



Discovery Program Guide

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[Introduction](#)

The Discovery Program seeks to recognize and develop talents in advanced-level learners. The following goals are established in order to offer a continuum of program services:

- Ensure that gifted education services are an integral part of the general education program.
- Provide differentiated instruction and curriculum to continuously improve student achievement and performance.
- Provide for the social and emotional needs of advanced-level learners.
- Recognize and develop diverse abilities and talents.
- Provide comprehensive professional development for its teachers to help them meet the unique needs of advanced-level students, twice exceptional learners, and English Language Learners who have exceptional academic skills.

These goals are based on gifted program standards and content goals of the [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#)

Regulations & Requirements

New Jersey Administrative Code N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5 mandates that public schools identify and provide educational services for gifted and talented students. “District boards of education shall be responsible for identifying gifted and talented students and shall provide them with appropriate instructional adaptations and services.”

District Policy

[Gifted and Talented Philosophy Statement](#)

We believe that it is our responsibility to:

- ensure that appropriate instructional adaptations are designed for students who are gifted and talented;
- make provisions for an ongoing identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in various academic areas
- develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environment. [Gifted & Talented Enrichment Strategies](#)
- take into consideration the Gifted Programming Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for identifying and serving gifted and talented students;

- provide the time and resources to develop, review, and enhance instructional tools with modifications for helping gifted and talented students
- actively assist and support professional development for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders in the area of gifted and talented instruction.

Adapted from NJ A4710 - "Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act"

Definition of Giftedness - NJAC 6A:8-3.1



Gifted students as defined by the NJ Department of Education and the NJ Legislature are “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.”

These individuals may exhibit high performance capability in an intellectual or creative area or excel in a specific academic field. Common traits of gifted individuals include, but are not limited to: intense curiosity, advanced problem-solving abilities, a keen sense of humor, the ability to uncover patterns and relationships, and the ability to acknowledge multiple viewpoints.

Gifted individuals may be asynchronous in their development, meaning that skills may develop at different rates. Often, intellectual skills develop much more quickly than physical and/or social skills. Because gifted children demonstrate greater maturity in some domains over others, they may be at greater risk for specific kinds of social-emotional difficulties if their needs are not met, such as underachievement, perfectionism, and stress.”

Adapted from New Jersey Administrative Code and The National Association of Gifted Children

[Gifted and Talented Statutes and Regulations](#) [National Association for Gifted Children](#)

Guiding Principles

The Tenafly Public School District recognizes that there are students who require differentiated programs and services beyond the core curriculum because of their exceptional abilities in one or more of the following areas:

- Intellectual ability across domains
- Mathematics
- English Language Arts
- Social Studies, Science
- STEM/STEAM disciplines
- Physical Education
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Social Emotional Learning

These students also possess cognitive and affective characteristics that require educational responses geared to their needs such as:

- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Sensitivity/Empathy
- Leadership
- Inquiry
- Problem-Solving

4. Program Components

Learning environments for the Gifted and Talented (G&T) students will provide student-centered learning and safe risk-taking in order to enhance student potential for creative production in their area(s) of passion.

1. We apply the theory and researched-based models of curriculum and instruction related to gifted students. We respond to student needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating a relevant curriculum by:
 - utilizing a comprehensive curriculum map delineating what processes will be taught
 - focusing on developing cognitive, learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills at each grade grouping
 - having an academic content foundation focused on interdisciplinary enrichment activities
 - developing competency across dimensions of learning and multiple talent areas.
2. We recognize the learning and developmental differences of gifted students to promote on-going self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth in the school, home and community demonstrated by:
 - educating the whole child and inspiring a passion for learning
 - offering choice and differentiation based on brain-based research to enrich the learning and development of gifted students
 - building social and emotional understanding of self; relative to community, culture, and physical environment engaging gifted students in identifying interests, strengths, and gifts.
3. We recognize that learning environments foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills in the 21st century to ensure specific student outcomes:
 - maintaining high expectations for all gifted students as evidenced in meaningful and challenging activities
 - meeting the needs of a 21st century student in a safe, risk-free environment
 - providing opportunities for interaction with intellectual and creative peers
 - developing many forms of leadership and leadership skills
4. Assessments provide information about learning progress and outcomes for gifted students in all domains.
 - students are able to demonstrate their gifts and talents through qualitative and quantitative assessments to develop a profile of their strengths and weaknesses

