

Parent Handbook for Gifted Services



WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted Services

4650 W. Sweetwater Avenue

Glendale, AZ 85304

Phone 602-347-2651 / FAX 602-347-2683

Gifted Services Coordinator – Dr. Jason McIntosh

Jason.mcintosh@wesdschools.org

Dr. Paul Stanton, Superintendent

Dr. Lyn Bailey, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

Lori Mora, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services

Copyright © 2019 Washington Elementary School District

A Parent Handbook for Gifted Services in WESD

Greetings,

My name is Jason McIntosh and I am the Gifted Services Coordinator in WESD. You are receiving this document due to the fact your child has been identified as gifted in one or more areas. In this handbook you will find an explanation for what the term gifted means, how we serve gifted students in WESD, frequently asked questions, and suggestions for parenting a gifted child. If at any time you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me or your child's gifted teacher.

Sincerely,
Jason S. McIntosh, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Definition of Giftedness in Arizona	3
Three Areas of Giftedness	4
General Characteristics of Gifted Students	5
Qualification Process	6
WESD Gifted Services Mission Statement	7
Three Signature Programs	8
Frequently Asked Questions.....	9
Effective Communication with Schools.....	10
Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted.....	11
Tips for Parenting a Gifted Child	13
Additional Resources	14

Definition of Giftedness in Arizona

**ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES
January 1, 2007**

Full text of the Arizona State Statutes can be found at:

<https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5503172e1130c016dcbfbc27>

Mission:

Champion the academic, intellectual, social and emotional development of Arizona's gifted and advanced learners through ensuring gifted learners in Arizona receive an appropriate gifted education commensurate with their abilities and potential.

Definitions:

“Gifted education” means appropriate academic course offerings and services that are required to provide an educational program that is an integral part of the regular school day and that is commensurate with the academic abilities and potential of a gifted pupil.

“Gifted pupil” means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs appropriate gifted education services, to achieve at levels commensurate with the child's intellect and ability. [ARS §15-779](#)

Three Areas of Giftedness Recognized in Arizona

VERBAL GIFTEDNESS	QUANTITATIVE GIFTEDNESS	NONVERBAL GIFTEDNESS
CHARACTERISTICS	CHARACTERISTICS	CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses advanced vocabulary, plays with words • Invents stories, rhymes, songs • Creates elaborate fantasy worlds • Reads well • Uses language beyond what is expected • Uses metaphors and analogies • Learns new words or phrases quickly • Has a good memory for songs, stories and poem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands advanced mathematical concepts • Uses logic to solve problems • Uses advanced mathematical computations • Engages in estimating, predicting, classifying, organizing, hypothesizing • Remembers mathematical processes and symbols easily • Able to figure out difficult patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes interesting shaped designs and patterns with blocks, clay or drawing materials • Displays skill in putting together new or difficult puzzles • Reacts with unusual attentiveness to changes in the environment • Takes apart reassembles things • Likes consistent things (numbers, clocks, calendars) • Able to reproduce designs and pictures • Often messy desks • Creative
NEEDS	NEEDS	NEEDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encounter and use difficult vocabulary • Share ideas and knowledge • READ • WRITE • Work with academic peers • Make choices and decisions • Deal with environment and culture • Meet with experts in interest area • Read books of interest • Work with advanced subject matter • Engage higher level thinking skills • Use humor • Use leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with different kinds of problems and solutions • Build problem solving skills • Be allowed to develop other ways to solve the problem • Work with academic peers • Work with mentors • Work with self-paced instructional materials • Use manipulatives • Engage in higher order thinking skills • Design their own math problems • Work cooperatively and collaboratively to solve mathematical challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written directions • Sight approach to reading not phonics • Advanced abstract material • Inductive learning strategies • Hands on learning activities • Multidisciplinary studies • Holistic method • Activities requiring synthesis • To be shown • To do it • Avoid drill and repetition • Higher level thinking skills • Observe others • Time to visualize • Discover own methods of problem solving • To avoid time tests • Frequent humor in instruction

General Characteristics of Gifted Students

Characteristics	Instructional Implications
1. Excellent memory	Need for early mastery of foundation skills of academic disciplines; less drill/review work needed
2. Persistent, goal directed behavior	Include problem-solving, critical thinking, creative processing in all curricula; behaviors may be perceived as stubbornness
3. Verbal proficiency; large vocabulary; breadth of information in advanced areas	Encourage wide reading and research; may be verbally manipulative
4. Questioning attitude; intellectual curiosity; demanding of consistency and logic in requirements	Needs differentiated curriculum and instruction. May challenge assignments; impatient with drill and irrelevant work
5. Able to abstract, conceptualize, analyze, synthesize at younger ages; problem-solving a strength	Need to learn to focus on details. May tend to skip details and focus on the "big picture," resists directions
6. Evaluative of self and others, including adults; critical thinker	Has difficulty accepting the illogical or irrelevant; may have peer difficulties, but work well with older students
7. Sensitive, intuitive, empathetic; tends to take on grown-up concerns	Vulnerable, does not want to be singled out; may intrude into areas that are not appropriate
8. Diversity of interests; many hobbies and activities	Needs flexibility and individualization; more of the "guide on the side" than the "sage on the stage" teacher
9. High energy, alert; eager for new challenges	Needs differentiated assignments. May become frustrated with inactivity or slow pace
10. Independent; preference for individualized work; self-reliant	Needs to understand the "why" of assignments. May reject or rebel against group work perceived to be irrelevant or too easy

