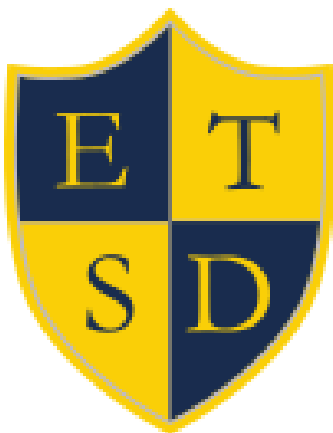


EASTAMPTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gifted & Talented Services Handbook



2026-2027

As Golden Knights, we empower every student to reach their academic and personal goals through expert teaching, engaging programs, and everyday acts of noble kindness — all within a safe, inclusive, and challenging learning environment.

Contents

Introduction	3
Curriculum and Instruction Vision Statement	3
Gifted and Talented Philosophy and Rationale	4
Further Defining Gifted Students	4
Gifted & Talented Goals	6
Continuum of Supplemental Gifted & Talented Services	6
Tier 1: Enrichment for All	7
Tier 2: Pull-Aside: Academic Enrichment/Extensions	7
Tier 3: Pull-Out Services	8
Tiered Services Explained	8
Identification for Gifted & Talented Services	9
Identification Process	9
Twice Exceptional Students	10
Multilingual Learners	10
Identification Using Multiple Measures	11
Assessments for Universal Screening. Grades K-1	11
Assessments for Universal Screening. Grades 2-8	12
Parent and Teacher Referrals	12
Identification of Newly Registered Students to Eastampton Township Public Schools	13
Notification of Service Eligibility to Parents	13
Annual Review/Re-Evaluation	13
Exit Criteria	13
Probationary Periods	14
Questions, Comments, Concerns, or Complaints	14

Introduction

Welcome to a journey of exploration, discovery, and growth within the realm of gifted and talented education. Within these pages, you will find a roadmap to unlocking the full potential of gifted and talented learners through our comprehensive Gifted & Talented Services Handbook.

Eastampton Township Public Schools Services for Gifted and Talented is designed to identify students who possess the potential for exceptional gifts and talents and provide for them the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential. We recognize that such potential may be in the area of intellect, specific academics, creativity, art, music, drama, or leadership. We will work with parents, students, and the educational community to identify gifted and talented students from all backgrounds. Eastampton Schools will offer these students the differentiated instruction and opportunities they need in order to become confident and productive adults.

Gifted & Talented Services Development Team

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Curriculum and Instruction Vision Statement

At Eastampton Township Public Schools, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction is proud to lead with the spirit of the Golden Knight — dedicated to guiding, supporting, and overseeing a K–8 curriculum that is rigorous, meaningful, differentiated, culturally responsive, and academically challenging. Our mission is to ensure high-quality instruction that promotes excellence, sets high expectations, and prepares all students for the demands of high school, college, and beyond — developing dynamic achievement and lifelong learners who embody the strength, character, and resilience of a Golden Knight.

Gifted and Talented Philosophy and Rationale

Eastampton Township Public Schools believes that all children are capable of learning and achieving their full potential. We recognize that students enter school with a range of abilities, and some demonstrate unique talents or advanced learning capabilities that exceed typical grade-level expectations. These students may be identified as “gifted and talented,” showing exceptional aptitude, creativity, or performance beyond that of their peers.

To meet the needs of gifted learners, the district is committed to providing meaningful instructional adaptations across content, process, product, and learning environment. These supports aim to challenge and inspire students while helping them reach their highest potential.

In alignment with New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3; 6A:8-3.1), Eastampton Township Public Schools has developed a comprehensive, multi-measure process for identifying students who demonstrate giftedness. We also strive to provide enrichment opportunities for students who may not be formally identified as gifted but have demonstrated high academic achievement in the classroom.

[Policy 2464](#)

The district takes into account the [PreK-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards of the Association for Gifted Children](#), the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards - Gifted and Talented](#), as well as other professional literature on giftedness, when designing and revising its gifted and talented program.

Further Defining Gifted Students

The State of New Jersey defines students who are gifted and talented as those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Our program, borrowing heavily from the works of the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) and the New Jersey Association of Gifted Children (NJAGC), and aligning to the criteria set forth by the NJDOE, further defines students to be identified as having an unusually high (top 5-7%) intersection of three critical areas: Ability, Creativity, and Task Commitment.

