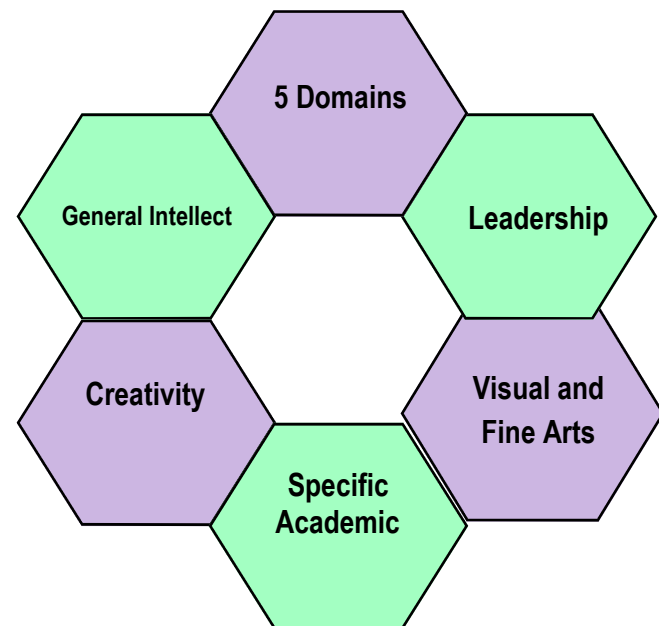




Talented and Gifted Programming

K-12 Parent Handbook for Talented and Gifted (TAG)

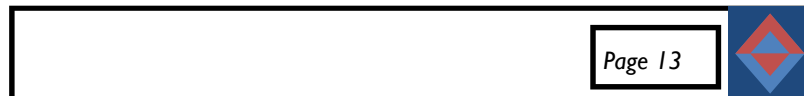


Stoughton Area School District



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RESOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS (cont.)

Hoagies Gifted—www.hoagiesgifted.org

Free Spirit Publishing—www.freespirit.com

Great Potential Press—www.giftedbooks.com

Prufrock Press—www.prufrock.com

The Stoughton Area School District does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of the person's sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap as required by s. 118.13 WI stats. in its education programs or activities. The district also prohibits discrimination as defined by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race and national origin), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with 118.13. Due process procedures are outlined in the Official Policies of the Board of Education Handbook.

RESOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Stoughton Area School District—www.stoughton.k12.wi.us

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction—www.dpi.state.wi.us

National Association for Gifted Children—www.nagc.org

The Davidson Institute—www.ditd.org

Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted—www.sengifted.org

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented—
www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html

Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted—www.watg.org

Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth—www.wcaty.org

Center for Talent Development (Northwestern University)—
www.ctd.northwestern.edu

Talented and Gifted (TAG) Overview

Effective education in Stoughton schools is based on rigorous classroom instruction, a positive learning environment, and school-wide support. Students receive instruction that meets both state standards and district benchmarks.

Teachers recognize that each child learns at a different depth and pace. To meet the needs of some children, it might be necessary to modify, or differentiate, the curriculum and/or how it is taught. In most cases these modifications are integrated throughout the student's daily classroom experience, rather than occurring as special events.

Our Talented and Gifted model evolved from the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Comprehensive and Integrated Model for Gifted Education, also referred to as the Pyramid Model. This model grew out of Wisconsin's Standard (t) legislation, which outlines compliances for K-12 gifted education that all public school districts must meet. (http://cal.dpi.wi.gov/cal_gift-overview)

District TAG Website

Information in this handbook is explained in greater detail on our district TAG website. Talented and Gifted is part of the Curriculum and Instruction Department. For more information about TAG programming please visit:

www.stoughton.k12.wi.us

Mission

All learners require a curriculum consistent with their learning pace and abilities. It is the belief of the Stoughton Area School District that the exceptional educational needs of children can be best served within the regular classroom and through extracurricular opportunities that address their unique needs. Their education requires a partnership between classroom teachers and TAG Coordinator, who work together to provide continuous, systemic instructional support in classrooms. Academic rigor, curriculum adaptation, staff development, and parent involvement are essential components of gifted programming.

- **Principles and Beliefs**

Identification of students with exceptional needs is linked with appropriate educational programming at all levels using a collaborative process.