- students are able to demonstrate evidence of advanced and complex learning
 - students will be assessed with a variety of assessments: self-assessment (rubrics and/or written reflection), goal-based checklists, pre- and post-, performance-based, product based, and out-of-level assessments, peer and teacher conferencing.
5. [Renzullilearning.com](https://www.renzullilearning.com) is available to all elementary students as part of our Schoolwide enrichment model. The program enables teachers to easily differentiate instruction and leverage student motivation to achieve enhanced academic performance. The program brings personalized, interest-based learning into the classroom each day and encourages students to apply their knowledge in engaging activities that match their learning styles and interests.

Kindergarten and First Grade:

The focus on the development of gifted potential is the foundation for K-1 programming. During these developmental years, it is most appropriate to allow for children to become acquainted with the learning process and social nuances of the school setting. The goal is not to label some students gifted and others as not gifted. The goal is to provide the most appropriate level of instruction to each child in the classroom.

K-1 Programming Components

- A strong focus on differentiated instruction practices within the classroom including teacher's use of enrichment pieces embedded in and provided by Everyday Math. Small group instruction allows teachers to attend to the needs of learners demonstrating early mastery.
- Whole-class enrichment STEM activities
- Interested students provided with extension activities with STEM specialist
- Extra-curricular club opportunities

Grades 2-5: Mathematics

- **In the classroom:** Teachers first utilize vetted differentiated enrichment materials provided in the Everyday Math program and/or our curriculum for both small groups and high achieving math students. Small groups of students or individuals may also pursue research-based extension projects. In these intensive projects, students apply and practice advanced mathematical skills as they pursue research and prepare presentations for their peers.

- **Students identified as gifted in math** participate in a pull out group with a teacher other than their own classroom teacher. Material selected for this group focuses on the topics being discussed in the current unit of study, but both the level of difficulty and the range of the material is accelerated and the focus is creative problem solving and critical thinking.
- **Additional acceleration opportunities:** A child demonstrating exceptional talent in mathematics will be offered an opportunity to work closely with one of the district's Discovery Program teachers to explore content well beyond grade-level expectations and standards for learning math. Eligibility for this personalized learning and/or self-paced virtual/online course experience requires that the student first exhaust the district's resources fully.
- **For students in Grade 5 who are to be tested for advanced course readiness in Grade 6 and beyond:**
Students in Grade 5 complete a placement assessment to determine eligibility and readiness for advanced courses in Grades 6-8. This process includes determining candidates ready to by-pass grade-level courses, starting with Math 6. The assessment includes questions based in abstract thinking, pattern recognition, algebraic thinking, and logic. Additional details related to our advanced course opportunities in middle school can be found in the middle school section of the guide and our TMS Program of Studies.

[Providing Opportunities for Students with Exceptional Promise in Math](#)
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

- **Elementary Schools: English Language Arts/Humanities:** 2-5 graders will participate in a whole class ELA differentiated and enrichment during workshop and small group instruction. Identified students will have pull out opportunities with outside consultants, staff developer, or other grade level teachers. Reading and writing enrichment opportunities will be offered on an extra-curricular basis as well.
- **Elementary Schools: Physical Education and Fine, Visual, and Performing Arts**
Elementary school students will have the opportunity to participate in a dynamic and innovative Physical Education and Arts program. Encompassing fine and performing arts classes at all grade levels, students will have the opportunity to self select as a means to embrace creative expression. Teachers will provide a list of students who excel in each area by the end of the first marking period.

They will also provide differentiated extensions for these students." The G&T panel will explore residencies in dance, music, and theater arts each year. Students identified in the creative arts will have opportunities for enrichment and curriculum development in small groups to extend their learning during other pull out class offerings.

Grades 6 - 8: Tenafly Middle School

Differentiation within core academic subject areas (Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science), the Arts, World Languages and Physical Education: Teachers of all core academic courses, the arts, world languages and physical education at TMS focus on the differentiation of work and small group work in the classroom and through assignments, research projects, and other challenges.

