

Lawrence Township Public Schools Office of Instructional Services



Gifted Program and Services

Revised June 2021

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Mission Statement

The Lawrence Township Public School's mission statement is to provide extraordinary learning for all students. Thus, the Board of Education is committed to providing each student with a challenging and rigorous academic program. We believe that there are gifted students who possess or demonstrate high levels of abilities, or the potential to achieve, in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas.

We are committed to the belief that gifted students are individuals with potential who require guidance in discovering, developing, and realizing that potential as individuals and as members of society. Under this philosophy, it is our responsibility to provide diverse, appropriate, and ongoing learning experiences and environments that incorporate academic, psychological, and social needs of students. Further, it is the responsibility of the entire staff to provide gifted 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.

Lawrence Township Public Schools Definition of Giftedness

The Board of Education has modified the State of New Jersey definition of giftedness. Gifted students are defined 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.

Underrepresented Populations and Giftedness

The Board of Education is committed to developing the gifts and talents in all students, including those of underrepresented populations typically identified as students with special needs as well as those who are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse. Therefore, a variety of assessment tools may be used to ensure an equitable identification of underrepresented populations as gifted students and those with high potential. These assessment tools may include and are not limited to: teacher referrals, behavior checklists, portfolios, student interviews, performance assessments, parent inventories and nominations, standardized test scores, growth assessments, Renzulli scale analyses, writing samples, formal assessments, benchmark assessments, anecdotal notes and observations, and verbal and nonverbal assessments.

Briggs & Reis (2003) suggest that when identification and services are expanded to target and increase the number of underrepresented populations in gifted programs, specific program supports must be provided to educators who are involved in the identification of and the provision of service for these underrepresented populations. The Board of Education is committed to providing ongoing professional training to assist staff in developing a deep cultural awareness and referring, identifying, and providing services for these students. We are also committed to providing increased support for students through sustained interactions with families and the community.

Goals of the Gifted and Talented Program

From the very first Task Force meeting held in June 2006, Task Force members stressed the need to provide a continuum of services for the both the truly gifted students (top 2-3% of the student population) and the high-achieving students. To that extent, Lawrence Township Public Schools recommend that programs, services, and experiences for gifted students in our district will address the specific learning needs of gifted students by:

- (1) Providing a variety of appropriate types and levels of acceleration, curriculum compacting and enrichment in grades K-12 that are based on the students' needs;
- (2) Providing students with learning experiences at an appropriate level of challenge based on pre-assessment data;
- (3) Designing, developing and implementing high quality curriculum that is supported by research-based models appropriate for gifted students; and increases opportunities for exposure to higher level thinking.
- (4) Ensuring that the curriculum for gifted students is aligned with and extends within and beyond the general classroom curriculum; and
- (5) Assessing and evaluating *annually* the effectiveness of the gifted and talented program at addressing all students' needs.

Eligibility Criteria

The screening tools and eligibility criteria are listed on pages 6-7. The district realizes that the gifted traits, aptitudes and behaviors children display may develop at different rates; therefore, **all students will be re-evaluated for eligibility to receive gifted services each year.**

2464 GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS

UPDATE WITH POLICY APPROVED IN SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board of Education is committed to providing each pupil with a challenging and rigorous academic program.

The Board recognizes its responsibility for the provision of educational opportunities for pupils with exceptional abilities. To that end, the Board directs that pupils be identified and offered appropriate educational programs, services and/or modifications.

For purposes of this policy, gifted and talented pupils are defined as those 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 Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures for the ongoing identification of gifted and talented pupils initiated in Kindergarten and reviewed annually through grade twelve. The identification procedures shall incorporate multiple measures including but not limited to achievement and/or aptitude tests; grades; pupil performance and/or products; behavioral rating scales; assessments used to identify giftedness; parent, pupil and/or teacher recommendation; and other appropriate measures. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall ensure that the identification methodology used is developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered. Though early discovery is important, it is essential that the identification be recognized as a continuing process in that exceptional abilities and skills appear at different times in the lives of many children.