Ability - processing information, integrating experiences, abstract thinking, capacity to acquire knowledge, activity performance

Creativity - fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought, an openness to experience, sensitivity to stimulations, and a willingness to take risks

Task Commitment - perseverance, endurance, hard work, self-confidence, perceptiveness, a special fascination with a special subject



Current research indicates that academically talented students—often referred to as “gifted learners” or “gifted and talented”—are frequently under-challenged in typical classroom settings. As a result, some students may experience school as repetitive or unengaging when they have already mastered many of the concepts being introduced.

Gifted and exceptionally able learners often demonstrate a range of advanced characteristics, including:

- A high degree of intellectual, creative, and/or artistic ability
- Exceptional leadership skills
- Outstanding performance in specific academic or talent areas
- Achievement well above grade-level expectations
- A need for instructional accommodations or enrichment to match their level of ability
- Rapid or intuitive grasp of complex concepts
- Deep curiosity about systems, ideas, and how things work
- The ability to develop original theories, hypotheses, and investigative approaches
- Creation of high-quality, insightful, and creative work products

Giftedness is a multifaceted, multicultural, and multidimensional concept that encompasses aptitude, traits, and behaviors. Gifted learners are present in all cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic groups. To identify and nurture their potential, educators and administrators must broaden their understanding of how culturally and environmentally influenced behaviors may indicate creativity and high ability.

Gifted & Talented Goals

To fulfill the mission of Eastampton Township Public Schools, the district has established the following goals for its Gifted & Talented Services:

- Provide intellectually challenging and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that align with students' unique needs and advanced achievement levels.
- Foster an environment where high-ability learners can explore and develop their talents, interests, and academic potential to the fullest.
- Offer a continuum of differentiated learning opportunities, including diverse curricular options, instructional strategies, and resources tailored to advanced learners.
- Allow for flexible pacing to support acceleration in areas where students demonstrate readiness and aptitude.
- Differentiate instruction through enriched content, processes, and products using interdisciplinary projects and cross-curricular activities.
Engage students in inquiry-based learning, collaborative problem-solving, independent research, hands-on experiments, and reflective discussions.
- Strengthen students' communication skills through writing, research, presentations, and debate to support their ability to effectively engage with the world.
- Promote the development of higher-order thinking and interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, creativity, leadership, collaboration, and empathy.

Continuum of Supplemental Gifted & Talented Services

Our continuum of supplemental Gifted & Talented (G&T) services is thoughtfully designed to meet the diverse profiles and needs of our students. Across all content areas, our instructional approach prioritizes differentiated instruction within the general education classroom to accommodate variations in student readiness, learning styles, and abilities typically found at each grade level.

When multiple data points indicate that a student's learning needs extend beyond what is typically expected for their developmental stage, a range of supplemental services may be provided to support their continued growth toward their individual potential.

This flexible continuum of G&T services includes enrichment and extension opportunities for students who demonstrate exceptionally high ability—well beyond end-of-grade-level expectations—in one or more subject areas. Eligibility decisions for supplemental services are always guided by our commitment to nurturing the whole child, including academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development.

As with all interventions, these supports are designed to be flexible and responsive. Services are provided when a student's needs cannot be fully met through Tier 1 classroom differentiation alone and may be adjusted as needed based on ongoing observation and performance data.

In-Class Differentiation:

- Curriculum Compacting: Teachers condense the regular curriculum, so students can move through material they already know and focus on new and challenging content.
- Flexible Grouping: Students are grouped by ability for specific subjects or projects, allowing for more targeted instruction.
- Tiered Assignments: Teachers design assignments with varying levels of difficulty to match students' readiness levels.

Pull Out Program:

- Gifted students leave the regular classroom for a portion of the day or week to engage in specialized instruction that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and advanced problem-solving.

Cluster Grouping:

- Small groups of gifted students are placed together in a regular classroom, ensuring that they can work with peers of similar ability while also interacting with the larger student population.

Subject Acceleration:

- Students move ahead in a particular subject where they show exceptional aptitude, even if their overall grade level remains the same.

Honors Classes:

- High-achieving students in middle school take Honors math classes, which offer more challenging content.

Tier 1: Enrichment for All

“Enrichment for All” opportunities provoke curiosity, creativity, exploration, problem-solving, investigation, and discovery. Approximately 90%-100% of our student body will receive Tier I services.

