



The Neenah Joint School District Gifted and Talented Program For Advanced Learners

NJSD Gifted and Talented Staff

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Philosophy

Foundations of the Gifted and Talented Program:

- Our purpose is to bring about the best match between the student's level of skill or ability and what our curriculum can offer that child.
- Students at all functional levels need to be challenged and provided opportunities to make the most of their learning experiences.
- Gifted and Talented programming is one of many efforts in our school district to better meet students' individual learning needs.
- Our Gifted and Talented faculty serve as advocates, facilitators, resources, planners, and providers of differentiated programming for high ability students.
- Gifted and Talented faculty are always working to keep learning expectations for students as high as possible and to promote differentiated learning experiences for high ability students.

Neenah's Gifted and Talented Program for advanced learners reflects the community's support of educational excellence and our desire to individualize learning, to the greatest extent possible for all students.

The Gifted and Talented faculty works collaboratively with teachers, administrators, and parents in making sure that identified students are being appropriately challenged to attain their highest level of achievement.

Wisconsin Standard (t)

Wisconsin requires that every school district in the state provide a Gifted and Talented Program for students who have demonstrated evidence of high performance in the intellectual, creative, artist, leadership, or specific academic areas.

“Each school board shall:

(t) Provide access to an appropriate program for pupils identified as gifted and talented. “

Advanced Learning Policy

To best comply with state standards, the Neenah school board has approved a policy that lays out all of our goals for our Gifted and Talented programming. In regards to identification and instruction for advanced learners, the policy (code [po2464](#)) states:

IDENTIFICATION

Advanced learners (gifted and talented pupils) shall be identified in kindergarten through grade 12 in the five (5) domains: general intellectual, specific academic, leadership, creativity, and visual and performing arts. The identification process shall result in a student profile based on multiple indicators of student need, including but not limited to standardized test data with use of both national and local norms, rating scales or inventories, classwork, portfolios, nominations, and demonstrated performance. Identification tools shall be appropriately matched to each domain in which students are being identified. The identification process and tools shall be responsive to factors such as, but not limited to, pupils' economic conditions, race, gender, culture, native language, developmental differences, and identified disabilities (as described under sub ch. V of ch. 115, Stats.) Students with advanced learning needs in one area but learning challenges in another (i.e. "twice-exceptional learners") shall be included.

INSTRUCTION

The District Administrator shall provide access to appropriate instruction for students identified as advanced learners (gifted or talented) that results in their continued academic growth and development. This instruction shall be provided during the regular school day and without charge for tuition. Classroom-based, school-based, and/or District-wide advanced interventions should include evidence-based practices appropriate for the instruction of advanced learners.

Instruction for advanced learners should include opportunities both within and outside the established grade level curriculum. Such opportunities may include but are not limited to, classroom differentiation, curriculum compacting, above grade level instruction, acceleration in an individual subject, full grade acceleration, cluster grouping and flexible grouping, faster pace and greater depth of instruction, academic enrichment, early admission to kindergarten or first grade, concurrent enrollment at accredited institutions, and early graduation.

Identification

All students in NJSD are screened for Gifted and Talented placement. Formal identification of Gifted and Talented students will occur before the end of second grade. For Magnet Class placement, students are screened using an above grade level achievement survey test (Iowa Assessment) and a cognitive abilities test (CogAT). This screening is open to all families in the district from grades 3-6. Placement in a Magnet class is determined by student performance on these instruments. Specific criteria for each can be found on the [district website](#).

Program Overview and Progression

Grade Level	Programming
K-1	Early entry to Kindergarten Differentiated instruction as needed
2	Differentiated instruction as needed Universal screener for GT Identification
3	Cluster Grouping
4 - 5	Magnet - housed at Neenah Middle School (additional testing required for admittance to Magnet classroom) Cluster Grouping
6 - 7	Magnet (English Language Arts and Social Studies) Cluster Grouping Accelerated Math
8	Advanced Class Offerings Cluster Grouping
9 - 12	Advanced Class Offerings Advanced Placement (AP) Classes Dual Enrollment Early College Credit Program (ECCP) Start College Now (SCN)

Cluster Grouping

To better address Gifted and Talented (GT) students' learning needs, students are grouped within a regular classroom in what is called a "cluster group" at their home school. Cluster grouping is used for identified Gifted and Talented (GT) students in grades 3 – 8. Purposely placing all identified gifted students into the same classroom provides social-emotional support, subject modifications and differentiation as needed, continuous progress monitoring, and continuity. Additionally, cluster grouping places students with teachers experienced in working with gifted learners.