Counseling Services:

Support for academic choices, effective Elementary and High School transition placements, as well as exposure and encouragement to pursue various club opportunities in areas of a student's interests. The counselors provide social and emotional support for gifted students to include executive functioning skills, various sensitivities, integrity, leadership, and other topics related to students' needs. Liaison role in the facilitation and the implementation of the individualized offerings to the gifted population.

Additional forms of enrichment are also available at TMS

Leadership opportunities:

- Student Organization - Elected positions
- RAPP - (Reaching All Peer to Peer) Student leadership and peer outreach program available to 8th graders as a class-
- Ambassador Program - 6th Grade and 7th Grade-Allows students to identify their own character strengths and weaknesses through self assessments and open discussions.
- Red Cross Club (Florczak)-Allows the students to "give back" to their communities. I.e. food drives
- Citizen of the World/Anti-Bullying Anti-Racism group

Discovery Program:

The Discovery Program includes a program which provides schoolwide enrichment courses to TMS students. Some courses require the permission of two current teachers.

- Logic Puzzles Circle: 4th-6th Grades: Genres of logic puzzles (Semester)
- Scripps Spelling Bee
- Math Museum Workshop
- Science Workshops: Tenafly Nature Center and Meadowlands Environmental Center
- Budding Biologists: Micro to macro study: the Ecosystem of a Pond (multi-session)
- CSI: The Case of the Vengeful Vandal: Two day G&T workshop in forensic science
- Hackensack Riverkeeper: Workshop and wildlife cruise through Meadowlands
- Mathematics Meets Architecture: Hands-on workshop at Saint John The Divine Cathedral in New York City for geometry students at TMS.

Mathematics:

While all TMS teachers of Mathematics differentiate instruction and pursue small group activities in class, it is possible for students to participate in advanced course work starting in grade 6. Courses in that sequence include Math 7 Advanced*, Algebra 7, and Geometry. Course placement is determined by overall math performance and aptitude, teacher recommendation, and a placement exam. The placement exam is scheduled in the spring and all students in grades 5, 6, 7 are expected to participate. For additional course detail and sequencing, please see our TMS Program of Studies.

- **Placement Assessment in March:**

Guidelines are used to review the student's aptitude for more complex mathematics. These guidelines are used to evaluate a student's readiness to take Algebra as a 7th grader. Other students may be placed in Math 7 Advanced.

- **MathCounts:**

Teams of students are coached as "mathletes" by the MathCounts coach on problem-solving and mathematical skills. A school competition is held in the winter and up to 8 students are selected to compete in local competitions in October and February. Winners progress to state competitions in March and the top 4 scorers earn the right to represent their state at the National Competition in May.

- **AMC 8:**

AMC 8 is an annual contest in middle school mathematics to promote problem-solving skills. The AMC 8 consists of questions that focus on analytical thinking and mathematical concepts that can be applied to students' future careers.

- **Noetic Learning Math Contest:**

The NLMC is a semi-annual contest for middle school students. Questions focus on problem-solving skills and motivate students to inspire and excel in mathematics.

World Languages:

Opportunities to showcase talent:

- National French Contest
- National Spanish Exam
- William Paterson University Poetry Contest
- Asian New Year Celebration
- National Chinese K-12 student "V-log" competition of "Chinese and Me"

Social Studies:

Opportunities for all middle school students to showcase their talents and expand their knowledge in the field of social studies include the following:

- The National Geographic Bee
- Veterans' Day Presentations
- Debate Club
- Global Citizens Club
- History Bowl
- participation in the National Constitution Center Classroom Exchanges
- the 6th Grade Tiger Tank Expo
- the 8th Grade Colonial Fair
- a field trip for eighth grade students to our nation's capital
- as well as multiple school-wide writing competitions, art contests, and community service activities

Science:

- Science Olympiad - organization devoted to improving the quality of science education, increasing student motivation in science and recognizing outstanding

student achievement. These goals are accomplished through classroom activities, research, and the encouragement of state and national tournaments. The Science Olympiad tournaments are rigorous academic competitions that consist of a series of events which students prepare for during the year. These events are spread out between the various science disciplines of biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, and technology.