Grades K-4

- Enrichment for All: Enriched lessons by Gifted & Talented Teacher in Library/ Media class

Grades 5-8

- Enriched electives (Media Makers, Studio Art, Sculpture and 3D Art, Music Maker, Battle of the Books)
- Academic Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Offerings/Academic Clubs

Tier 2: Pull-Aside Academic Enrichment and Extensions

In addition to Tier 1 supports, the following services may be recommended for select students demonstrating advanced academic abilities:

- Differentiated instruction within the general classroom to address individual learner differences by integrating gifted education strategies.
- Targeted enrichment and extensions designed for high-ability students who consistently perform above grade level in specific academic areas. Eligibility is determined annually based on multiple data sources. These lessons provide differentiated extensions of the regular classroom content.

Instructional planning is guided by classroom and other assessments to tailor differentiation effectively. Furthermore, all Board of Education–approved curricula include modifications for gifted and talented learners in content, process, product, and learning environment, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)(5).

Approximately 20% of students typically receive Tier 2 services annually.

By Grade Bands:

- **Grades K–4:**
 - Classroom differentiation for advanced learners
 - Instrumental Music- Grade 4

- **Grades 5–8:**
 - Classroom differentiation for advanced learners
 - Advanced Math (Grades 5 and 6)
 - Pre-Algebra Math (Grade 7)
 - Algebra Math (Grade 8)
 - Instrumental Music- Grades 5-8
 - Science Club

Tier 3: Pull-Out Services

Specialized academic and social support for identified learners whose needs are unlikely to be met via Tier I or II services alone. Emphasis is on developing executive functioning skills of gifted students and meeting affective needs through grouping with a similar-ability cohort of students. Approximately 5-7% of the student body will qualify to receive Tier 3 services each year

Grades K-4

- Pull-out classes for gifted & talented services

Grades 5-8

- Pull-out classes for gifted & talented services
- Advanced Performing Arts
- Battle of the Books

Tiered Services Explained:

Advanced Performing Arts—Students in grades 6-8 who demonstrate exceptionality in performing arts (primarily instrumentally and/or vocally) have an opportunity to join the advanced band and select chorus.

Battle of the Books—America's Battle of the Books is a reading incentive program for students in 3rd thru 8th grades. Students read books and come together, usually in groups, to demonstrate their abilities and to test their knowledge of the books they have read.

Classroom Differentiation for advanced learners—Provide enrichment, extensions, and/ or advanced learning opportunities that are commensurate with students' instructional levels.

Enrichment for All—Students in kindergarten through third grade are provided with accelerated and enriched activities within their Library/ Media class with the gifted and talented specialist, creating a learning environment in which advanced learners can fully develop their abilities and interests.

Advanced Mathematics—enriched mathematics instruction in grades 5-7 that covers concepts more in depth and at a faster pace than the traditional mathematics instruction to enrich, extend, and accelerate the performance expectations of the NJSLs by emphasizing depth and complexity and the teaching of supplemental skills.

Honors Algebra—offered to advanced learners in grade 8 at a more rigorous pace and in depth study than the traditional algebra model to enrich, extend, and accelerate the performance expectations of the NJSLs by emphasizing depth and complexity and the teaching of supplemental skills.

Identification for Gifted & Talented Services

To identify students in need of Gifted & Talented services, each school will assemble and train a school-based identification committee annually for the purpose of identifying students demonstrating gifted behaviors, monitoring previously-identified students, and recommending appropriate supplemental services for identified needs.

District/School identification committees will typically include representation of the following job roles at each school: School Administrator, Counselor, G&T Specialist(s), Teacher(s) including Multilingual Teacher, and a Child Study Team member. The G&T Specialist(s) will support the committee by providing identification training to identification committees and coordinating the identification process. Teachers and CST members do not serve in decision-making roles.

Identification Process

To ensure equity and fairness, School-based Identification Committees will utilize an anonymized identification process inclusive of a variety of developmentally and culturally appropriate, valid, and reliable data points. The information provided during the identification process is completely confidential. Identifying student information is anonymized and/or redacted.

Quantitative assessments considered by School Identification Committees are limited to those which can be administered universally to all students in the district at a specific grade level so that the context necessary to establish local school norms can be set. Appropriate assessment alternatives and/ or accommodations for English Language Proficiency and the special needs of students with Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans are utilized to plan for assessments. Qualitative data is also incorporated into the process which provides the opportunity for the affective aspects of a learner and other artifacts demonstrative of gifted behaviors to be considered.

