



ACADEMICALLY TALENTED AND GIFTED PARENT HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

- I. [Introduction](#)
- II. [Philosophy and Student Expectations](#)
- III. [Identification Process](#)
- IV. [Monitoring Student Needs and Decision-Making](#)
- V. [Intervention and Exit Procedure](#)
- VI. [ATG Service Description](#)
- VII. [Social-Emotional Needs](#)
- VIII. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- IX. [Appendix](#)



COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED
SCHOOL DISTRICT 15



Introduction

Welcome to the Academically Talented and Gifted (ATG) Program Handbook for Palatine Community Consolidated School District 15. The ATG team, made up of specially trained teachers and administrators, designed this handbook to provide useful information for families/caregivers of gifted students.

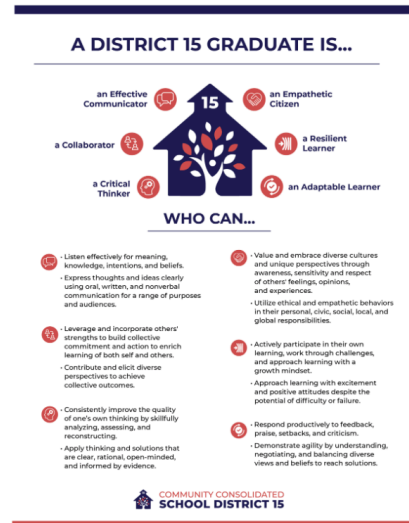
The handbook begins with our philosophy, the District's definition of giftedness, and the District process for identifying gifted learners (including transfer students). These sections provide information about how we partner with parents to address the needs of high-performing students. Additionally, these sections contain information about our student performance monitoring system and the process we use to approach students whose needs have changed and no longer require a self-contained program to address their educational needs.

Other sections in this handbook provide information about the services and supports provided to students who have been identified as gifted.

This handbook ends with sections that cover Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and known resources for parents. These sections should help answer common misconceptions, confusions, concerns, and questions that new families to the program often voice. These sections include a link where parents can ask more individual questions. Responses to these questions are made through email and repeated questions are added to the FAQ section.

Philosophy

The Palatine Community Consolidated School District 15 uses a [Portrait of a Graduate](#) to focus our vision of what we want our students to be as a result of their time in District 15. We hold our gifted learners to the high standards outlined in the Portrait and make an effort to push them beyond, so they can become leaders amongst their peers.



The ATG program has developed a **Learning Attributes and Behaviors Matrix** and **Student Facing Learning Attributes and Behaviors Matrix** that builds upon the District's vision and guides us to expand the competencies of our gifted students. The ATG program focuses on key areas (Scholarship, Agency for Own Learning, Mindset, Cooperation, and Self-management) that we strive to develop in every one of our students.

Our approach to building this portrait is powered by a series of fundamental beliefs. These beliefs were created by our ATG administration and staff. These beliefs are consistent with the standards of the **National Association for Gifted Children** and are deeply held by our teaching and administrative staff. They work as a guide to the development and decision-making within our program.

We believe:

1. In a **continuum of services** and supports for K-8 grade advanced learners who are served through a differentiated delivery model of instruction.
2. In a fluid multifaceted process, advanced learners are **equitably identified** and represent the diverse groups in our schools, and their academic and intellectual talents are adequately addressed within the program.
3. In the use of **standards-based cross-curricular** instructional methods, development of critical and creative thinking with depth complexity, and rigor in collaborative and cooperative learning environments.
4. In addressing the unique **social and emotional needs** of advanced learners. These needs will be addressed and supported through a coordinated effort of district and school personnel to strengthen potential talents, tenacity, academic aptitude, and attitude.
5. Teachers of advanced learners require and receive a variety of **ongoing professional learning** opportunities that emphasize best instructional practices and models to meet the specialized needs of their students.



Identification Process

The District uses a multi-measure selection system that includes measures of aptitude (ability), achievement, and teacher observations of the student's classroom performance. Students in grades 2, 3, and 4 are screened in the fall to identify those students who show remarkably high achievement in reading and math. The highest performing 15% of students are offered the opportunity to take a test of cognitive aptitude called the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

Students with remarkably high test performance and academic needs are eligible to enroll in the ATG program. Eligible students' parents are not obligated to enroll their child into the ATG program. Information on that process can be found on our [website](#).

Monitoring Student Progress and Decision Making

Once a student is enrolled in the ATG program, their performance is closely monitored by both a set of recurring tests (e.g., MAP) and at the classroom level with a teacher-completed performance of the Learning Attributes and Behaviors Matrix. This matrix is completed soon after the start of each year and at least once per grading period thereafter.

Student performance expectations are communicated to our families/caregivers through a [contract](#) that is sent to them at the start of each school year. Parents/caregivers are asked to read and acknowledge this learning contract by signing it and returning it to their child's teacher.

Intervention and Exit Procedure

In some circumstances, a student may find that the ATG programming is no longer meeting his/her educational needs. If this occurs, a parent may withdraw their student from the ATG program. In cases where classroom performance is of concern, the teacher, parent, student, and/or principal will initiate the procedure for exiting a student from the ATG program as outlined in our [Intervention and Exit Procedure](#).



ATG Service Description (2024-2025 School Year and Forward)

Identified students are eligible for CCSD15's ATG Program. If a student accepts their eligibility, they will be placed in a self-contained gifted classroom at the District's gifted site, Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School.

Self-contained gifted programming ends after a student's fifth-grade year. When your child transitions to 6th grade, the serving middle school will offer advanced students a planned set of advanced courses in ELA and mathematics. Students are considered for these classes based on a review of performance data. ATG program eligibility does not guarantee automatic enrollment.

Instructional practices in the gifted program contain a mixture of direct instruction, guided group work, enhanced dialogue, and independent work. Additionally, independent projects are more common in our classrooms than in general education. We strive to use innovative techniques to help our students identify meaningful connections with various subjects so they may pursue and develop their unique interests.

Addressing Social-Emotional Needs

Students in an ATG classroom display a variety of unique strengths and needs. These include academic and social-emotional needs as well. Research suggests that academically talented/gifted students may display the following **social-emotional needs**:

- Overexcitabilities- psychomotor, heightened senses, intellectual, imaginational, emotional oversensitivity (Dabrowski's Theory).
- Perfectionism/Growth Mindset
- Self-Esteem, Identity
- Underachievement, Reaching Potential, Effort

The ATG program has adopted specific materials and strategies that support our students' distinctive social and emotional development while balancing their unique and developed thinking patterns with their developmental levels.



Frequently Asked Questions

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Have a question not listed on the FAQ? Use [this form](#) and ask it!

Appendix

District 15 Portrait of a Graduate

HOPE Scale (Teacher Rating Scale for Identification Process)

District Accelerated Placement Information

Learning Attributes and Behaviors Matrix

ATG Contract

Intervention and Exit Procedure

ATG FAQ

Parent Questions About the ATG Program Form

New Parent Orientation Slides and YouTube Recording



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