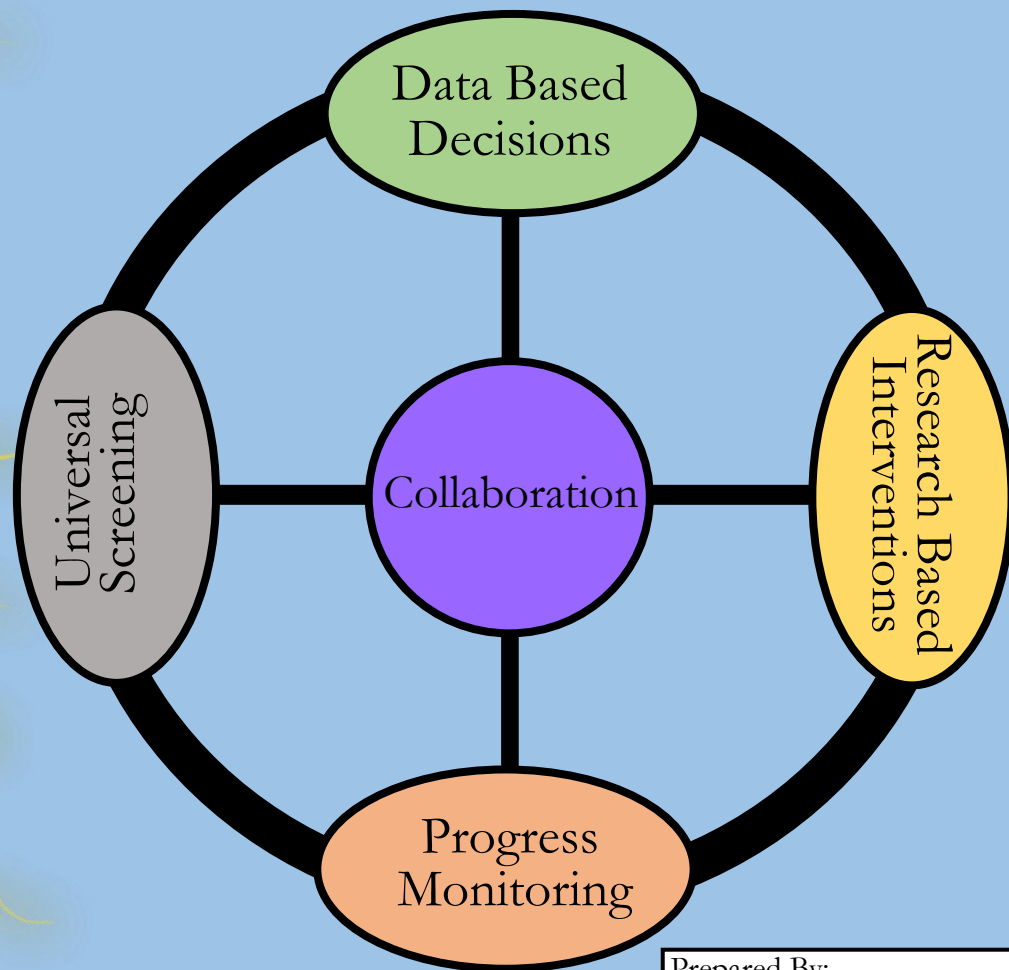




20²⁴-₂₅

Gifted & Talented

Family Handbook



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SOUTH HARRISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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South Harrison Township Elementary School District

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM DEFINED

State regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1) define gifted and talented students as follows:

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.

The South Harrison School District recognizes gifted and talented as those students, whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment, are so outstanding that they require a variety of special provisions to meet their educational needs. We also recognize students identified as gifted and talented come from all races, socioeconomic groups, and geographic locales/environments with no regard to learning disability.

Approximately five percent of the student population shall be eligible through the use of multiple standardized test scores and identified as the gifted population of the South Harrison School District. We recognize these students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school curriculum.

Our mission is to provide optimal development of the gifted student's intellectual, emotional, and social abilities, and to honor the diversity among all students through a differentiated and challenging curriculum.



