet Class time and regular middle school day interaction allows for intellectual stimulation as well as normal social adolescent development. As with the elementary Magnet Class, the 6th and 7th-grade Magnet Classes offer a curriculum that emphasizes advanced content knowledge within the disciplines of study, provides higher-order thinking and processing, and focuses learning experiences around major issues and themes related to real-world applications within and across disciplines.

The goal is to challenge students to:

- Increase skills, knowledge, and a desire for learning
- Make connections between newly gained knowledge and application
- Develop personal and interpersonal skills with adults and peers
- Be productive citizens by exercising talents and contributing to the school and local communities

Identification

Every district in the state of Wisconsin is required by statute to implement a process for identifying Gifted and Talented students. This identification process needs to be based on multiple criteria: different types of information from different types of sources. Multiple sources of information entail aptitude test data (CogAT), achievement test data, and ratings from classroom teachers (GATES). Districts are required to identify children in one or more of five key areas - intellectual strength, creativity, artistic skill, specific academic skills, and leadership. All students are subject to the same screening criteria. Therefore, if a student is found eligible for Gifted and Talented placement at school "A," he/she will also be eligible at school "B."

All students in NJSD are screened for possible Gifted and Talented placement. Formal identification of Gifted and Talented students will occur at the end of second grade, with Gifted and Talented services formally beginning in third grade.

For Magnet Class placement, students are screened using an above grade level achievement survey test (Iowa Assessment) and a cognitive abilities test (CogAT.) Placement in a Magnet class is determined by student performance on these instruments.

Helpful Hints for Parents of High Ability Children

Here are some suggestions for the parents of those children who do things a little earlier, a little better, a little faster, and maybe a little differently from most other children.

- **THEY ARE CHILDREN FIRST** and gifted second. A five-year-old may be able to solve mathematical problems worth bragging to the grandparents, but he has only lived five years. Only behavior appropriate for a five-year-old should be expected of him.
- **ENJOY!** Of all the problems children have, giftedness is the best one. Gifted children are curious, enthusiastic, excited about new things, and able to communicate early. So - enjoy!
- **DON'T COMPARE** your gifted child to other children. That places on the gifted one the burden to live up to that image all the time, and it certainly is no fun for whoever comes off second best. All children are unique and special in their own way.
- **LISTEN** to your gifted child. Dinner may be about to burn and the telephone ringing, but **LISTEN** because the question may be important. If ignored, the curiosity to ask may disappear. The only thing all of us can give our children is our undivided attention.
- **IT IS A GREAT** big wonderful world. Show it to your gifted child in the form of trips, books, interesting people, symphonies, digs, museums, fire stations, wiggly things, theater, daisy chains and the magical chemistry that makes a cake rise.
- **LET THEM SPECIALIZE** early if they want to. There are fringe benefits to living with dinosaurs from morning to night; they may be keeping notes and records, learning to do research, and discovering the Dewey Decimal System as well as Tyrannosaurus Rex.
- **CHILDREN** don't have to be gainfully employed every waking minute. There should be time to daydream, to be silly, do baby things, and to lie on an unmade bed and contemplate the ceiling. High ability children are usually creative children, and it is hard to be creative on a schedule.

- PRAISE your children for their efforts. Praise them for the wonderful things they do, and if the great experiment does not work and the shaky tower of blocks comes **tumbling down**, praise them for trying. Inquiring minds must take intellectual risks, and risk-taking needs support and praise.
- DISCIPLINE is necessary for harmonious family life, and dinnertime comes at the same time for all brothers and sisters - whether high ability, curly-headed or slowpokes. High ability is no excuse for unacceptable behavior.
- DON'T EXPECT your high ability child to be "gifted" all the time. That kind of halo makes for bad headaches.

Based on a piece by Gina Ginsberg, Executive Director, Gifted Child Society, Inc.; 59 Glen Gray Road; Oakland, New Jersey 07436

Glossary of Terms

Acceleration	Acceleration is looked at when all other ways of addressing a student's learning needs have been exhausted. Acceleration generally refers to students attending a class with older students. This option is used more frequently with students in grades 6-12 but includes full grade acceleration which may be used at any grade level. For example, a student may complete first grade in the spring of one school year and be enrolled in third grade for the following school year. A student might also be placed in an advanced grade level for a single course. The more common application of acceleration is to have a middle school or high school student attend an upper-level course. In this way, acceleration is a course or subject-specific and offers students the opportunity for learning options that provide acceleration in the needed areas while also enabling the student to participate in other courses and activities with age mates. Students may travel between middle school and high school to access such course opportunities.
AP	Advanced Placement; examinations to gain college credit.
CAPP	Cooperative Academic Partnership Program; a program for dual credit between Neenah High School and UW-Oshkosh.
CEE	Community Educational Experiences; students engage in some type of community-based learning experience for which they can earn high school credit.
Cluster Grouping	Grouping students within a class based on similar ability levels and common instructional needs.
CogAT	Cognitive Abilities Test

**Curriculum
Compacting**

Compacting begins with a student being pretested either for the unit of study or the course. The pre-test identifies the specific knowledge or skills that need to be developed with the learner and those that have already been mastered. In this way, the unit of study or course is completed in a shorter period of time with a focus on the knowledge or skills needed for further development. Compacting can also be used in situations where the student is able to learn the material more quickly than peers as the student needs less repetition or practice to accomplish mastery. Compacting can be done with individuals or with flexible groupings of students.

**Content
Modification**

Some aspect of the regular program is modified to better meet the learning needs of the student.

DEP

Differentiated Education Plan; a plan documenting the type of individual program differentiation in which a Gifted and Talented student will be engaged during a particular school year.

**EXTENDED
LEARNING
EXPERIENCE**

A new learning experience that is developed to match the student's ability and interest.

GATES

Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales

**Gifted and
Talented**

Pupils enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high-performance capability in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic areas and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided in a regular school program in order to fully develop such capabilities.

GT Student

The term used for high-ability students in the Neenah schools who, to be appropriately challenged, need to be taught at a pace, a breadth, or a depth greater than what the regular curriculum provides.

ITBS	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (now renamed as the "Iowa Assessment")
KRANZ	Kranz Talent Identification Instrument (Old teacher survey)
Mentorships	Matching a community expert in a particular field where the student has academic and/or vocational interests in the same area.
NUMATS	Northwestern University's Midwest Academic Talent Search; this program seeks to identify exceptionally high ability students using the Explore Test for students in grades 4-5 and the ACT (American College Test) or SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) for students in grades 6-8.
TOMAGS	Test of Mathematical Abilities for Gifted Students.
YOP	Youth Options Program; allows eleventh and twelfth-grade students to enroll in institutions of higher education in lieu of attending classes at Neenah High School.

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Online Resources

Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University

<https://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/>

Center for Talented Youth—Johns Hopkins University

<https://cty.jhu.edu/>

Davidson Institute

www.ditd.org

Gifted Education Press

<http://www.giftededpress.com/>

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page

<https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

National Association for Gifted Children

<http://www.nagc.org/>

Overview of Foundations for Gifted Education in Wisconsin

<https://dpi.wi.gov/gifted/overview>

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

<https://gifted.uconn.edu/>

Statutes and Rules for Gifted Education – Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

<https://dpi.wi.gov/gifted/laws>

Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted

<http://www.watg.org/>