- Golden Ratio - 7th grade math and science students collaborate on a project which explores the scientific and mathematical correlation seen in the human body.
- Engineering Week - All 6th grade students collaborate over five days to engage in engineering challenges that apply units of study from the physics section of the science curriculum.
- Environmental Club (Go Green) - Go Green is an afterschool program which seeks to engage students in environment action projects and activities to heighten environmental awareness and promote constructive action intended to address environmental problems.
- Stem Club & Robotics - Stem & Robotics club is an after school activity that seeks to engage students in opportunities to increase their knowledge and capabilities in a wide variety of technology related fields.
- Science Field Trips: Specialized science related trips include ecology-focused trips to the Bronx Zoo, Geology and Technology related field trips to Sterling Mines.

English Language Arts:

- All students have opportunities to explore their passions through individualized writing and reading options in writing genre studies and through independent reading and choices within reading/book club units.
- Expert Project in sixth grade
- I-Search Project in eighth grade allows students to learn research and communication skills while exploring personal interests
- Opportunities to showcase passion and talents in literary arts include but are not limited to: NY Times writing contests; The Scholastic Writing Awards; various school-wide writing/art contests
- Tiger Tales (School Newspaper)
- Limelight (Literary Magazine)
- the Scripps Spelling Bee
- The Teen Arts Festival

ELL:

- NJ TESOL 8th grade Essay Contests
- *Action, Scope, and Upfront* Magazine Contests
- WPU poetry recitation contests for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced ELL students

Fine and Performing Arts

In Tenafly Middle School's Music Program, students participate in grade-level orchestras, bands, and choruses, as well as participating in Chamber music and small group ensembles.

- **Teen Arts** (includes Instrumental and Vocal music, Theatre, Dance, Visual Art, Video Production and Visual Art)
 - Students from TMS attend the Bergen County Teen Arts Festival, the largest, most comprehensive single day arts-in-education festival held in New Jersey. Students spend the day performing and learning about creative fields—an experience that builds their artistic skills and fosters the desire to continue their association with the arts into adulthood.

MUSIC

- **Bergen county Band and Chorus**
 - Bergen County also invites middle school students who excel in band or choral music to compete for placement each year in the Bergen County Chorus and Band.
- **Region Band, Orchestra and Chorus**
 - Students in Region 1 (northern NJ) are invited to audition for the annual Region 1 Band, Orchestra and Chorus.
- **Region Jazz Band**
 - Students in Region 1 (northern NJ) are invited to audition for the annual Region 1 Jazz Band, including instrumentalists and vocalists.
- **TMS Extra curricular music clubs**
 - TMS Philharmonic / Fiddle Club
 - TMS Jazz Band
 - TMS All School Chorus
 - Vocal Showcase annual spring concert
- **Field trips**
 - Holiday Tour - All School Chorus, Chamber musicians in Band and Orchestra spread holiday cheer in two area retirement communities in Tenafly and Englewood..

- 8th grade Music in the Parks Festival
- 7th grade Band and Orchestra - MEBC Ensemble Festival
- 6th grade Band - MEBC Honors Band
- Jazz at Lincoln Center, Fall - 6th grade
- Jazz at Lincoln Center, Spring - Jazz Band

THEATRE

- Spring Musical
- Drama Club (year long)

VISUAL ARTS

- Limelight, Literature and Art Magazine

Physical Education:

Athletes at TMS participate in both intramural and intermural events, competitions, and meets. The G&T panel will also explore residencies in dance, music, and theater arts for the upcoming school year.

- Intramurals
- Cross Country
- Spring Track
- Boys Baseball
- Girls Volleyball

Grades 9-12 Tenafly High School:

The High School Program of Studies specifies eligibility requirements for specific advanced courses in all subject areas. There is a process for appeals and a waiver, explained in the Program of Studies, but questions regarding the gifted determination should be addressed directly with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. The label of students as gifted is not a competition, is not public information, nor is it meant to create a group that has additional privileges. It is meant to ensure that students' needs are matched with appropriate services.