Strengthening Gifted and Talented Programs

In January, 2020, the State of New Jersey Passed a new law (CHAPTER 338) governing Gifted and Talented Education.

An Act concerning gifted and talented students and supplementing chapter 35 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

Be It Enacted *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey*:

C.18A:35-34 Short title.

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act.”

C.18A:35-35 Definitions relative to gifted and talented students.

2. As used in this act:

"Gifted and talented student" means a student who possesses or demonstrates a high level of ability in one or more content areas when compared to his chronological peers in the school district and who requires modifications of his educational program if he is to achieve in accordance with his capabilities.

"Instructional adaptation" means an adjustment or modification to instruction enabling a student who is gifted and talented to participate in, benefit from, and demonstrate knowledge and application of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in one or more content areas at the instructional level of the student, not just the student's grade level.

C.18A:35-36 Instructional adaptations, educational services for gifted and talented students.

3. a. A board of education shall ensure that appropriate instructional adaptations and educational services are provided to gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 12 to enable them to participate in, benefit from, and demonstrate knowledge and application of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at the instructional level of the student.

4. A board of education shall:

- (1) ensure that appropriate instructional adaptations are designed for students who are gifted and talented;

- (2) make provisions for an ongoing kindergarten through grade 12 identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity, or a specific academic area. School districts shall ensure equal access to a continuum of gifted and talented education services. The identification process shall include consideration of all students, including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 plans;

- (3) develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environment, and including, but not limited to, additional education activities such as academic competitions, guest speakers, and lessons with a specialist;

- (4) take into consideration the Gifted Programming Standards, Position Statements, and White Papers of the National Association for Gifted Children in identifying and serving gifted and talented students;

- (5) provide the time and resources to develop, review, and enhance instructional tools with modifications for helping gifted and talented students acquire and demonstrate mastery of the required knowledge and skills specified by the standards at the instructional level of the student; and

- (6) actively assist and support professional development for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders in the area of gifted and talented instruction.

C.18A:35-37 Coordinator for gifted and talented services.

4. a. The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a coordinator for gifted and talented services. The coordinator shall have teaching experience and specialized knowledge in gifted and talented education. The coordinator shall be responsible for providing support by identifying and sharing research and resources to school districts as they develop, implement, and review their local gifted and talented services. The coordinator shall be responsible for reviewing the information about gifted and talented services provided by each school district to support implementation of the provisions of this act.

5. Each school district shall file with the coordinator a report by October 1, 2020 and thereafter on a schedule that coincides with the school district's New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum review pursuant to section 11 of P.L.1975, c.212 (C.18A:7A-11). The report shall include, but not be limited to:



- (1) the gifted and talented continuum of services, policies, and procedures implemented in the school district;
- (2) the total number of students receiving gifted and talented services in each grade level kindergarten through grade 12 disaggregated by race, gender, special education designation, and English language learner designation;
- (3) the professional development opportunities provided for teachers, educational services staff, and school leaders about gifted and talented students, their needs, and educational development; and
- (4) the number of staff employed by the school district whose job responsibilities include identification of and providing services to gifted and talented students.

C.18A:35-38 Complaint for noncompliance.

5. a. An individual who believes that a school district has not complied with the provisions of this act may file a complaint with the board of education. The right to file a complaint shall be set forth in the board's policy on gifted and talented education. The policy shall be linked to the homepage of the board's Internet website. The board shall issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the district's action in the matter.

6. The individual may then file a petition of appeal of the board's written decision to the Commissioner of Education through the Office of Controversies and Disputes in accordance with N.J.S.18A:6-9 and the procedures set forth in State Board of Education regulations.

C.18A:35-39 Information available on website.

7. A school district shall make detailed information available on its website regarding the policies and procedures used to identify students as gifted and talented and the continuum of services offered to gifted and talented students. The information shall include the criteria used for consideration for eligibility for the gifted and talented services, including the multiple measures used in the identification process to match a student's needs with services, and any applicable timelines in the identification process.

