



Gifted Identification and Services Guide

2026-2027

Frequently asked questions about gifted identification
procedures and gifted services in the Upper Arlington Schools



The Upper Arlington Schools Gifted Services Program, part of the Student Services Office, is an integral part of the district's K-12 academic program. The Gifted Services Program provides Upper Arlington students who are receiving services a rigorous curriculum to stretch their thinking and develop to their fullest potential.

What is “gifted?”

In the state of Ohio, “gifted” means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of section 3324.03 of the Revised Code.

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Gifted Identification FAQ

What are the signs that a child may be gifted?

While there is no single profile that fits all gifted children, typically these students demonstrate the following characteristics well before their chronological peers:

- acquire knowledge quickly;
- manipulate knowledge easily;
- see relationships between discrete pieces of information;
- understand knowledge at a complex level;
- are capable of abstractions and generalizations;
- show perseverance;
- appreciate humor;
- demonstrate an advanced vocabulary;
- are independent in thought and judgment;
- are curious about many problems and issues; and
- are motivated by the unknown.

Are the signs of giftedness always obvious?

Not necessarily. It is important to know that children who have learning disabilities may be gifted. Twice-exceptional (2E) students are those who have learning disabilities AND are gifted in one or more areas.

Inconsistencies in a student's abilities may be an indicator of twice-exceptionality. Identifying twice-exceptional students can be challenging because their areas of giftedness may compensate for their learning disabilities, and conversely, their disabilities may mask their giftedness. [The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce's Twice Exceptional Guide](#) lists characteristics of students who are twice-exceptional and describes strategies and interventions for addressing learning disabilities while building on areas of strength.

The gifted characteristics of English learners may be impacted by communication difficulties or cultural differences. [The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce provides resources for English learners.](#)

How are students identified as gifted?

In Ohio, school districts are required to identify students who are gifted in superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability (reading and/or writing, math, science, social studies), and visual and performing arts ability. Districts must screen all students at least once in grades K-2 and at least once in grades 3-6 in the areas of superior cognitive ability, reading and/or writing, and math.

Districts also must test students within 90 days of a student, parent, or teacher referral. Each student may be tested twice per school year in each area of giftedness. If grade level testing has been performed, that counts as one testing opportunity.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce provides districts with a list of test instruments that may be used, as well as required scores for identification.

How does Upper Arlington Schools accomplish gifted testing?

We screen all students in grade 2 for giftedness in cognitive ability and reading achievement. 4th graders are screened again for cognitive ability. We screen all 7th graders for science and social studies achievement. Whole-grade testing typically occurs in late fall/early winter. Students in other grades and identification areas are tested upon referral in small groups or individually. We do not test students in the summer unless they are transferring into the district.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has approved the use of the Star Reading test for gifted identification in reading in grades 3-12 and the Star Math test for gifted identification in math in grades 1-12. Star testing is conducted in the fall, winter, and spring.

What tests does Upper Arlington use for gifted identification?

The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce requires school districts to use tests on [its approved list](#). We use the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Assessments for whole grade and small group testing, as well as the Star Reading test (grades 3-12) and the Star Math test (grades 1-12). High school students may be identified as gifted via the ACT (reading, math, and science), PSAT (reading and math) and SAT (reading and math). Our school psychologists employ a variety of instruments from the approved list for individual administration.

What are the state's required scores for gifted identification?

Superior Cognitive Ability

A score two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual or group standardized cognitive abilities test

Specific Academic Ability (reading/writing, math, social studies, science)

Performance at or above the 95th percentile at the national level on an approved individual or group standardized achievement test in the academic area

Visual and Performing Arts Ability

Sufficient performance, as established by the Department of Education, on an approved checklist of behaviors related to a specific arts area and demonstration through a display of work, an audition, or other performance or exhibition, superior ability in a visual or performing arts area

Creative Thinking Ability

A score one standard deviation above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual or group standardized cognitive abilities test and sufficient performance, as established by the Department of Education, on an approved checklist of creative behaviors

What happens if my child's score is close to the state's required score?

Students who score within two points of the minimum required score on the CogAT and/or Iowa Assessments will be retested in small groups in early spring. For individually administered tests, students who score within two points of the minimum required score are offered retesting with a different instrument. We will contact you in either situation to obtain your permission for retesting.

How will I know if my child is identified as gifted?

After whole grade or small group testing, you will receive a letter formally notifying you if your child has been gifted-identified in one or more areas. Individual test results are communicated by school psychologists. In Ohio, once a child is identified as gifted in a particular area, they are always identified as gifted in that area.

Is there an appeal process?

Parents/guardians may request reconsideration of the result of any part of the identification process. The superintendent or designee will convene a meeting with the parent/guardian. The superintendent or designee will issue a written final decision within 30 days of the appeal.

Gifted Services FAQ

My child has been identified as gifted. What happens now?

While the state of Ohio requires gifted identification, it does not require districts to offer gifted services (gifted classes). Each district considers available funding and the needs of its student population to determine how to provide gifted services. While the state sets the criteria for gifted identification, each district determines the criteria it will use to qualify students for gifted services. Criteria must be objective and applied fairly and consistently. Every child who meets the criteria for a given service must be given the opportunity to participate in that service. Students in gifted services have Written Education Plans (WEPs). If your child qualifies for gifted services, we will notify you. In Upper Arlington, the following gifted services are provided at the elementary and middle schools.