How Your Child Was Identified for Gifted Services

QUALIFICATION PROCESS

Any parent, teacher, staff member or student may refer a student and request evaluation for gifted services. Students may be tested once a year.

Testing Process

- Notice of testing is published three times a year in the school newsletters.
- A Screening form is completed by either the teacher or parent or both.
- One of the following State approved tests are administered to determine eligibility:
 - Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 (CogAT), grades K-8
 - Assesses verbal, quantitative and nonverbal abilities
 - Students scoring 97th percentile or higher in one or more areas qualify
 - Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT), grades K-8
 - A nonverbal measure of general ability
 - Does not require English skills to perform well
 - Students scoring 97th percentile or higher qualify

Matrix Identification for Gifted Services (MIGS)

- English Learners may be assessed for giftedness using the Matrix Identification for Gifted Services (MIGS). This specialized process is a comprehensive team approach requiring the review of all available testing data and a portfolio of student work. Please contact Gifted Services for more information.

Temporary Placement Process

- A team consisting of the gifted teacher, the regular classroom teacher, and the site administrator may choose to offer gifted services to non-qualifying students (those with less than a 97th percentile on one of the above measures) if all three agree the student needs extra challenge and there are available spots in the gifted classroom.
- All temporarily placed students are reevaluated each nine weeks. If the student is not performing well or the class becomes too large, the student will not continue receiving services the following quarter.

Description of Gifted Services in WESD

Mission Statement

The WESD Gifted Services mission statement states: “We believe that gifted students require special services in their area of exceptional potential. These services include the adjustment of environmental factors; modification of the course of study; and adaptation of teaching methods, materials, and techniques to maximize student potential. We believe modifications should be made to accommodate gifted students with special needs. In doing so, we believe that these students will have a greater opportunity to become contributing, productive members of society and to lead fulfilling lives.”

WESD believes that gifted students are gifted all day, every day and that every teacher is a teacher of gifted students. Services are provided in addition to the student’s regular education program. Opportunities are provided to gifted students that accelerate and expand the curriculum.

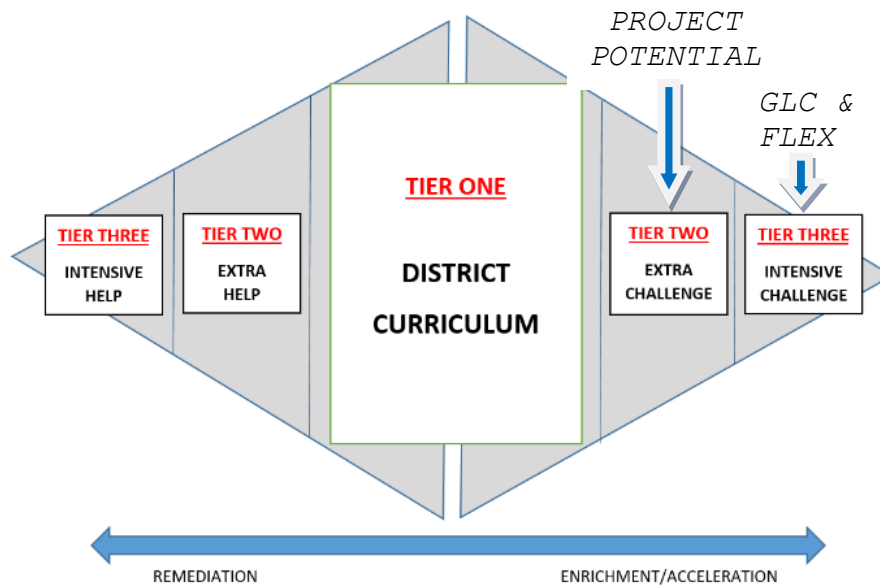
Desired outcomes for students in WESD gifted programs include:

- Self-directed learners
- Contributing collaborative workers
- Complex thinkers
- Problem solvers
- Quality producers
- Community contributors
- Competent researchers

Differentiation for students’ is addressed through:

- Content – What is taught
- Process – How it is taught
- Products – How students show what they have learned
- Environment – Where learning takes place