The Board will develop appropriate curricular and instructional modifications for gifted and talented pupils including content, process, products, and learning environments.

The educational program offered to pupils with exceptional abilities shall encourage and challenge them in the specific areas of their abilities, enhancing but not replacing the basic instructional program of the district. Challenging academic curricula may include opportunities for content acceleration, content enrichment, content expansion, curriculum content compacting or content that is different from the regular program of studies. Programs must ensure that the pupils have the opportunity to interact with a wide range of pupils and not be isolated.

Programs, services and/or modifications for pupils exhibiting exceptional abilities should be periodically evaluated for their continuing efficacy and adjusted accordingly.

The parent or legal guardian of any pupil with exceptional abilities shall be consulted regarding any program, services and/or curricular modifications designed to address the pupil's particular needs.

POLICY —

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM
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GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS
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N.J.S.A. 18A:61A-2; 18A:35-4.16
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3; 6A:8-3.1(a)s.
P.L.108-382, Sec. 10201 et seq.

Adopted: 23 September 1998
Revised: 9 April 2003
Revised: 9 July 2008
Revised: 10 October 2012

Gifted and Talented Screening Protocol

Screening Period	Screening Protocol
Spring of the kindergarten year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creative Response Assessment – all kindergarten students ● SIGS Scales – kindergarten students who present gifted behaviors based on the Creative Response Assessment ● G.A.T.E.S – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 2/4 of the above criteria for eligibility in first grade</p>
Spring of the 1 st grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creative Response Assessment ● SIGS Scales – 1st grade students who present gifted behaviors based on the Creative Response Assessment ● G.A.T.E.S – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 2/4 of the above criteria for eligibility in second grade</p>
Spring of the 2 nd grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frasier Scale ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli – (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 3/4 of the above criteria for eligibility in third grade</p>
Spring of the 3 rd grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frasier Scale ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli - (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 3/4 of the above criteria for eligibility in fourth grade</p>
Spring of the 4 th grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frasier Scale ● iReady Math Assessment ● iReady Reading Assessment ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 4/6 of the above criteria for eligibility in fifth grade</p>
Spring of the 5 th grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frasier Scale ● iReady Math Assessment ● iReady Reading Assessment ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 4/6 of the above criteria for eligibility in sixth grade</p>
Spring of the 6 th grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frasier Scale ● iReady Math Assessment ● iReady Reading Assessment ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 4/6 of the above criteria for eligibility in seventh grade</p>
Spring of the 7 th grade year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● iReady Math Assessment ● iReady Reading Assessment ● Nonverbal Ability Test ● Renzulli (4 components) – Completed by teachers, counselors or specialists for students consistently exhibiting gifted behaviors ● Portfolio Profile <p style="color: red; margin-top: 0;">Students must meet 4/5 of the above criteria for eligibility in eighth grade</p>

Gifted and Talented Services Scoring Criteria

Assessment	Description	Max Score	Gifted Child	Bright Child	Who
Creative Response Assessment	Creative Solutions Evaluation	Approved	Yes	NA	Kindergarten and 1 st
Nonverbal Ability Test	Aptitude	99%ile	95%ile	93%ile	Grades 2,4,6
SIGS Scales	Ability Evaluation	140 points	130 points	120-129 points	Grades K - 1
G.A.T.E.S.	Teacher rating of characteristics & behaviors	Raw Score 30 Behaviors	Exhibits 80% of "gifted" behaviors	Exhibits 80% of "bright" behaviors	Grades K - 1
Renzulli 4 <i>Learning</i> <i>Creativity</i> <i>Math</i> <i>Reading</i> <i>Communications</i> * <i>Motivation</i> * <i>Leadership</i> *	Teacher rating of characteristics	100% for each characteristic	Total% >= 80% & One characteristic >= 95%	Total% >= 80%	Grades 2 - 7
<i>Portfolio Profile</i>	Traits, Aptitudes, Behaviors	Approved	Yes	N/A	K-7
<i>Frasier Scales</i>	Traits, Aptitudes, Behaviors	Approved	Yes	N/A	2-6
<i>iReady Math</i>			1 or 2 grade level above current grade level	on grade level	4-7
<i>iReady Reading</i>			1 or 2 grade level above current grade level	on grade level	4-7

The above reflect the benchmark criteria. Criteria will be adjusted for local norms each year and to comply with District Policy 5750 Equal Educational Opportunity and 5755 Equity in Educational Programs and Services.