- Students may have programming needs in one area or in multiple areas, which may include: general intellectual, specific academic, leadership, creativity, and visual/performing arts.
- Students' needs may emerge at varying times and fluctuate throughout their K-12 schooling and each child is entitled to appropriate and varied options in response to their changing needs.
- Effective TAG programming addresses the social-emotional needs of students.
- Students are encouraged to be active and responsible in their learning.
- Gifted education is a partnership between home, school, and at times the greater community.

Programming Options Defined

Programming Within the Regular Curriculum

Academic Venues/Competitions – Encourage students to: demonstrate mastery, solve challenging problems, and/or create new products such as inventions or creative writing.

Advanced Placement (AP) Classes – A formalized system that allows students to enroll in intense, high level courses in the high school. By receiving a sufficient score on the College Board exam, college credit can be obtained.

Centers – Unit or single subject specific. Centers can be used and adjusted to explore topics or practice skills.

Contracting – An agreement set up between the teacher and student that outlines a specific project/product the student will produce as an alternative to the regular classroom work.

Differentiation – Modifying curriculum and/or instruction to meet varying student needs.

Enrichments/Extensions – Provide students with opportunities to be challenged with more complex, higher level thinking and/or broader-based activities related to the curriculum content being studied. Enrichments/extensions replace some classroom work.

Flexible Grouping – Grouping students based on similar interests and abilities. Groups may change regularly according to purpose or topic.

Independent Projects/Products – The student and/or teacher identifies problems or topics of interest to the student. A method of investigation and a student product are developed and agreed upon by the student and teacher.

Interdisciplinary Activities – Student investigations in which two or more subject areas are involved.

Programming Beyond the Regular Curriculum

Options Include All of the Above PLUS the Following:

Subject Acceleration (High School) – Students take accelerated or advanced coursework in a subject area but remain at the regular grade level for most of their subjects.

Compacting – Modifying or “streamlining” content, process, or product in order to better match the learning styles or needs of individual students.

Independent Study – Students engage in study of advanced coursework under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

Mentorship Courses – One or more students are paired with a community volunteer, teacher or parent volunteer in an area of mutual expertise or interest.

Off-campus Options – Secondary students may participate in off-campus workshops and extra-curricular enrichment activities. School credit is not offered for these opportunities.

Performance-Based Grouping – Grouping students of like ability to work together on a short- or long-term basis.

Youth Options – A high school program through which students can enroll in college courses at school district expense.

Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)

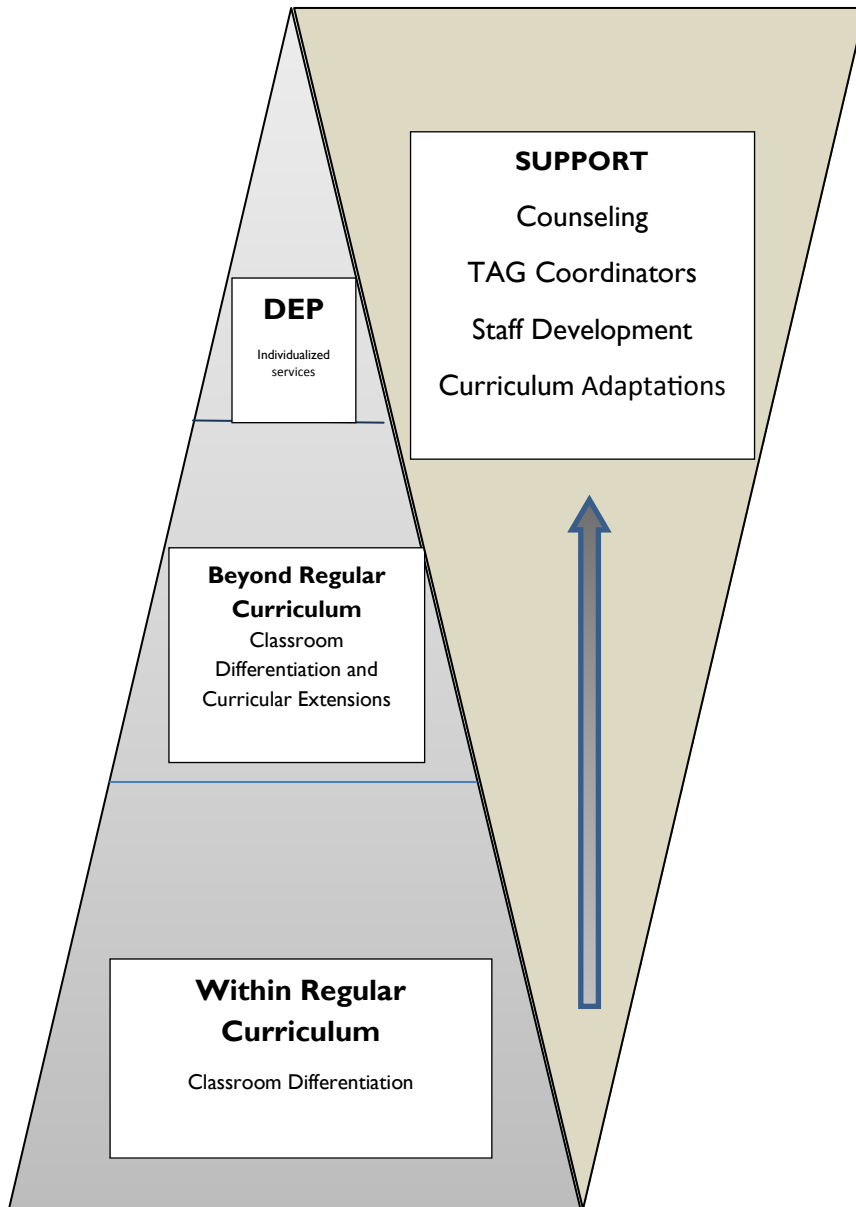
Options Include All of the Above PLUS the Following:

