

Gifted and Talented Educational Philosophy

Gifted children have unique academic and social and emotional needs. When their needs are not met, there is a loss to the individual, to the school, and to society.

Three of those most basic needs are:

- 1) an advanced level of challenge and/or pace
- 2) socio-emotional fulfillment through interaction with like- peers
- 3) support in dealing with specialized issues such as perfectionism, sensitivity, loneliness, underachievement, and depression

These needs are best met on an ongoing daily basis, within the general education environment, by an appropriately trained school staff with access to adequate resources. This is not the responsibility of one person. All school district staff including administrators, teachers, interventionists, related support staff, GT Coordinator, psychologist and counselors, as well as parents, must be involved with planning, implementing, supporting, and evaluating the Gifted and Talented Educational Services provided to our students.

What is Giftedness?

The concept of giftedness has varied over the course of educational, philosophical, and psychological history. Educational approaches to meeting the needs of students with gifts and talents have been based on our understanding of giftedness, so they have varied as our conceptualizations have shifted.

Gifted programming in the Richmond District is anchored in this broad notion of giftedness and are based on **three major ideas**: 1) intelligences are dynamic and fluid 2) giftedness is inclusive and 3) educational systems should be responsive.

Brain research confirms that intelligences are fluid and not fixed:

- **Dynamic and Fluid:** Children develop at different rates. The goal is to identify and address the educational needs of all students regardless of the trajectory of their development. In addition, students vary in their learning experiences and in their exposure to tasks. Because of this, students should be instructed in complex curriculum and provided varied opportunities to exhibit their talents through products and performance.
- **Giftedness is Inclusive:** Giftedness is exhibited across gender, race, ethnicity, income level, and exceptionality. The composition of the students who exhibit gifts and talents reflects the total student population of the school.
- **Educational Systems Should be Responsive:** The school should be continually identifying student needs and responding to those needs. This improves the likelihood that potential will be recognized and maximized.

It is also important to remember that there is a difference between **gifted, high achiever and creative learners**. Each has some distinct characteristics that make them special. High achievers are not necessarily gifted and gifted learners are not all high achievers. The following chart provides an illustration of this concept:

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
Remembers the answers	Poses unforeseen questions	Sees exceptions
Is interested	Is curious	Wonders
Is attentive	Is selectively mentally engaged	Daydreams; may seem off task
Generates advanced ideas	Generates complex, abstract ideas	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed
Performs at the top of the group	Is beyond the group	Is in own group
Learns with ease	Already knows	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master	Questions the need for mastery
Enjoys the company of age peers	Prefers the company of intellectual peers	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone
Completes assignments on time	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments	Initiates more projects that will never be <u>completed</u>
Enjoys school often	Enjoys self-directed learning	Enjoys creating
Is highly alert and observant	Anticipates and relates observations	Is intuitive
Is pleased with own learning	Is self-critical	Is never finished with possibilities
Gets A's	May not be motivated by grades	May not be motivated by grades

Kingore, B. (2004). High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Learner. Understanding Our Gifted. Szabos, J. (1989). Bright child, gifted learner. Challenge, 34. Good Apple.

Identification

Students will be identified for programming in academic strands based on universal screeners used by the school as well as teacher input from classroom performance or parent input from home observations.

A gifted evaluation is also available at any time throughout a child's education. Multiple criteria are used to identify intellectually gifted and /or academically talented students. This must be initiated by a parent completing a [PIP \(Parent Inventory of Potential\)](#) or teacher completing the [TILS \(Teacher Inventory of Learning Strengths\)](#). The PIP and TILS nomination forms are available on GT Website under **Identification**. A summary of the inventory will be shared with the parent or teacher. The summary will indicate if the child may have a *possible strength* or if he/she may exhibit *giftedness* in the following areas: intellectual, academic, creative, social, and/or artistic. Parents will be notified for permission to administer additional assessments and results will be shared after completion.

Assessments may include but are not limited to the KBIT-2 (Kaufman Brief Intelligence Assessment) and/ or the SAGES (Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students). Students are identified as intellectually gifted based on the Arrowhead Area Guidelines for Gifted Identification. Teacher and parent consultation is part of the formal identification process, as well.

Grade Level Acceleration or Subject (math) Acceleration

See the procedure that relates to these two programming options for highly gifted students.

GT Programming

The Richmond School District utilizes the **Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RtI)** three-tiered model as a systemic approach to serving intellectually and academically gifted students.

The RtI process begins at Tier 1.

Tier 1 or Level 1 instruction consists of high quality core curriculum which is differentiated to meet various student needs. Students with advanced learning needs in any academic subject are identified through use of a balanced series of assessments. Differentiation in the classroom includes: higher level thinking activities, problem solving work, tiered assignments, compacting, enrichment work, acceleration, independent learning contracts, literature circles, personalized learning, etc. If the assessment data shows that a student's learning needs are beyond the level that can be met through classroom differentiation, extensions or other learning opportunities will be implemented to provide more challenge and/or a faster pace of learning. This is **Tier 2 or Level 2** of the RtI model.

Tier 2 or Level 2 of the RtI model involves small flexible extension groups. Students may work with the gifted specialist or coordinator for a predetermined amount of time on a more challenging unit of study. Experiences may include: advanced literature study, math extension or contest, independent study, science extension, WCATY on-line classes (grades 5-8), etc. A small number of highly gifted students may need more than what can be provided at Tier 2. These students will be provided with **Tier 3 or Level 3** interventions.

In addition to services at Tier 1 & 2, **Tier 3 or Level 3** interventions are more specialized, intensive, and individualized. Often additional assessments are necessary to make decisions for level 3. Options for Tier 3 interventions may include: grade level and class (math) acceleration, mentorship opportunities, out-of-school counseling, etc.

Programming looks different in each classroom and is determined by the needs of the individual students. On-going dialogue with classroom teachers, parents, and the GT coordinator is key. Parents or students are encouraged to communicate with their classroom teacher and/or the GT coordinator. Paired with appropriate instruction and intervention is the expertise of student support services. School guidance counselors provide social/emotional support as well as course and career planning services. The key to making this model work for GT students, is ongoing staff development, school-wide collaboration, and family involvement.

Parent Involvement

The district provides parent support opportunities offered throughout the Arrowhead Area Gifted and Talented Coordinators' Consortium. Parents are invited to evening meetings, several times a year, that address various issues and topics particularly helpful to parenting gifted children. The district has a [*Richmond Gifted Education Website*](#) that has up-to-date information about gifted student activities as well as current issues in the area of gifted education. Parents are also encouraged to provide input regarding the identification and programming of their gifted child.