8. This act shall take effect in the 2020-2021 school year.



SOUTH HARRISON SCHOOL DISTRICT G&T PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Students in Grades K-2, who are identified as intellectually gifted, are enriched within the classroom through curriculum differentiation. The aim is to remove the ceiling on what is learned and promote creativity and higher level cognitive skills. Such extended learning opportunities are designed to support individual learning needs and are identified and provided through collaboration between the classroom teacher, the building principals, and the Instructional Facilitator.

Students in Grades 3-6, who are identified as intellectually gifted, are enriched through a Gifted and Talented program. Classes are usually held one to two periods per six day cycle throughout the school year. The program runs approximately from October through May.

The G&T Program enhances the regular curriculum through special projects and/or activities based on the NJ Student Learning Standards including:

- Next Gen Science Standards
- Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills
- Computer Science & Design Thinking
- National Gifted Program Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children

Students will be pulled for G&T after school on Thursdays during the year. Students within the program are expected to adhere to the building code of conduct. Failure to uphold the code of conduct or violate other school rules or policies may result in removal from the Gifted and Talented Program.



Identification Process for Gifted and Talented Pull-Out Program

Grades 3-6: Because no two gifted children are alike, it is important to collect information on both the child's performance and potential through a combination of objective (quantifiably measured) and subjective (personally observed) identification instruments in order to identify gifted and talented students. For 2022-2023, students will be selected for the Grades 3-6 pull-out G&T program in the fall utilizing an identification matrix and the following criteria:

Level 1: Using the identification matrix, tally points for each student based on the following three criterion:

Criterion #1: Educational Performance

A standardized composite measure of academic achievement through the iReady educational evaluation and implementation system.

Criterion #2: Creative Thinking

Creative thinking will be measured by a nationally-normed standardized test of creativity (ie: the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking).

Level 2: Additional screening/assessment tools may be used to make a final determination including, but not limited to:

- Teacher Rating Scale: Teachers will be asked to complete an observation survey based on specific Behaviors that Support Learning (ie: Renzulli/Harman Behavior Rating, which provides a rating in four areas: Learning, Motivation, Creativity, and Leadership).
- Parent/Guardian(s) may request a meeting to discuss conducting an additional cognitive acuity assessment approved by the district.

Students found eligible in the Gifted and Talented Program beginning in their Third Grade Year, will remain in the program throughout their time in the South Harrison School District. All new students and students who are not selected for entry in their fourth-grade year, will be included in the identification process each subsequent year. In this way, a student may become eligible in their 4th, 5th, or 6th grade year as well. Families will be notified in the fall for the current school year if their child has been identified in the program.



2024-2025 Gifted & Talented Identification Matrix

Level I: Criteria as follows:	Point Value System			Student Point(s)
	1	2	3	
Criterion #1a: Educational Performance (Math)	60 th -74 th Percentile	75 th -89 th Percentile	≥ 90 th Percentile	
Criterion #1b: Educational Performance (ELA)	60 th -74 th Percentile	75 th -89 th Percentile	≥ 90 th Percentile	
	1	3	5	
Criterion #2: Creative Thinking	85th-89th	90th-94th	≥ 95th	
TOTAL:				
Recommendation by G&T Committee:				
Level 2: Criteria as follows:	Point Value System		Student Point(s)	
	1	2		
Criterion #3: Teacher Recommendation	≥ 30 on 2 out of 4 categories		≥ 30 on 3-4 out of 4 categories	
TOTAL:				
Recommendation by G&T Committee:				
6+ points: Students are recommended for the Gifted & Talented Program.				



Topics of Study

Gifted & Talented - Grades 3-6

Problem solving and reasoning are processes students go through as they apply what they know and are able to do when solving a particular problem. A good math problem:

- engages and appeals to the reader;
- lends itself to a variety of problem-solving solution strategies;
- involves the understanding or use of a math concept or skill;
- has multiple solutions;
- provides opportunities for extension and critical thinking.

Students in Grades 3 through 6, who are considered “*Beyond*” or Gifted & Talented, will use ***Real-World Problem Solving*** skills, STEAM Concepts, and/or ***Project Based Learning*** that will involve them in real-world problem solving activities.

Real-World Problem Solving skills combine different content areas in an interdisciplinary approach for students numerous opportunities for them to read and solve problems, including problems at the higher levels of the Depths of Knowledge.