THS Program Components

School Counseling

A counselor's responsibility reaches far beyond merely scheduling students into a program of studies. Each counselor is assigned to guide and counsel students throughout the high school years. The counselors attempt to get to know students' unique needs and try to help them recognize and fulfill their many potentials. Counselors assist students in the selection of a realistic and satisfying academic program, which they support by providing information about further education and career decisions. In addition to counseling related to academic issues, counselors assist with the personal, social and emotional growth of their assigned students. They also work closely with teachers, parents, and other professional and community resources. The counselors provide academic, social and emotional support for all students.

THS counselors are participating in professional development opportunities to expand their knowledge about meeting the academic and affective needs of gifted students. They will be working closely with the Discovery Program staff.

Special Education

All classified students have full and equal access to any and all opportunities available to their peers, with access to any related services or supports necessary for their full inclusion as identified in their IEP. Having an IEP does not exclude a student from inclusion in any available offering or program.

The Structured Learning Experience (SLE) initiative, coordinated by New Jersey Department of Education, provides our classified students with meaningful, relevant educational experiences that provide the opportunity to explore career options focusing on their interests and abilities, assist them in gaining employment skills, make future career and educational choices in a real-life workplace environment. Individualized career assessment and placement, job-coaching and mentoring services are determined and provided through the IEP.

Mathematics & Computer Science

Program of Studies - offer the following AP Courses: AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, AP Computer Science A, (for 22-23 SY: AP Computer Science Principles)

(Refer to THS Program of Studies)

Math Club, Contests, Olympiads - Students have opportunities throughout the year to participate in local, regional, state, and national competitions in mathematics.

CSI Internship/Senior Option Program

Typically offered annually, each spring through and with our Content, Skills, Internship Center Teachers

(Refer to THS Program of Studies)

AP Capstone (AP Seminar / AP Research Sequence)

The **AP Capstone Diploma** is granted to students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research and on 4 additional AP Exams of their choosing.

- NJ Governor's School of Engineering and Technology (Spring counselor/science teacher/math teacher)
- NJ Scholars Program (Spring)

English Language Arts

Course offerings: AP English Language/AP English Literature/AP Capstone/Creative Writing/Journalism

Opportunities to showcase passion and talent:

- NY Times contest
- Scholastic Awards
- Dodge Poetry Festival/Echo (School Newspaper)/Omega (Literary Magazine)

World Languages/English Language Learners

Demonstrating proficiency above minimum levels as deemed by STAMP test
Achievement of Seal of Biliteracy

Course offerings: AP Chinese/French/Spanish

Opportunities to showcase talent:

- National French Contest/National Spanish Exam/National Italian Exam
- William Paterson Poetry Contest

Visual Arts

Course offerings: AP Studio Art/Computer Animation Honors

Opportunities to showcase talent:

- NJ Teen Arts Festival
- Scholastic Awards

Library Media Services

Broadcast Technology: Special passion projects in a variety of fields allow students to bring their interests to the next level while providing services to others. Creativity

provides new services or valuable conveniences to the school learning community. Students are referred via teacher and/or guidance counselor recommendation or self nominate. Administrative staff can also recommend.

The Falling Walls - Entrepreneur Interview Experience

Students have the opportunity to interview graduates of the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) and inquire about their experiences in their respective start up companies. Over 250 start-ups with one Unicorn, HPI incorporates Design Thinking into their curriculum. Resulting interviews may be published online. Students are referred via teacher and/or guidance counselor recommendation or self nominate. Administrative staff can also recommend.

Performing Arts

Students are offered a variety of paths to follow over and above course offerings listed in the Tenafly High School Program of Studies. Students can follow their passions in music, acting, and performance by joining the following:

- A Cappella: There are 3 A Cappella groups: Nothing But Treble (girls), WakaFlokaPella (mixed), and the Testostertones (boys). Students meet once a week to sing songs that are selected and arranged, and students perform at various places around town and in school concerts.
- Chamber Music: The Chamber Music Club encourages all instrumental musicians to get involved and form a chamber music group. One of several performances of the Chamber Music Club is called “Potpourri” and takes place in the library just prior to Thanksgiving. Chamber Music Club competes annually at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Young Musicians Program.
- In addition there are audition opportunities for plays and musicals performed on stage for the public. One Acts Festival which is student written, directed, acted and produced.