This screening process begins at the beginning of each student's Kindergarten year, and each student's data is reviewed annually using the most current assessment data in order to identify potential needs.

Twice Exceptional Students

ECS Identification Committees are committed to identifying students regardless of needs. Per the NAGC, “Twice-exceptional,” also referred to as “2e,” is used to describe gifted children who have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement and give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria. These disabilities may include specific learning disabilities (SpLD), speech and language disorders, emotional/ behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, autism spectrum, or other impairments such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).”

IEPs or 504s that include provisions for accommodations/ modifications are provided to students as part of all district-proctored assessments. Additionally, our identification process incorporates available and appropriate alternative/ supplemental assessments proctored by the ECS Department of Special Services to find twice-exceptional students. School-based committees work with the student’s case manager and G&T personnel to determine the individualized approach to deliver appropriate G&T services to identified students.

Multilingual Learners

School Identification Committees are committed to identifying students whose abilities may be masked due to English language proficiency. The district utilizes NJDOE Gifted & Talented Guidance for Multilingual Learners to ensure identification processes are culturally appropriate.

Our identification process incorporates available and appropriate alternative/ supplemental assessments such as the WIDA Model and/ or ACCESS 2.0 proctored by the ECS English as a Second Language teachers to find emerging bilinguals who demonstrate gifted behaviors.

Students whose language proficiency is classified as within the Entering - Emergent stages [WIDA/ ACCESS 2.0 Composite Score range: 1.0-2.9] are provided with modifications that exempt the student from taking the Verbal portion of the CogAT test during the district’s administration period. Students with Developing-Reaching levels of language proficiency may also be provided with appropriate accommodations as determined by their ESL teacher. The purpose of testing accommodations for MLs is to reduce the impact of limited experience with English on the measurement of reasoning abilities. In line with NJSLA testing, Multilingual Learners who have arrived in the country within the last school year are exempt from ELA state standardized testing.

Identification Using Multiple Measures

Universal screening of all students will be conducted in an effort to create and maintain comprehensive learner profiles of each student inclusive of multiple quantitative and qualitative data points. All quantitative data points included are obtained utilizing assessment information collected by the district via district personnel as proctors.

Assessments for Universal Screening. Grades K-1

Multiple Measures for Identification	
Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<u>Achievement</u> iReady Diagnostic Testing (Math and ELA) Literacy Task Benchmarks Standards-based Benchmarks/Grades (Optional) <u>Predictive/Aptitude</u> Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) Our kindergarten students will participate in the NNAT as part of the Gifted & Talented universal screening process. It is a brief, nonverbal assessment that measures problem-solving and reasoning skills using pictures, shapes, and patterns rather than reading or language-based questions. The assessment is designed to give all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate their thinking skills and potential. NNAT results are only one part of the screening process and may be considered along with classroom performance, teacher observations, and other academic information. The test is age-appropriate for young learners and is administered in a supportive school setting. <u>Alternative Data</u> as appropriate (e.g., Special Services or English Language Proficiency data)	Creativity Assessment (Optional) Teacher Referral (Optional) Parent Referral (Optional) <u>Supplemental Artifacts</u> (Optional) Student work samples (work completed independently) Other submitted student evidence/reports Outside testing results that have been conducted at the parents' expense such as an ability, achievement, or aptitude testing from a licensed school psychologist or psychologist in a private practice, should include the full typed narrative report and should have been administered in the last 24 months. Testing should include the following information about the examiner: printed name, license/ certification #, contact information, and signature of the psychologist who served as the examiner, and any organizational affiliation.

Assessments for Universal Screening. Grades 2-8

Multiple Measures for Identification	
Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<u>Achievement</u> iReady Diagnostic Testing (Math and ELA) Literacy Task Benchmarks Standards-based Benchmarks/Grades (Optional) NJSLA-A (Gr. 3-8) <u>Predictive/Aptitude</u> Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Students in grades 2 and 5 will participate in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) as part of the Gifted & Talented universal screening process. The CogAT is an aptitude assessment that measures reasoning and problem-solving skills in verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal areas. The assessment helps identify students who may demonstrate potential for advanced or gifted learning opportunities. CogAT results are only one part of the screening process and may be considered alongside classroom performance, teacher observations, and other academic information. The assessment is administered during the school day in a supportive testing environment. <u>Alternative Data</u> as appropriate (e.g., Special Services or English Language Proficiency data)	Creativity Assessment (Optional) Teacher Referral (Optional) Parent Referral (Optional) <u>Supplemental Artifacts</u> (Optional) Student work samples (work completed independently) Other submitted student evidence/ reports Outside testing results that have been conducted at the parents' expense such as an ability, achievement, or aptitude testing from a licensed school psychologist or psychologist in a private practice, should include the full typed narrative report and should have been administered in the last 24 months. Testing should include the following information about the examiner: printed name, license/ certification #, contact information, and signature of the psychologist who served as the examiner, and any organizational affiliation.