In the Classrooms – What Services are Offered?

Kindergarten

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	DI provided to all K and 1 st grade students
Higher order thinking challenges and creative problem solving activities	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	Centers available for exploration by all kindergarten students
Whole class enrichment push in	<i>EGT specialist w/assistance from classroom teacher</i>	Enrichment available for all kindergarten students

First, Second & Third Grade

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	DI provided to all 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grade students
Higher order thinking challenges and creative problem solving activities	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	Centers available for exploration by all 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grade students
Whole class enrichment – push in	<i>EGT Specialist w/assistance from classroom teachers</i>	Enrichment available for all 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grade students
Cluster Strategy – ensures narrow band of heterogeneous balance in all classes	Building Principal <i>w/input from the elementary EGT teacher, classroom teachers and/or scheduling committee</i>	All 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grade students Establishes a peer group for “truly gifted”

Fourth & Fifth Grade

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	DI provided to all 4 th and 5 th grade students
5 th Grade Project Rotation	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from EGT specialist</i>	Rotating Group of Students
Whole class enrichment – Each class rotates through an enrichment unit taught by the Gifted specialist	<i>EGT Specialist w/assistance from classroom teachers</i>	Enrichment available for all 4 th and 5 th grade students
Cluster Strategy – ensures narrow band of heterogeneous balance in all classes	Building Principal <i>w/input from the EGT specialists, classroom teachers and/or scheduling committee</i>	All 4 th and 5 th grade students Establishes a peer group for “truly gifted”
Renzulli Learning System (4 th , 5 th , 6 th Grades)	Classroom Teachers with assistance from EGT specialist	RLS provided to All students 4-6 grade

Sixth, Seventh & Eighth Grade

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from G&T specialist</i>	DI provided to all 6 th , 7 th and 8 th grade students
Cluster Strategy – ensures narrow band of heterogeneous balance in all classes	Building Principal <i>w/input from the classroom teachers and/or scheduling committee</i>	All 6 th , 7 th and 8 th grade students Establishes a TABS peer group for EG
Independent Study Program Students receive additional experiences in problem solving, critical thinking 7 th & 8 th grade – self-contained	<i>EGT Specialist and/or other Special Area Teachers w/assistance from classroom teachers</i>	Identified 6 th , 7 th and 8 th grades
Acceleration: Math Grade 6: Accelerated Math Grade 7: Algebra I Grade 8: Geometry	Math teachers	Students demonstrating advanced proficiency on all math assessments
1:1 Mobile Technology Students receive a mobile device which will allow additional enrichment opportunities	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from Tech specialist</i>	All 6 th – 8 th grade students

High School

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers	DI provided to all high school students
1:1 Mobile Technology Students receive a mobile device which will allow additional enrichment opportunities	Classroom teachers <i>w/assistance from Tech specialist</i>	All 9 th – 11 th grade students
Independent Study Program Students work on an ongoing independent project of choice	Mentor/Facilitator	Any student completing the application and meeting the criteria
Honors and Advanced Placement Courses	Classroom teachers	Any student meeting the course pre-requisites and assessment requirements
Acceleration: Math Grade 9: Algebra II Honors Grade 10: Pre-Calculus Honors Grade 11: AP Calculus AB Grade 12: AP Calculus BC	Math teachers	Any student meeting the course pre-requisites and assessment requirements
Option II Program College/University Courses	Guidance Department	Any student completing the application and meeting the criteria



Gifted and Talented Services Parent Inventory Forms

The New Jersey Department of Education requires districts to identify gifted and talented students beginning in Kindergarten. Gifted and talented students are defined by the State Board of Education as those students 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.