Science

Science Research: Students take their interest in the natural and social sciences by accessing scientific databases, by using on-line bibliographic search techniques, consulting doctoral-level research scholars, developing hypotheses and performing experiments to test them, and by writing research papers and presenting their passion projects at scientific symposia. In this course emphasis is placed upon performing experiments in consultation with mentors and can result in the greater good for society.

The Science Olympiad: An organization devoted to improving the quality of science education, the Science Olympiad increases student motivation in science and

recognizes outstanding student achievement. These goals are accomplished through classroom activities, research, and the encouragement of state and national tournaments. The Science Olympiad tournaments are rigorous academic competitions that consist of a series of events which students prepare for during the year. These events are spread out between the various science disciplines of biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, and technology.

Social Studies

The Tenaflly High School Social Studies curriculum focuses on the acquisition of the knowledge, understandings, dispositions and perspectives needed to live responsibly and productively in a democratic society within an increasingly complex, global world. The curriculum is varied and challenging and includes opportunities for those students who demonstrate a particular aptitude and interest in social studies to explore complex relationships and think critically about human society in its historical, contemporary and future forms. Honors and Advanced Placement classes in US History, American Government and Politics, Psychology and Macroeconomics provide challenging curricula (please refer to the Tenaflly High School Program of Studies for additional information). Students who have particular talent, interest, or skill in social studies may pursue independent studies through the 2 year Advanced Placement Capstone program, where, with the guidance of a teacher, students select an area of interest in which to conduct original research and present their findings. Additionally, students have a multitude of opportunities to pursue their interests through participation in extracurricular clubs and activities that include school government, social justice and action initiatives, and competitive debate. Students who excel beyond the opportunities provided through differentiated instruction and course offerings, the department may suggest additional opportunities to meet the students' needs.

Business

Students who demonstrate a particular interest in business studies have the opportunity to participate in a course sequence culminating with a capstone course during which students may earn their Microsoft Office Certification. As part of their sequence, students may also enroll in relevant courses outside the department in the areas of public speaking and graphic design. Additionally, students may participate in DECA, a nationally recognized program that prepares future leaders and entrepreneurs through educational workshops and competitive events. Advanced Placement Economics provides students with an interest in economics and finance to further their understanding of these complex concepts. Opportunities for senior internships are in the planning stages.

Family and Consumer Science

Students with a demonstrated interest and ability in child development and psychology may participate in a three year sequence during which students observe and apply their learning through interaction with our in-house early learning program for 3 and 4 year olds. During their capstone year, students also have the opportunity to intern at the elementary school level, earn a career recognized certificate in child development, and earn college credit through dual enrollment.

Students with a particular interest and ability in the culinary arts have opportunities to apply and enrich their talents through extracurricular activities and coordination with other school-based organizations.

[A Multi Criteria System for the Identification of High Achieving and Creative/Productive Giftedness](#) Joseph S Renzulli and Amy H. Gaesser, Purdue University.

[The Schoolwide enrichment model: A Focus on student strengths & interests](#) Sally M. Reis and Joseph S. Renzulli. University of Connecticut, 1994.

A more individualized educational program is required to serve the range of needs our students possess that include diverse ethnic backgrounds, learning and physical disabilities, and non-native English speakers.

5. Screening and Identification

The Screening Process consists of creating a pool of potential students who may or may not proceed to the evaluation and identification phases.

Screening

The initial screening phase is a pre-assessment nomination stage that involves collecting student data from multiple sources to document their possible need for services provided by the Discovery Program. The purpose of the screening process is to analyze information as evidence of a student's potential. We will also look at the performance of the top 5% of the students in the grade level for the subject areas of Math and Humanities.

Note that the screening process is annual and does not guarantee future services for a student.

Identification Procedures

Identification of gifted students is a requirement of the NJ Department of Education for all school districts in the state. Tenafly Public Schools' students are not restricted from opportunities based on being identified as gifted identification as we practice a schoolwide enrichment model and offer acceleration as needed in subject areas. In each of the core subject areas, identification of gifted students is based on multiple measures of a top percentage of students (up to 3% of each cohort in each area) determined by a combination of ability, performance, and motivation.