Subject Acceleration – Students move ahead in a subject area but remain at the regular grade level for most of their subjects.

Cluster Grouping – Assigning a small group so students from the same grade level to a heterogeneous classroom, with a teacher trained to facilitate modifications of their curriculum. This will provide consistent interaction with intellectual peers and appropriate challenges.

Grade Level Acceleration – Accelerated students move ahead one or more years, including early graduation for college-bound students, beyond the next level in the normal sequence of promotion.

Stoughton Programming Pyramid Model



Student Characteristics

Students who show talented and gifted needs in the areas listed below will exhibit many, but not necessarily all, of the listed traits. These traits may not always be perceived as assets.

General Intellectual

- Recalls facts easily; is very well informed about one or more topics
- Shows keen insight into cause-effect relationships
- Has exceptional ability to solve problems; has phenomenal memory

Specific Academic

- Exhibits extended attention in math, science and/or humanities; displays a passion for a topic of interest
- Makes independent contact with or carries on correspondence with experts in the field
- Puts extensive efforts into a project - time is of no consequence, manages to change a topic under discussion to the discipline of his/her interest, e.g., weather discussion soon becomes one of the Ice Age or dinosaurs

Creativity

- Possesses strong visual/imaginative skills; transfers ideas and solutions to new situations
- Prefers variety and novelty, and their own way of solving problems
- Asks many and unusual questions; often has many projects going at once
- Resists external controls; tests and challenges limits

Leadership

- Relates to and motivates other people; organizes other students for activities
- Demonstrates high levels of self-assurance when making decisions or convincing peers; see problems from many perspectives
- Listens to and respects the opinions of others

Visual/Performing Arts

- Shows very high ability in the visual arts, i.e., painting, sculpting, and/or arranging media in a unique way, possesses unusual ability to create, perform, or describe music
- Possesses unusual talent in drama or dance, uses artistic ability to express or evoke feelings

Frequently Asked Questions

Whom do I talk to if I think my child is gifted or talented?

Parents should initially contact their child's teacher/team with questions regarding their child's classroom needs. The TAG Coordinator for your building is another resource for information around Talented and Gifted Identification and Programming. In the event that you feel your child needs to be monitored for identification and programming support contact your child's classroom teacher/team.

Where can I find additional information?

The district Talented and Gifted website is found on each school homepage under the "Academics" link.

What will Programming Support Look Like?

TAG programming support is built in to classroom instruction in a way that adds depth and complexity to content. Examples include: tiered lessons, compacted curriculum, independent projects, and enrichment opportunities available at each building. It is best to talk to your child's classroom teacher(s) as this will look different in each classroom.

Whom do I contact if I have concerns about my child's classroom instruction and TAG programming?

Parents should first contact the classroom teacher(s) to share initial concerns. The TAG Coordinator for your building is the next step resource. Contact information can be located on the district TAG website found on each school homepage under the "Academics" link.