We recognize that parents possess valuable information about the learning characteristics of their children. Please use this form to share your insights about your child. Completion of this form does not guarantee that your child will be identified as eligible to receive gifted services. Parents of students identified as eligible to receive gifted education services will receive written notification of their child’s eligibility.

Since children grow and change so quickly, all K-6 LTPS students are screened for gifted services every Spring. Return this form to your child’s principal. Students who are new to Lawrence Township Public Schools can return this form to your child’s principal within 30 days of enrolling. For additional information, please visit the district website, Administration >> Office of Instructional Services >> Special Programs >> Gifted and Talented at www.LTPS.org.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

_____ School: _____ Teacher: _____

Current Grade: _____ Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Please complete the following if your child participated in a Gifted program in another school district:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

District Contact Person: _____ Phone Number: _____

Directions: Circle the behavioral characteristic that best describes your child...what you see consistently. Only circle one (1) behavior per line. If your child does not demonstrate either behavior most of the time, circle N/A.

=====

Most of the time my child...

1. Knows the answers	Asks the questions	N/A
2. Is receptive to new ideas	Is intense about ideas	N/A
3. Is interested in learning	Is highly curious	N/A
4. Copies information accurately	Creates a new design or way of doing it	N/A
5. Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas	N/A
6. Answers the questions	Discusses in details, elaborates	N/A
7. In the top group of the class	Well beyond the top group of the class	N/A
8. Is a good memorizer	Is a good, informed guesser	N/A
9. Loves to memorize	Loves to think and ponder	N/A
10. Appears to "pay attention"	Appears to be "distracted"	N/A
11. Accepts information presented as fact	Questions information presented	N/A
12. Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well	N/A
13. Learns with ease	Already knows	N/A
14. Needs 6-8 repetitions for mastery	Needs 1-2 repetitions for mastery	N/A
15. Enjoys peers	Prefers older children and/or adults	N/A
16. Is pleased with his/her own learning	Is highly self-critical	N/A
17. Loves rules	Only wants the basic guidelines	N/A
18. Absorbs information – can easily repeat	Manipulates information – can easily extend	N/A
19. Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences	N/A
20. Enjoys school	Enjoys learning	N/A

21. Completes all assignments	Initiates new projects	N/A
22. Enjoys a straightforward sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity and loves ambiguity	N/A
23. Is alert and attentive	Is keenly observant – notices everything	N/A
24. Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions	N/A
25. Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions	N/A
26. Is focused on the end product	Is focused on the journey	N/A
27. Questions: “What do I need to do?”	Questions: Why do I need to do this...purpose?”	N/A
28. Wants to follow the assignment directions	Wants to “do it my way’ or has a better way to do it	N/A
29. Loves the teacher	Loves the learning	N/A
30. Learns easily at the knowledge and comprehension levels	Sees relationships and combines ideas; sees the whole picture	N/A

Please select the rating for each characteristic based on your observations.

	Almost Always (very consistently- if you select almost always, please give at least two examples	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
1. Uses a lot of advanced words and is interested in definitions, relationships of words, sounds, and has a large vocabulary for his/her age (in any language).			
2. Uses jokes, puns, and multiple meanings in conversations or in writing.			
3. Reads or listens to literature; may focus on one topic or genre for a period of time and then switch his/her focus to another.			
4. Is self-directed and immerses themselves into their activities.			
5. Is inquisitive and sometimes skeptical.			

6. Applies numbers and patterns to real life situations; such as using numbers while playing, thinking, organizing, or planning.			
7. Enjoys trying to solve challenging problems such as puzzles, logic problems, or games of strategy.			
8. Solves difficult problems naturally and easily, but may not always be able to explain his/her solution or strategy.			
9. Asks deep, open-ended, or philosophical questions about “grown-up” social issues or world problems.			
10. Can understand multiple sides or explanations of a situation or problem and tries to persuade other people to join his/her side.			
11. Relates learning to real world situations, makes interesting connections that sometimes surprise you or make you look at things differently.			
12. Enjoys experimenting, likes open-ended discovery, inventing, finding multiple uses for things, experiments to satisfy curiosity.			