Project Based Learning activities will incorporate the grade level NJ Student Learning Standards, Next Gen Science Standards, Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills, Computer Science & Design Thinking, and National Gifted Program Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children.

The Depths of Knowledge include:

Level 1	Recall the Basics
Level 2	Use Basic Concepts and Procedures
Level 3	Reason and Communicate Understanding
Level 4	Evaluate, Extend, and Generalize

Students will be involved in creating and implementing new projects that promote the standards and concepts discussed in class.



G&T Program Start/End Dates

G&T programs start approximately in October. This allows time for eligibility analyses to be conducted, matrices to be completed, and identification of students to be finalized. The programs end sometime mid- to late May, depending on the closing stages of each project.

Notification of Student Placement

Once students have been officially identified for G&T, administration, teachers, and families will be notified of student placement through a letter mailed home.

All reasonable inquiries concerning the identification of Gifted and Talented students will be addressed in order to ensure the most reliable and valid information on individual students.

G&T Transfer Students

In accordance with NJ State regulations for Gifted and Talented students, a previously identified G&T student transferring into a New Jersey school district, *from another district in New Jersey or another state*, is not required to be automatically placed in the receiving district's Gifted and Talented Program.

A new student, identified as G&T, will only be placed in the South Harrison G&T Program *after* the G&T Coordinator and administration has determined that: (1) the transferred student's prior identification meets district criterion, **or** (2) South Harrison district assessments must be completed in order to identify the student as meeting comparable standards of peers in the specific grade level.

Parents/guardians of G&T students transferring out of the South Harrison School District may request to have a letter, including a copy of their child's Identification Matrix, forwarded to the receiving school district verifying identification and participation in the G&T program.

Exits and Furloughs

1.a(1): Reported at the end of each trimester, or reported from the most recent trimester, students must meet a "B" or "2" (Standards Based Reporting) average where applicable in all current classes. Students that fail to meet this requirement will subsequently be placed in academic review. Upon being placed on academic review, it will be up to the Gifted and Talented teacher, after discussion with the student's subject teachers, whether or not a trimester away from the program would be warranted. Students that once again meet grade requirements will be able to resume Gifted and Talented programs as usual during the following trimester (following year, if reported in trimester 3)

1.a(2): Grades are not to be taken from progress reports and(or) utilized from such to effect Gifted and Talented program standings. Students must show a proper educational standing at the end of each trimester upon final reporting on school report cards.

2: If a parent/guardian, teacher, coordinator, or administrator has evidence a student is not profiting fully from his/her/their Gifted and Talented educational program, the G&T teacher should be notified. At that time, a determination of continued participation in the program will be made by the G&T Coordinator, in conjunction with the G&T teacher.

3: A furlough may be an option for a student who may be struggling with success in the program because of outside interferences that may be beyond his/her/their control. A parent/guardian may request a furlough for his/her/their child by contacting the G&T teacher. At that time, a determination will be made by administration in conjunction with the G&T teacher & coordinator.



4: Upon seeking a return to the program, the parent/guardian of the student must notify the G&T teacher. At that time, a determination as to whether the student is ready to return to the program will be made by the administration in conjunction with the G&T teacher and coordinator.

5: If, at any time, a G&T student is failing to maintain the expectations of G&T, and/or the regular education classroom, the parent/guardian will be contacted by the G&T teacher via letter. If warranted, a conference will be scheduled with the student, G&T teacher, and the parent/guardian to determine the best course of action. The G&T Coordinator and administration will make the final determination as to whether the student is exited from the program, furloughed, or remains in the program.

Expectations

The following are just a few of the general expectations of the G&T Program. Each teacher will have his/her/their own classroom/program expectations.

- Motivation is Key
- Behavior MUST be Excellent
- Attendance is Vital
- Participation is Required
- Responsibility is Essential



Frequently Asked Questions about Gifted and Talented Services in New Jersey

How does New Jersey Administrative Code define a gifted and talented student?

The regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1) define gifted and talented students 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.*

What services are required?

All public school districts must have a board-approved gifted and talented identification process and provide services for identified students enrolled in the grades of that school district. The regulations require that identification and services be made available to students in grades K-12.