Tenafly Public School District uses both quantitative and qualitative data to identify students for gifted program services. Ability and achievement test scores along with evaluation forms completed by teachers are reviewed by the committee. From these multiple measures, students whose data indicates that GT program services are the most appropriate educational setting will be placed in the program by the placement committee.

Categories for consideration: In addition to test scores, a child's learning characteristics such as creativity, motivation, task completion, leadership, and planning skills will be considered. We will look for a score of 95% or higher in each category.

Testing: We will administer a cognitive abilities test for specific grade levels in order to help us to make decisions that elevate each student's academic experience. The cognitive abilities test, rates a student's verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning.

Renzulli Scale Evaluation: Teachers use a Discovery Checklist based on the Renzulli Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior students. On this checklist, classroom teachers note specific areas in which a student shows both exceptional interest and ability. The Kingore class inventory may also be utilized.

We also seek to include procedures that are fair to students who are members of minority groups or who are from culturally and linguistically-different backgrounds as well as twice exceptional students.

Identification

1. All students will be screened using a variety of measures in the spring of each school year. Data is gathered so that each student's strengths may be evaluated

Data includes:

- a. A Discovery Checklist based on Renzulli Characteristics will be completed by classroom teachers during the spring semester for students who have potential for above grade level abilities.
- b. Achievement Assessment results, including both ongoing classroom assessments and the results of District Benchmark Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Student portfolios will be assessed.
- c. Ability Assessments: The NGAT test was administered to all students in grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7and 8 during the spring of 2021. Use of local norms is essential in the process. Moving forward, Grade 1 will be tested each spring.
- d. Teacher observations: Teachers observe students who routinely display extraordinary performance in the areas of leadership, motivation, work ethic, natural curiosity, academic aptitude, productive thinking, reasoning, and/or creativity. These students *may* produce work that exceeds grade level expectations.
- e. NJSLA: Local norms for ELA and Math scores will be considered when available. Note: During the fall of 2021, the Start Strong assessment will take the place of the NJSLA

6. Steps in the Process and Timeline Spring Semester Annually

- 1) Send letters home to parents for cognitive abilities assessment consent
- 2) Administer cognitive abilities assessment
- 3) Request input from administrators and teachers for students' referral
- 4) Final selection by G & T committee
- 5) Schedule information session for parents
- 6) Anecdotal notes from Kindergarten Screening
- 7) Send parent notification letters

7. Questions/Concerns and Appeals Process

Parents or students may appeal the decision of the Discovery Services Committee. Written **notification** must be submitted to the principal stating the request for appeal. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent, the teacher, and the curriculum supervisor to discuss the appeal. Final decisions on all appeals will be made by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

Please direct all inquiries to Dr. Jeff Gorman jgorman@tenafly.k12.nj.us

Discovery Program Appeal of Services Form

8. Exit Procedures

Students are re-evaluated each spring for participation in the differentiated services provided by the Discovery Program. However, recommendations for exit from the program may be initiated at any time by the classroom teacher, the Discovery teacher, the child study team, the parent or the student. All concerns must be directed to the Director of Gifted Services who will conduct a meeting to discuss the issues with those individuals involved in the concern. A plan will be developed to support the student's continued participation in the program and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. A second meeting will be held to evaluate the student's progress and determine if continued participation or withdrawal from the program is most appropriate for the student.

9. Program Evaluation

The Program will be evaluated and updated yearly by a committee of school personnel using the rubric provided by the National Association for Gifted Children and the State of NJ.

10. Resources for Parents

Traits of Giftedness: from the National Association for Gifted Children

This article lists characteristics that will help you to understand and evaluate your child's gifts and talents.

Resources for Parents: from the National Association for Gifted Children

<https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents>

A wide variety of articles that address the concerns of parents of gifted children

New Jersey Association for Gifted Children <https://www.njagc.org/>
(A parent and teacher organization)

Other resources:

An extensive, updated list of parent and student resources can be found on the
Discovery website [Family Resources](#)