Fairfield Public Schools
Workshop-Gifted/Talented Program

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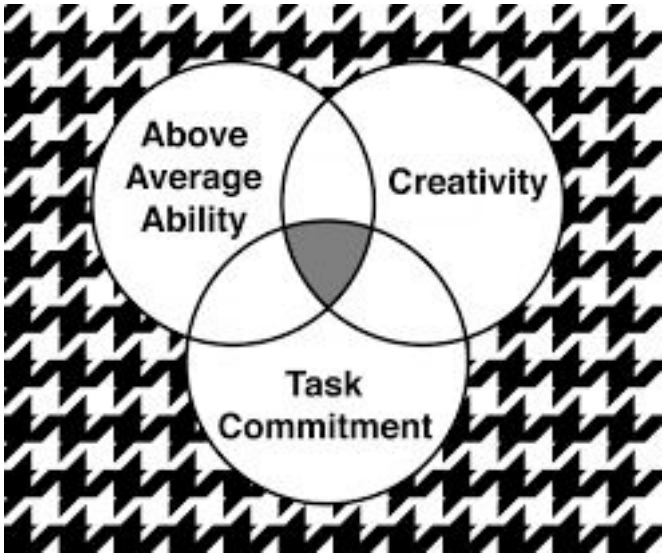
Philosophy Statement

The Fairfield Public Schools are committed to providing an education of excellence that challenges students to reach their highest potential by meeting their individual interests, abilities, and needs under a common curriculum framework. A key component of this philosophy is that high-quality, differentiated learning experiences are at the heart of good classroom instruction across all grade levels and subject areas.

It is also understood that some students may perform at higher levels than their peers and require instructional services beyond those found in the general educational program. To that end, a program has been developed to support students who demonstrate above average ability, creativity, and high levels of task commitment.



Three Ring Conception of Giftedness

https://gifted.uconn.edu/schoolwide-enrichment-model/three-ring_conception_of_giftedness/

Developed by Joseph Renzulli, the Three Ring Conception of Giftedness is a developmental approach that has revolutionized gifted and talented identification. The Three Rings include: Above Average Ability, Creativity, and Task Commitment.

Gifted & Talented Defined

Gifted and talented students are those who demonstrate an advanced ability or potential in one or more areas when compared to their peers, their experiences, or their environment. They excel in their ability to think and reason, therefore, making it necessary for them to receive support services in a program for the purpose of maximizing and fully developing their potential and talents.

These learners are a very diverse group of students. They sit in every classroom and come from all cultures, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some are twice-exceptional (2E), meaning they are students who are both identified as gifted and with a disability defined by federal or state eligibility criteria, qualifying them for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

Addressing Special Populations

It is important to select multiple measures and multiple sources for identifying and serving the gifted when assessing underserved gifted populations such as culturally diverse, linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and students with special needs. An integral part of the Fairfield Public Schools gifted identification process is a "formal review." This step considers multiple data points (including performance on nonverbal ability assessments, student work samples, standardized test results, grades, teacher/student /parent input, and other academic achievement data) and allows educators to better identify those students who may be gifted and have a disability.

For the purpose of identifying gifted abilities in students with limited English proficiency and culturally diverse

backgrounds, the Fairfield Public Schools administer the Naglieri (NNAT3), a nonverbal ability assessment that has been widely used to identify students for gifted and talented programming. The NNAT3 can be used for fair assessment of socially or economically disadvantaged students and those who may have disabilities that interfere with accurate measurement of ability. The Fairfield Public Schools believe the use of the Naglieri, combined with a comprehensive review process, will allow educators to better identify underrepresented populations in our gifted programs.

Identification

While differentiation is expected for every student, special educational services for students identified as gifted and/or talented are not mandatory in the state of Connecticut. Under current regulations, public school districts in Connecticut are required to identify gifted and talented students, however, they are not mandated to provide a program of service.

The Fairfield Public Schools fully support gifted education and offer a Workshop-Gifted/Talented program to students who qualify.

- Students who score 130 or above (age composite score) on either the CogAT or the Naglieri will be offered Workshop-Gifted/Talented services.
- Students with age composite scores between 125 and 129 are eligible for a formal review, which will assess whether gifted services are appropriate for them.

*Fairfield Public Schools does not retest students for gifted eligibility. Students who achieve an age composite score of 125 or above on either the Cognitive Abilities Test (Cogat) or the Naglieri (NNAT3) can be reviewed each year through grade 8 upon parent or teacher request. An application requesting a formal review must be made by November.

*Students who were previously in a gifted program from another school district will need to produce a copy of their child's Naglieri (NNAT3) or Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) results, reflecting an age composite score of 125 or above to be eligible for a formal review. If a student did not take either assessment in their prior school, the tests will be administered upon parent request.

Please send all forms and inquiries to Julie Heller, the Coordinator of Gifted Workshop at jheller@fairfieldschools.org

Programming

Our elementary and middle school Workshop-Gifted/Talented program offers a dynamic, part-time learning experience designed specifically for gifted students.

The grades 3-8 program includes the following academic and social emotional components:

Programming (continued)

- A small group setting where social connections are developed and cultivated
- A rigorous curriculum focused on conceptual thinking, higher level processes, and problem solving
- Opportunities for students to be themselves and collaborate with like-minded peers
- Social–emotional exploration activities and discussions that help students develop healthy self-concepts and increase commitment to personal responsibility toward others
- Highly-qualified gifted teachers who facilitate engaging, problem and project-based inquiries and challenges that align with our district's standards for critical and creative thinking, as well as communication and collaboration

Workshop-Gifted/Talented students convene weekly by grade level in middle schools, or on a letter-day rotation in elementary schools, during academic, unified arts, or FLEX periods. Sessions range from 1 to 2 hours per week or letter-day rotation and are scheduled to best enhance the students' overall learning experience.

In addition to the scheduled Workshop sessions, our gifted teachers also support and collaborate with classroom teachers to enrich the educational environment.

Online Resources for Parents

Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG)
www.ctgifted.org

CT State Department of Education Gifted and Talented page
www.csdegifted.org

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
www.nagc.org

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
www.sengifted.org

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children
www.worldgifted.org

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented
www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT/html