The Warrior Way: A Journey of Potential

Winton Woods City Schools
Gifted & High-Ability Handbook | 2026–2027

A Message from the Superintendent

At Winton Woods City Schools, excellence is not a destination—it is a standard we uphold every day.

The Warrior Way reflects our belief that every learner deserves to be seen, challenged, and empowered. As a New Tech Network district, we do not place ceilings on potential. Instead, we design learning experiences that encourage curiosity, innovation, and leadership.

This handbook outlines how Winton Woods City Schools identifies and supports students with exceptional potential through rigorous instruction, Project-Based Learning, and a commitment to equity.

Steve Denny
Superintendent

SECTION I

The Warrior Way: Our Promise

Mission

Winton Woods City Schools actively engages and challenges all learners to reach their maximum potential.

Vision

Winton Woods City Schools maintains a standard of excellence through a shared commitment among the Board of Education, staff, students, families, and community.

Beliefs About Gifted Learners

In Winton Woods City Schools, gifted education is an intentional extension of our instructional core.

We believe that:

- Giftedness appears across cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences
- High ability requires purposeful challenge, not simply more work
- Students grow best through authentic, complex, and connected learning
- Equity means access, opportunity, and support without lowering expectations

What “Gifted” Means in Winton Woods

In accordance with Ohio law, a student is identified as gifted when they perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment compared to peers

of similar age, experience, or environment and meet state-established identification criteria.

Winton Woods City Schools supports students through a **Total Talent framework**, recognizing:

Identified Gifted Students
Students who meet Ohio's identification criteria in one or more areas and receive state-recognized gifted services documented through a Written Education Plan (WEP).

High-Performing Scholars
Students who demonstrate advanced learning behaviors and thrive in rigorous instructional environments but may not yet meet formal identification criteria. These students may access enrichment and advanced opportunities within the general education setting.

Formal identification is required for state-recognized gifted services.

Commitment to Equity

Winton Woods City Schools is committed to equitable access to gifted identification and services through:

- Universal screening practices
- Multiple referral pathways
- Appropriate testing accommodations
- Ongoing review of identification patterns

Equity ensures fairness in access—not reduced standards.

SECTION II

The Warrior Roadmap: A K–12 Continuum of Gifted Services

Gifted learners require different supports at different stages of development. The Warrior Roadmap ensures students experience increasing challenge, independence, and opportunity as they progress through Winton Woods City Schools.

Guiding Principles

- Early potential must be nurtured before it can be measured
- Challenge increases in depth, not just quantity
- Services align to students' areas of identification
- Equity requires proactive access
- Student agency increases over time

Grade 1: Talent Pool

The Talent Pool provides early enrichment for students demonstrating advanced learning behaviors. Instruction emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, creative thinking, and curiosity. Participation is flexible and based on classroom data and observation.

Grades 2–6: Gifted Enrichment & Cluster Grouping

Students identified as gifted receive services through cluster grouping and instruction with a licensed Gifted Intervention Specialist (GIS). Instruction emphasizes Project-Based Learning, higher-order thinking, interdisciplinary connections, and application of learning.

Grades 7–8: Advanced Coursework & Cluster Grouping

Gifted services focus on advanced instruction, analytical thinking, and increasing

academic independence. Students may participate in accelerated mathematics pathways based on readiness and multiple data points.

Grades 9–12: Choice & Advanced Pathways

High school gifted services emphasize choice and specialization. Students may access Honors coursework, Advanced Placement (AP), College Credit Plus (CCP), and advanced world language courses.

High school course offerings are determined annually based on enrollment and staffing and are considered tentative.

SECTION III

Identification & Assessment

Winton Woods City Schools identifies students who are gifted in accordance with **Ohio Revised Code 3324.03** and **Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15**.

Students are formally identified as gifted based on meeting **state-established criteria** using **ODE-approved assessment instruments**. Identification decisions are objective and data-driven.

Areas of Identification

Students may be identified in one or more of the following areas:

- Superior Cognitive Ability
- Specific Academic Ability (Reading, Mathematics)
- Creative Thinking Ability
- Visual or Performing Arts Ability

Screening & Referral

Screening and referrals determine which students should be assessed for possible gifted identification. Screening sources include:

- Whole-grade screening
- NWEA MAP Reading and Mathematics data
- Teacher observation
- Parent or guardian request
- Student self-referral or peer referral

Screening does not result in gifted identification.

Assessment Instruments Used

Winton Woods City Schools uses state-approved instruments, which may include:

- NNAT3, CogAT (Cognitive Ability)
- NWEA MAP Reading and Mathematics (Academic Ability)
- Approved creativity measures
- Visual or performing arts portfolios, performances, and rubrics

Timelines

- Parents are notified of identification results within **90 days** of referral
- Transfer student evaluations are completed within **90 days** of request
- Students may be assessed at least **twice per year** upon request

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SECTION IV

Written Education Plans (WEPs) & Progress Monitoring

All students receiving gifted services have a **Written Education Plan (WEP)** documenting services and progress monitoring.

What a WEP Includes

- Area(s) of identification
- Description of gifted services
- Service delivery model
- Staff responsible for service delivery
- Method of progress monitoring

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is embedded within the district's existing instructional systems and includes:

- Interim assessment data
- Quarterly report card grades
- Classroom performance and instructional evidence

Communication with Families

Families receive progress information through:

- Quarterly report cards
- Interim assessment reports
- Ongoing communication from school staff as needed

SECTION V

Appeals & Due Process

Winton Woods City Schools values partnership with families and provides a fair process for resolving concerns.

When an Appeal May Be Requested

Parents may appeal decisions related to:

- Gifted identification
- Placement or service delivery
- Implementation of the WEP

Appeals must be based on process, data, or implementation.

Appeal Process

1. **Informal Resolution** – Families are encouraged to first contact school staff
2. **Formal Appeal** – A written appeal may be submitted to the Superintendent or designee
3. **Written Decision** – A response is issued within **30 calendar days**

The decision of the Superintendent or designee is final.

Withdrawal from Services

Parents may request withdrawal from gifted services at any time. Withdrawal does not remove gifted identification status.

Glossary of Gifted Education Terms

Acceleration – Early access to advanced curriculum or coursework.

Appeal – A formal written request to review a gifted education decision.

Cluster Grouping – Placing gifted students together to support differentiated instruction.

Gifted Identification – Formal determination based on Ohio-established criteria.

Gifted Intervention Specialist (GIS) – A licensed educator providing gifted instruction and coordination.

High-Performing Scholar – A student demonstrating advanced learning behaviors without formal identification.

Interim Assessments – Assessments used during the school year to monitor progress.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) – Instruction focused on sustained, real-world projects.

Written Education Plan (WEP) – A service plan documenting gifted services and progress monitoring.