Parent and Teacher Referrals

Each year, parents and teachers are offered the opportunity to share anecdotal information about students through an application posted by the district. Completion of a referral is optional and intended to provide supplemental information to the balance of district quantitative and qualitative data. All students entering grades K-8 are universally screened for potential needs regardless as to whether a referral is completed.

The referral form consists of a rating scale and open-ended questions regarding behavioral characteristics of creative children. It also provides a space to upload three supplemental artifacts such as student work samples (completed independently by the student without assistance including documents, photos, and videos that demonstrate gifted behaviors) and/ or other submitted student evidence/ data/ reports. Note: Outside testing results that have been conducted at the parents' expense such as an ability, achievement, or aptitude testing from a licensed school psychologist or psychologist in a private practice, should include the full typed narrative report and should have been administered in the last 24 months. Testing should include the following information about the examiner: printed name, license/ certification #, contact information, and signature of the psychologist who served as the examiner, and any organizational affiliation.

Identification of Newly Registered Students to Eastampton Township Public Schools

To ensure adequate time for the district to fully assess newly registered students (including Kindergarten), the district will require one full school year in order to collect the multiple measures and evidence necessary to compare students with the local Eastampton Schools. Meanwhile, Tier I services will be provided to all students.

Parents who wish to share qualitative information that demonstrates evidence of potential gifted behaviors, i.e., anecdotes or student work samples, should feel free to share this with the classroom teacher(s) as part of the parent-teacher partnership.

Additionally, school-based teams may also utilize processes such as consultations with the G&T Specialist or Intervention & Referral Services to review available data/evidence and determine if other measures should be taken.

Notification of Service Eligibility to Parents

Parents of identified students will receive notification of eligibility for services via letter of eligibility by November 1st of each school year.

Annual Review/Re-Evaluation

At the start of each school year, all students (including those previously identified) will be reviewed using the most current assessment data. This data will support continued efforts to align student needs with appropriate G&T services in a manner that is fluid and responsive. At times, reviews may result in recommendations to change (adding or removing) services.

It should be noted that implicit within the K-12 New Jersey Student Learning Standards is an increase in rigor and challenge across the content areas as students advance through the grade levels. Simply put, the expectations and demands for student academic performance increase with each successive school year. This can account for differences in year-to-year academic performance as students rise from elementary to middle to high school.

Exit Criteria

In addition to current year assessment and data, the following will also be considered when the committee meets to determine individual needs and the continued need for services:

- Attendance and participation in G&T services: If the child is present at school, but missing scheduled services, the child may no longer qualify for services;
- Quality/ Quantity of work within the program: Eligible students are expected to keep up with the pace of peers enrolled in services and produce superior work;
- Achievement/ Standardized test data: A significant decline in student performance may indicate services are no longer needed;
- Marking Period grades: Students may no longer qualify for services if summative evaluations of classroom performance/ effort/ commitment decline;
- Behavior/ Discipline: Students who receive a pattern of detentions and/ or suspensions may no longer qualify for services;
- Parent Request: Parents opt their children out of services.

Probationary Periods

Probationary periods may become necessary for students showing signs that G&T services are not benefitting the child during the school year, or if the G&T Committee has recognized inconsistent data as compared to the previous year during the annual screening process. Removal of specialized services can occur at any point during the school year, with or without a probationary period, if deemed necessary after careful review of the student's achievement, aptitude, attendance, or any of the other criteria listed above.

Questions, Comments, Concerns or Complaints

Parents with questions, comments, concerns, or complaints about G&T programming/ eligibility or complaints should contact their building Curriculum Supervisor.

An individual who believes that a school district has not complied with the provisions of this act (18A:35 – Article 5 – Gifted and Talented Education Programs) may file a complaint with the Board of Education by following the [Gifted and Talented Complaint Process](#) (also found on the website).