The primary resource for gifted students is the regular classroom teacher with the support of the building Principal and LST Team. The Gifted and Talented Facilitator provides further support through parent and teacher consultation, teacher training, materials, general enrichment experiences, academic workshops, and special skill competitions.

4/5 Magnet Class

The 4/5 Magnet Class is a multi-age, self-contained program for students with exceptionally high abilities. The Magnet Program serves a population of students who require increased depth and intellectual complexity. Students need to test into the Magnet program. The Magnet program provides for differentiated instruction utilizing curricular materials developed specifically for gifted students. The program also utilizes accelerated grade-level materials and gives students opportunities to work at a greater depth, breadth, and/or faster pace than in the regular education classroom.

The goals of the 4/5 Magnet Class:

- Develop problem solving skills and desire to acquire knowledge
- Use computational and analytical thinking to ask questions and solve problems
- Increase rigor and above grade level work
- Critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills
- Social Emotional Learning specific to the needs of gifted individuals

6th and 7th Grade Magnet Classes

Beginning in 6th grade, Magnet students are placed in different academic teams with the rest of the student population at Neenah Middle School. However, they all still come together each day for Magnet English Language Arts and Social Studies to provide above grade-level instruction in these subjects. These core blocks allow for the magnet teacher to easily integrate content material and weave broad-based themes through the lessons. They also continue with their same accelerated math progression during this time.

As with the 4/5 Magnet Class, the 6th and 7th-grade Magnet Classes offer a curriculum that emphasizes advanced content knowledge within the disciplines of study, provide higher-order thinking and processing, and focuses learning experiences around major issues and themes related to real-world applications within and across disciplines.

Additionally, differentiated education plans (DEPs) are used to accommodate students whose needs in acceleration exceed what is already available at their home school. These plans are made through consultations with parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors.

Helpful Hints for Parents of High Ability Children

Here are some suggestions for the parents of gifted children. Based on a piece by Gina Ginsberg, Executive Director, Gifted Child Society, Inc.; 59 Glen Gray Road; Oakland, New Jersey 07436.

- THEY ARE CHILDREN FIRST and gifted second. A five-year-old may be able to solve complex mathematical problems but he has only lived five years. Only behavior appropriate for a five-year-old should be expected of him.
- DON'T COMPARE your gifted child to other children. That places on the gifted one the burden to live up to that image all the time, and it certainly is no fun for whoever comes off second best. All children are unique and special in their own way.
- IT IS A GREAT big wonderful world. Show it to your gifted child in the form of trips, books, interesting people, symphonies, digs, museums, fire stations, wiggly things, theater, daisy chains and the magical chemistry that makes a cake rise.
- LET THEM SPECIALIZE early if they want to. There are fringe benefits to living with dinosaurs from morning to night; they may be keeping notes and records, learning to do research, as well as learning facts about the Tyrannosaurus Rex. Listen to them when they share.
- CHILDREN don't have to be academically engaged every waking minute. There should be time to daydream, to be silly, and to lie on a bed and contemplate the ceiling. High ability children are usually creative children, and it is hard to be creative on a schedule.
- PRAISE your children for their efforts. Praise them for the wonderful things they do, and if the great experiment does not work and the shaky tower of blocks comes tumbling down, praise them for trying. Inquiring minds must take intellectual risks, and risk-taking needs support and praise. PRAISE effort, not intellect.
- DON'T EXPECT your high ability child to be "gifted" all the time. That kind of halo makes for bad headaches.

Online Parent Resources

National Association for Gifted Children
<http://www.nagc.org/>

Davidson Institute Resource Library
<https://www.davidsongifted.org/resource-library/>

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page
<https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

Seng - Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted
<https://sengifted.org/>

Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted
<http://www.watg.org/>

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