Gifted Service		Criteria
2-8	Math Cluster Class (General education classroom*)	Gifted identification in math or superior cognitive ability
2-8	English Language Arts Cluster Class (General education classroom*)	Gifted identification in reading or superior cognitive ability
3	Gifted Math 3	Gifted identification in superior cognitive ability and math
4	Compacted Math 4/5A	
5	Compacted Math 5B/6	
5-8	Gifted English Language Arts "GELA"	Gifted identification in superior cognitive ability and reading

*In grades 6-8, qualifying students receive gifted services through differentiated instruction in general education math and English language arts classrooms where students with similar gifted identifications are clustered. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce requires general education teachers who provide gifted services to complete annual requirements for gifted education professional development. Upper Arlington middle school teachers who teach cluster classes participate in high quality professional development to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted students.

High School Gifted Services

At the high school level, students may choose from a wide variety of courses, regardless of gifted identification. The following courses are excellent options for students seeking increased rigor and challenge.

- Honors
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- College Credit Plus (CCP)
- Project Lead the Way Engineering Pathway

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce considers these courses to be gifted service settings if teachers complete annual requirements for gifted education professional development. (College Credit Plus and visual and performing arts teachers are exempt from this requirement.)

UAHS teachers who are gifted services providers participate in high quality professional development on meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of students who are gifted.

Gifted-identified students in Honors, AP, IB, CCP, and Project Lead the Way courses will be reported as served to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce if they are gifted in superior cognitive ability or in a specific academic, creative thinking, or visual and performing arts area that matches the content of the course. These students will have Written Education Plans.

What is a Written Education Plan (WEP)?

A Written Education Plan, or WEP, is a document required for any gifted-identified student who is reported by the district as receiving gifted services. WEPs may look different from district to district but must include the following information, according to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce:

- Descriptions of services to be provided and goals for each service
- Methods for evaluating progress towards goals and how progress will be reported
- Staff responsible for ensuring delivery of each service
- Policies regarding waiver of assignments missed in the regular education classroom while a child participates in gifted services
- Deadline for the next review of the WEP (typically the following school year)
- An explanation of how the gifted service meets the student's documented strengths, educational needs, and goals

A copy of the WEP must be provided to parents/guardians and to the teachers responsible for providing services. In our district, parents typically receive WEPs in October, after teachers have had a chance to get to know their students.

Is there a deadline for qualifying for gifted classes?

Yes. For the purpose of qualifying for gifted classes in the following school year, gifted referrals for testing must be received by **March 1 of the current school year** to ensure that the testing can be completed by the last day of school. No gifted testing will take place in the summer except for students who have transferred into the district.

Students who qualify for gifted classes after the start of the current school year will begin those classes in the following school year.

Can I withdraw my child from a gifted class?

A student may withdraw from a gifted class at the written request of the parent or guardian. Your child will continue to be gifted-identified throughout his/her educational career. You may contact the school at any time to address concerns about your child's education or to discuss gifted classes that are available in subsequent school years.

What about acceleration?

Acceleration is an intensive intervention that is appropriate for a small percentage of the student population. Some children's areas of strength are such that their needs cannot be met in the grade level classroom. Subject and whole-grade acceleration may be considered for any student, regardless of gifted identification.

For subject acceleration decisions, a school-based team that includes the parents will consider factors such as current level of performance, test results, social and emotional factors, and the student's feelings about acceleration.

For whole-grade acceleration decisions, districts in Ohio are required to use the Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine whether a student is a good candidate for acceleration.

If you would like to discuss acceleration for your child, please contact your child's principal or the gifted education coordinator. For research on acceleration, see [the website for the Acceleration Institute](#).

I am concerned that my child needs more academic challenge. What should I do first?

The first step is to speak to the teacher about your child's present performance and level of engagement. Children may say they are bored for different reasons. Sometimes they already know the material in classroom lessons and need enrichments or extensions. Occasionally, children say they are bored in a particular setting because they wish to be in a different instructional group or class with a friend. Children who exhibit perfectionistic tendencies may not want to engage in lessons or activities because of fear of not doing well.

A parent-teacher conference can help to clarify what is happening and provide important information about a child's progress and the differentiation methods the teacher has tried.

Gifted Student Well-Being FAQ

Where can I find information about the social and emotional needs of gifted children?

The gifted education coordinator and building gifted intervention specialists are available to help. Additionally, the following organizations provide resources to families:

- [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#)
- [Ohio Association for Gifted Children \(OAGC\)](#)
- [SENG \(Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted\)](#)

The OAGC has a parent division that meets regularly, and SENG offers local parent workshops. See their websites for information.

What is Upper Arlington City Schools doing to help teachers to understand the needs and traits of gifted learners?

Each elementary and middle school building has gifted intervention specialists (GIS) who have completed intensive training on giftedness and gifted education. The GIS provide information and resources to classroom teachers in their buildings. The gifted services coordinator is available to work with teachers K-12.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the gifted coordinator offers professional development for teachers interested in helping gifted learners to be confident self-advocates. At the high school level, the gifted coordinator and International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Coordinator work together to provide professional learning sessions on meeting the needs of gifted students.

Enrichment Opportunities

Upper Arlington Schools

Contact your school for information about available activities.

Please see the [Upper Arlington Schools Flyer Connection](#) for more opportunities available in the community.



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