# Talented and Gifted (TAG) Guidebook

# Interdistrict School for Arts & Communication

***New London, CT***

***August 2026***

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# Foreword

This document provides readers with an introduction to the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program established at the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC). It identifies and describes the prerequisites as well as the components that ISAAC will use across its interdisciplinary curriculum for TAG programming. This document was compiled to increase the understanding of TAG.

Current research indicates that students with exceptional academic abilities gain substantial benefit from contact with their peers. For some academically gifted students, the TAG Program may be the first time they encounter like-minded classmates, who share their love of learning and motivation for high academic work. In TAG classrooms, students are also expected work metacognitively, to think about their own thinking and to critically evaluate their work as they learn from the general education curriculum. Through classroom interactions with their peers and teacher, ISAAC TAG students learn to appreciate their own abilities and the talents of others, as well as to develop the skills to be critical thinkers.

## Mission Statement

Aligned with ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, the TAG Program is designed to provide highly motivated, academically gifted students with an opportunity to realize and develop their exceptional intellectual and creative abilities. The TAG Program provides differentiated instruction that allows for acceleration in some areas while teaching grade level curricula in others. The program emphasizes high-order thinking, deep knowledge, substantive conversations, and making connections to the world beyond the classroom. Learning through ISAAC's TAG Program prepares gifted and talented students to be empathetic and courageous leaders through authentic tasks and experiences that promote creativity, critical thinking, and excellence.

**Connecticut Definition of Gifted and Talented**

(*taken from CSDE Gifted and Talented Education: Guidance Regarding Identification and Service, March 2019)*

Section 10-76a-2 offers the following three important definitions that serve as the foundation for the identification of students as gifted and/or talented:

(1) "*Extraordinary learning ability" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of either performance on relevant standardized measuring instruments, or demonstrated or potential achievement or intellectual creativity, or both.*

(2) "*Gifted and talented" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (A) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (B) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the general education program in order to realize the child's intellectual, creative, or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts.*

(3) *"Outstanding talent in the creative arts" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts, or the performing arts.*

These definitions can be synthesized into the following two broad descriptions of students who may be identified as gifted and/or talented:

(i) those with *extraordinary learning ability (*commonly referred to as *gifted);* and/or
(ii) those with *outstanding talent in the creative arts (*commonly referred to as *talented).*

Extraordinary learning ability pertains to academic achievement and intellectual creativity. Outstanding talent in the creative arts pertains to achievement in music, the visual, or performing arts. Students in these classifications are collectively referred to as gifted and talented.

The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Subsection (1) of section 10-76d-9c of the RCSA requires "Each board of education to evaluate and identify gifted and talented children using the planning and placement team (PPT)." Evaluation and identification of gifted and talented students must be conducted by a PPT; however, the composition of the PPT for gifted and talented identification is different from the composition of the PPT for special education. Specifically, subsection (14) of section 10-76a-1 states that "For purposes of the evaluation, identification or determination of the specific educational needs of a child who may be gifted or talented, the PPT means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs, and who participate equally in the decision-making process." Note that the student's parent or guardian is not a required member of the PPT.

## Talented and Gifted (TAG) Committee

The ISAAC TAG Committee is a multi-disciplinary group of school professionals who meets in the fall and throughout the school year to review the performance of the gifted students within the TAG Program. The purpose of the committee is to:

- Analyze student data to determine eligibility;
- Identify student strengths, interests, and talents;
- Review referrals, appeals, or exit provisions as outlined by this guide.

### Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication TAG Committee

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Nicholas J. Spera | *Executive Director* |
| Mercedes Alger | *Principal* |
| Maria DePino | *Associate Principal* |
| Amy Geary | *Director of Special Education* |
| Lisa Lazarou | *MTSS Coordinator* |

### Assessment and Identification

In accordance with the Connecticut State Department of Education for the Gifted and Talented Education Guidance, ISAAC will use the guidelines for identifying students for the TAG Program. As established in Subsection (1) of section 10-76d-9c, "*Each board of education to evaluate and identify gifted and talented children using a planning and placement team (PPT).*" Under subsection (14) of section 10-76a-1 states that "*the PPT means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs, and who participate equally in the decision-making progress*."