Student Programming

Appropriate education for students with TAG needs involves systematic programming, continuity of instruction, and a rich learning environment. Programming and instruction are based on ability, learning profile, motivation, and initiative. Programming strategies for students are outlined in the Stoughton Pyramid Model. These instructional strategies are defined on page 11. Programming is matched with level of need according to the following guidelines.

Programming Within the Regular Classroom

This level of programming accommodates students who have moderately exceptional abilities and can have their needs successfully met in the regular classroom with appropriate modifications and differentiated teaching and learning practices to support their learning needs.

Programming Beyond the Regular Curriculum

Targeted services accommodate students who have exceptional abilities in the classroom and require enrichment opportunities that add depth and complexity to the regular classroom curriculum. They may also need accommodations such as cluster grouping, compacting, and tiered lesson options that address their areas of strength.

Differentiated Education Plan (DEP)

Intensive support services accommodate students who have highly exceptional abilities and for whom even differentiated grade level curriculum may not be sufficient to meet their needs. These students may require individualized instruction or radical acceleration. A DEP is created to document student needs and guide instructional planning.

Building Level Programming

TAG Programming (K-12)

Classroom teachers and TAG Coordinators work collaboratively to provide programming primarily within the classroom through differentiation of the classroom curriculum. Differentiated services are based on various forms of assessment, to provide students with work that is suited to the child's instructional level. The students' need for additional challenge varies depending on topics. When added depth and complexity are needed within curriculum, the TAG Coordinator and classroom teachers develop lessons to bring appropriate levels of differentiation into the classroom.

Additionally, each building level offers a unique set of academic and problem solving competitions such as Math 24, First in Math, Knowledge Masters, Quiz Bowl, and Yahara River Writers events.

Can I request specific classroom placement for my child?

Contact the school building office regarding placement issue policies.

Will my child be “pulled out” for TAG work?

Meeting the needs of high ability learners is best done in the classroom with a content area specialist. The TAG Coordinator and the classroom teacher work collaboratively to ensure students receive appropriate levels of challenge.

How are my child's records passed to teachers in following years?

Student information can be accessed by teachers through an electronic database. Files are kept by the building level TAG Coordinator that provide the classroom teacher with specific information regarding classroom support of the student's instructional needs.

What do I do if I think my child is gifted or talented, but is not performing well in school?

Some students do not perform up to their abilities. Parents should contact their child's teacher, school counselor, or TAG Coordinator to discuss possible intervention strategies as they monitor the student's progress.

Referral, Identification and Programming

The goal of this process is to identify student needs and to match those needs with the appropriate levels of programming. A recommendation or referral of a student may be made by a teacher or parent in one or more areas of giftedness. In grades 7-12 students may nominate themselves or peers. The goal of the process is to match those needs with appropriate levels of available programming. Student needs may surface at different times and under certain circumstances. Children progress through developmental stages at different rates. Therefore, identification and evaluation occur on a continuing basis. Students may be considered for identification in one or more of the five categories of giftedness recognized by the Department of Public Instruction.

When a student is referred for identification, the TAG Coordinator will begin a monitor process that involves consultation with the classroom teacher, analysis of standardized, summative, and formative assessments, and classroom observation of the student. If the student demonstrates abilities beyond that of his/her peer group, parents will be asked permission to begin formal testing in areas of giftedness in an effort to provide appropriate programming.

5 Areas of Giftedness

- **General Intellectual** – Students who are highly successful in multiple subject areas, demonstrate critical thinking, reasoning ability, high achievement or high potential, and are capable in a wide variety of areas.
- **Specific Academic** – Students who are highly successful in one or more subject areas. Students whose performance in a subject may be far above the work they do in other subject areas.
- **Creativity** – Students who demonstrate the unusual ability to use divergent and unconventional thinking in arriving at creative ideas or unusual solutions.
- **Leadership** – Students who demonstrate an unusual ability to relate to and motivate other people.
- **Visual/Performing Arts** – Students who demonstrate unusual talent in expressing their ability to paint, sculpt, draw, photograph, or arrange media; to create or perform in the areas of music, dance or drama.

Formal identification for programming is based on multiple criteria, including standardized test scores, individualized testing, parent nominations, teacher nominations, classroom performance and work products, and district assessments.