When should districts identify students for giftedness?

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)5 ii requires district boards of education to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten or upon entrance to the school or district. There is a misconception that schools are not required to identify students prior to grade three or that students who are new to a district must complete a state-mandated waiting period before they can be evaluated. That information is inaccurate. Additionally, local school districts are not obligated to identify students prior to their enrollment in the public school (e.g., three-year olds, students enrolled in community early childhood programs or private kindergartens). Local school districts are not obligated to identify students attending nonpublic schools.

What types of instructional accommodations must be made for students identified as gifted and talented?

The regulations require that district boards of education provide appropriate K-12 services for gifted and talented students. This includes appropriate curricular and instructional modifications for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environment. District boards of education must also take into consideration the *PreK-Grade 12 National Gifted Program Standards* of the National Association for Gifted Children in developing programs for gifted and talented students. A copy of those standards was sent to every chief school administrator and is available at www.nagc.org. In addition, each curriculum framework developed by the NJDOE provides general, as well as content specific information on gifted education (e.g., terminology, examples of appropriate practices). The frameworks can be accessed at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/frameworks/> or at www.nj.gov/njded/aps/cccs.

How should students be identified?

The regulations require that students be compared to their chronological peers in the local school district. New Jersey does not have state-level criteria, such as mandated tests or assessments, grade point averages, or IQ scores. Local school districts must use multiple measures to identify gifted students.

**Once students are identified in Grades 3-6 as being Gifted and Talented, can they be removed from the program?**

Students who meet the Criteria for the G&T program, will still be evaluated each year against their grade level peers. If they do not meet the criteria, they will be provided with a “probationary” year to allow them more time to participate in the program and to increase their scores in specific areas.

What does the state mean by “multiple measures?”

District boards of education must make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process for gifted and talented students. Multiple measures include, but are not limited to, achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; intelligence testing; parent, student, and/or teacher recommendation; and other appropriate measures. Local school districts should ensure that the identification methodology is developmentally appropriate, nondiscriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered (e.g., using math achievement to identify students for a math program).

Does the state require a specific program or model for elementary or middle-level students?

No. The state does not endorse a particular program or model. Program models might include, but are not limited to, pull-out programs, classroom-based differentiated instruction, acceleration, flexible pacing, compacted curricula, distance learning, advanced classes, or individualized programs.

Are local school districts obligated to accept the evaluation of a student’s giftedness from another state, school district, or independent service?

No. The district board of education establishes the identification criteria, and students are compared to their chronological peers within the district; therefore, the district is not obligated to accept an out-of-district evaluation. However, new students, particularly those who have been identified as gifted in another state or district, should be evaluated by the district, as appropriate.

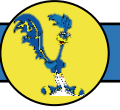
I am moving to New Jersey from another state. How can I find out which New Jersey schools have the best gifted and talented programs? How can I find out what programs are offered in certain schools?

All New Jersey public school districts are required to identify gifted and talented students and provide services. The types of services may differ from district to district. New Jersey does not rank, or otherwise evaluate, specific gifted programs.

For information on programs and services available in a particular district, contact the district or check its website. Contact information on schools and districts is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/directory/>. You can also find out more about gifted education in New Jersey by going to www.njagc.org and www.njping.net.

Does the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* address the gifted child?

The federal government does not prescribe programs and services for gifted students (unlike special education). ESSA focuses on improving student achievement with particular emphasis on students in high-need schools. Gifted students are not a subgroup population examined under ESSA testing parameters.

**What state or national organizations support the needs of gifted students? How can I contact them?**

The New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC) assists schools, teachers, parents and students. For more information on New Jersey programs, consult the NJAGC Website at www.njagc.org. Additionally, the Gifted Child Society is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1957 by parents of New Jersey to further the cause of gifted children. More information is available on its Website at www.gifted.org.

At the national level, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, teachers, educators, other professionals, and community leaders, who unite to address the unique needs of children and youth with demonstrated gifts and talents, as well as those children who may be able to develop their talent potential with appropriate educational experiences. For further information on national efforts on behalf of gifted children, go to <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=585&al>.