Additionally, ISAAC Board of Education's Policy 6022 states that *"The Board requires the use of multiple methods of identification of gifted and talented students. This includes receiving the highest level on both sections (mathematics & ELA) of the Smarter Balance Assessment (SBAC High 4: Level 8) and a normed total cut score of 120 via the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) or a normed cut score of 120 in either the Verbal or Non-Verbal score on the OLSAT with a cut-score of 110 in the other criteria. AIMSWEB data may be used when SBAC data is absent."*

### Tests Used to Identify Talented and Gifted Ability

| **Assessment Administered** | **Percentile Rank or Level of Eligibility** |
|---|---|
| OLSTAT-8 ***AND*** | Standard score 120 |
| SBAC ELA and Mathematics ***OR*** | SBAC High 4: Level 8 |
| AimsWeb ELA and Mathematics | 90$^{th}$ Percentile Rank or higher |

Currently, ISAAC's evaluation process is accomplished by administering standardized group assessments. ISAAC will administer the OLSAT-8 in the fall to all sixth-grade students. After the results are reviewed by the planning and placement team, parents will be notified of their student's eligibility for Talented and Gifted.

## Referral Process

Faculty and parents may refer an individual student for screening for the TAG Program. Once parental consent is obtained for individual testing and a TAG learning need is identified, parents will be notified and transition into the TAG Program will begin immediately.

## Instructional Programming

ISAAC's TAG students are served in a small group setting with a highly trained, certified educator who provides advanced, in-depth instruction, well planned activities, develops independent study, and monitors student progress. This program meets for 45-minutes, twice a week during Dragon Time. TAG serves gifted students in the following areas:

- English/language arts
- Social Studies
- Mathematics
- Science

## Exit Criteria

Student performance in the program shall be monitored. ISAAC's TAG committee will review evidence if a recommendation is made for program removal. If a student or parents requests removal from the program, a representative from the TAG committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

## Transfer Students

When an identified TAG student transfers from another school district, the student's records shall be evaluated by the TAG committee to determine if placement into ISAAC's TAG Program is appropriate. The committee shall make its determination within thirty (30) days of the student's first day of attendance at ISAAC and shall base its decision on the transferred records, observation reports of ISAAC teachers who instruct the student, as well as a student and parent conference. If needed, the committee may request additional data to make its determination.

## Appeals

Parents may appeal any final decision of the TAG committee regarding participation in or removal from gifted and talented services. Appeals can be made to the TAG teacher or an administrator.

**Educating the Talented and Gifted Breaks Down into Three Categories**




### Identify Advanced Potential

- Find all students who perform at, or show the potential to perform at outstanding levels
- Use a multifaceted identification system, including measures of achievement, measures of aptitude, and qualitative measures of both
- Know the cognitive and affective characteristics of gifted learners

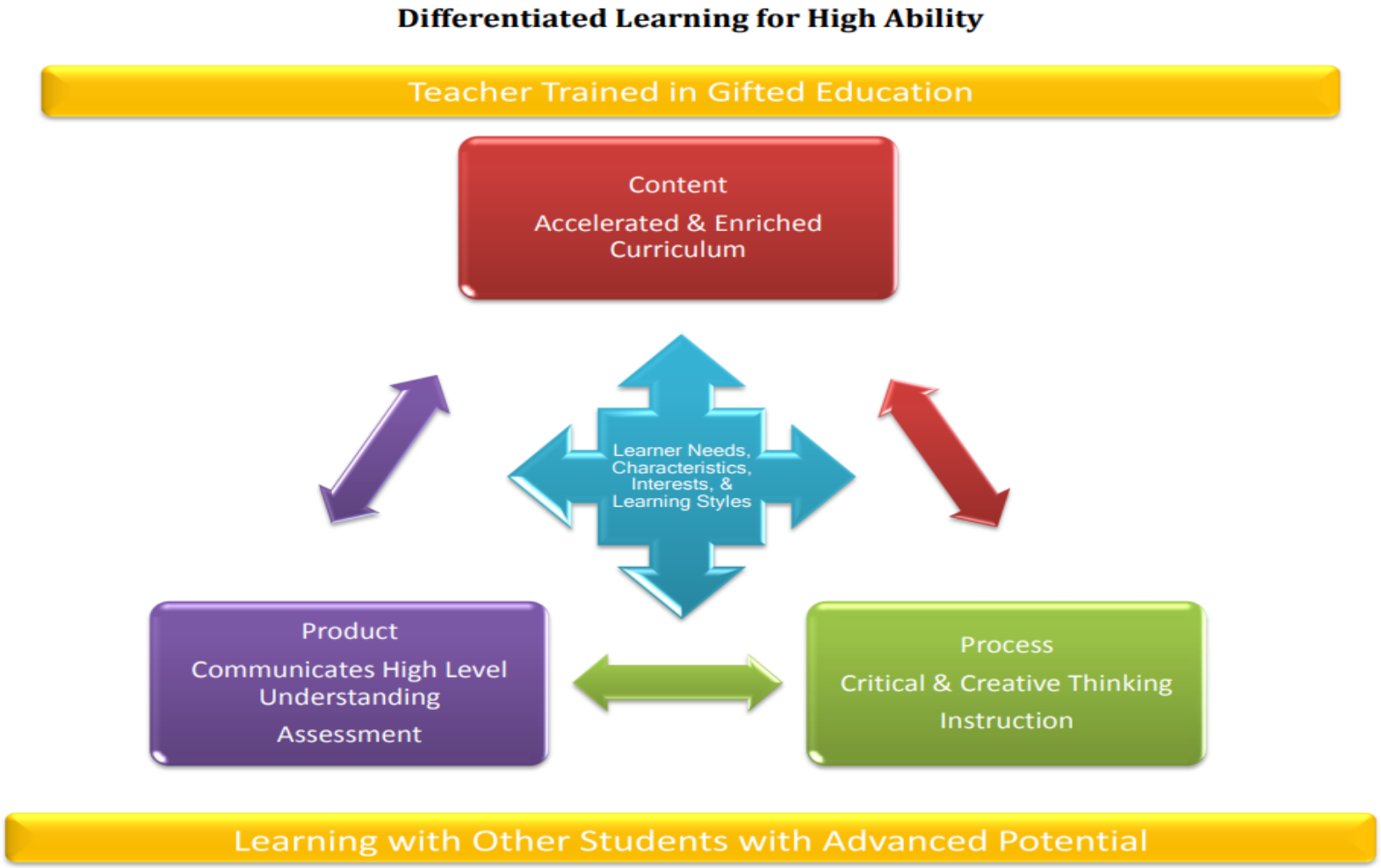
### Provide an Appropriate Environmental