Optional - Please use the space below to share any additional information regarding your child’s gifts and talents. You are encouraged to list the area(s) in which you feel your child excels and any specific examples of your child’s demonstration of their exceptional ability and what supports they may need to reach their potential.

Gifted and Talented Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is differentiated instruction and how does that meet the gifted child's needs?

Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that allows teachers to customize their instruction, activities and/or assessments to meet the needs of the individual learners. For example, a teacher may differentiate a reading lesson by assigning students different books to read *based on the student's reading ability*. A teacher may differentiate math homework by selecting different assignments and problems *based on individual students' needs and mastery levels*. A teacher may differentiate a culminating assignment *by allowing students to choose* whether they wanted to take a written test, create a project that demonstrated their mastery of the concept, or give an oral presentation on the subject matter. Research suggests that differentiated instruction is one of the best instructional practices.

2. What is the overall focus of the Gifted and Talented Program?

The G&T Task Force and Design Team recommend that programs, services, and experiences for gifted students in Lawrence Township Public Schools will address the specific learning needs of gifted students by:

- Providing a variety of appropriate types and levels of acceleration, curriculum compacting and enrichment in grades K-12 that are based on the students' needs;
- Providing students with learning experiences at an appropriate level of challenge based on pre-assessment data;
- Designing, developing and implementing high quality curriculum that is supported by research-based models appropriate for gifted students;
- Ensuring that the curriculum for gifted students is aligned with and extends the general classroom curriculum; and
- Assessing and evaluating *annually* the effectiveness of the gifted and talented program at addressing students' needs.

3. What Gifted and Talented services are available to Lawrence Township students?

Elementary school level (grade K) Gifted and Talented services will emphasize:

- Exploring the potential of all students
- Incorporating differentiated instruction strategies
- Providing whole class enrichment and opportunities for all students
- Creating a portfolio of verbal and non-verbal lessons, activities, projects and assessments
- Revising the curriculum to include extension activities for gifted students

Elementary school level (grades 1-3) gifted and talented services will emphasize:

- Continuing all K services
- Establishing cluster and flexible heterogeneous grouping to create a Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors (TABS) peer group for gifted students

Intermediate school level (grade 4-5) gifted and talented services will emphasize:

- Continuing all K-3 services
- Providing additional independent project/study opportunities, and a series of rotating experiences based on student interest and need.

Middle school level (grade 6-8) gifted and talented services will emphasize:

- Providing opportunities for acceleration in math
- Enrichment challenge program for identified students.
- Incorporating differentiated instruction strategies

High school level (grade 9-12) gifted and talented services will emphasize:

- Providing opportunities to enroll in honors and AP courses
- Providing opportunities for independent study
- Providing opportunities for dual enrollment in college/university courses
- Providing opportunities to explore additional coursework through Option II

4. What criteria are used to determine eligibility to receive gifted and talented services?

Multiple criteria are used to assess students' gifted potential including but not limited to: verbal and nonverbal assessments, teacher observations, higher level performance tasks/activities located in centers/stations, reading ability, math benchmarks, observations during inquiry-based lessons, language ability, critical thinking and problem solving skills, parent inventory, behavioral rating scales such as Renzulli, G.A.T.E.S. (*Gifted and Talented Educational Services Research & Evaluation*), grades, teacher/staff referrals, portfolio profile, and additional assessments.

5. How can parents give input about their child's abilities?

Parents can fill out the Gifted & Talented Services Parent Inventory Forms to provide input about their child's abilities and behaviors.

6. Who should parents contact if their child was not recommended for services and they have additional questions?

Please feel free to contact the building principal to discuss your concerns.