- Provide curriculum that is in-depth and delivered twice a week and at a pace that permits high levels of critical thinking, innovation, and creativity among gifted students
- Provide instruction that is differentiated for gifted learners with opportunities for creative extensions and connections across the disciplines
- Address the social and emotional needs of gifted students

### Produce Advanced Achievement

- Students demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively, make connections and problem solve, communicate effectively in oral, written, and visual formats
- Use measures without ceilings to document achievement gains
- Evaluate effectiveness of programs and services for students with advanced potential

(adapted from www.nagc.org, June 2022)




(taken from www.nagc.org, June 2022)

**Student Information Form**

## ISAAC Talented and Gifted (TAG)

**Date:**

| **Student Name:** | **Date of Birth:** | **Grade**: | **Student Success Plan #** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Parent/Guardian Name(s):** | **Parent/Guardian Contact Information:** | **Date of Parent/Guardian Notification:** | **Date of Initial Referral:** |
| **TAG Teacher/Case Manager:** | | **Date of Initial eligibility:** | **Date of Exit:** |

**Assessment Data**

| ***Name of Assessment and Scores for Eligibility*** | ***Date Administered*** | ***Standard Score*** | ***Percentile Rank*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| SBAC: Level 4 | | | |
| AIMSweb: 90th PR | | | |
| OLSAT8: SS 120 | | | |

Additional Information:

**Cc: Student file**

**Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication**

**Parent/Guardian Notification of Talented and Gifted Program**

We are pleased to share some exciting news regarding your students' academic achievement. Based on recent assessments and evaluations, your student's name is being forwarded to the ISAAC Talented and Gifted (TAG) Committee.

The eligibility criteria for the TAG program require students to demonstrate advanced academic performance through multiple measures. A student may qualify by achieving on the Otis-Lenon School Ability Index (SAI) score of 120 or higher, and achieve, from SBAC, Level 4, Exceeding Standards, or achieve a score of 90th percentile on the schoolwide AimsWeb Mathematics and Reading Assessment. Together, these criteria ensure that students identified for the TAG program demonstrate both high academic achievement and strong cognitive ability.

You will be receiving information electronically from the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS) within a day or two. This information requires your signature to review the referral and conduct these schoolwide evaluations for the purpose of eligibility. A Parent Portal Guide to CT-SEDS is attached to assist you in signing the document electronically. If you prefer, we can also prepare the document for you to sign in our office.

Parent Portal Quick Start Guide for Parents (English)

Should you have any questions or concerns about this eligibility or the process, please contact me.

Sincerely,