Three Signature Programs & Frequently Asked Questions



Project Potential Pull-Out Program (Grades K-6)

- Students identified as gifted participate in regularly scheduled group instruction with a gifted-endorsed teacher. Students receive services a minimum of 40 minutes twice a week.
- Instructional models include:
 - Enrichment through interdisciplinary units incorporating problem-based learning
 - Instruction in higher order thinking skills and creativity
 - Opportunities for independent study
 - Academic replacement in math on some campuses

The Gifted Learning Center (GLC) (Grades K-6)

- Students who are highly gifted may apply to attend the self-contained, multi-age program at Sahuaro Elementary. Applications include test scores, samples of student work, a letter from the parents, and completed screeners from teachers.
- Instructional models include:
 - Flexible grouping based on students' academic needs
 - Accelerated instruction enabling students to move through the curriculum at their own pace
 - Social and emotional needs supports through specially designed lessons
 - Opportunities for independent study, leadership development, and academic competitions

(Continued on Next Page)

Flex Center (Grades 7-8)

- Highly gifted students may apply to attend this specialized designed program at Cholla Middle School. The program consists of:
 - Flex Core – a two year self-contained gifted program incorporating advanced language arts and social studies taught by a gifted endorsed highly-qualified teacher.
 - Placement in advanced math and science with their typical peers
-

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Will my child receive a gifted report card?**

Project Potential is not graded, but you will receive a gifted progress report every quarter.

- **Will my child have to retest every year?**

No. Once identified as gifted in the state of Arizona, your child will always be identified as gifted.

- **How do I get my child into the GLC or Flex programs?**

Students who meet the eligibility criteria may apply to attend. Applications are evaluated and placements made based on the decision of a review team.

- **How will Gifted Services communicate with me throughout the year?**

You will receive a gifted parent newsletter every quarter. In addition, you may choose to attend a quarterly parent meeting and game night at the district office.

- **What does a typical gifted lesson look like?**

Gifted education can take one of two forms. The first is enrichment. This involves exploring topics not traditionally taught in the regular classroom or going deeper into a topic than most students have the opportunity to do. The second is acceleration. This means completing work above grade level or at a faster pace.

- **What will happen when my child goes to high school?**

Glendale Union High School District does not have a gifted program. Instead, your child will participate in honors or advanced placement courses.

How to Effectively Communicate with Your Child's School

The home, school, and community form the environment in which a child grows and develops. Positive, clear, and open communication between the school and home supports the best interests of the child.

1. Read information provided by your school carefully

- School handbook
- Newsletters
- Classroom notices

2. Attend school functions

- Open house/Meet the teacher night
- School-wide events
- Individual conferences
- Site-council meetings

3. Take a positive role

- Do not criticize the teacher in front of the student
- Compliment valuable activities
- Be involved – in class, school, district
- Volunteer as often as possible
- Ask about situations you don't understand

4. If there is a concern, define it in specific terms

- Write a detailed description of what you believe happened or should be happening
- Document incidents and keep a record of all communications
- Determine possible solutions with your child
- Write down acceptable alternatives

5. Make an appointment to speak with the person you believe to be most directly concerned in resolving the issue – usually the classroom teacher

- Be prepared to listen to the teacher's or school's point of view. It may change your understanding of the problem.
- Bring and leave a description of the problem, including dates and a list of questions to ask. Having samples of the problem, such as the assignments in question, will be helpful.
- Be positive and receptive to proposed solutions. A mutual solution is best, and the most likely to be implemented. If a proposed solution does not seem to solve the problem, be prepared to explain why and propose alternative solutions. Set a time for reviewing results.
- If you are unable to reach an acceptable solution, make an appointment with the next higher authority, usually the principal. Bring any information that will show how efforts have been made to solve the problem previously.

Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted

Because gifted children demonstrate greater maturity in some domains over others, they may be at greater risk for specific kinds of social-emotional difficulties if their needs are not met.

These aspects may include heightened awareness, anxiety, perfectionism, stress, issues with peer relationships, and concerns with identity and fit. Parents, adults, and caregivers in their lives need to stay in tune with their specific child's needs, and help shape a strong framework for social-emotional health.

Keep in mind:

- A child gifted in one area does not mean gifted in all
- Giftedness can lead to the masking and misunderstanding of problem signs
- Not all gifted children are alike, including their own unique social-emotional profile
- There is no single, definitive recipe for maintaining a child's emotional equilibrium
- Parents should set the tone to reduce stress/anxiety in the gifted child's life
- We can teach our children strategies for dealing with the ebb and flow of life

Gifted children vary in their abilities. Their patterns of growth often differ from their typical age peers as well.

When the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative aspects of a person develop on a trajectory that is outside of norms, and at an uneven rate, it is described as ***asynchronous development***.

Research shows that some gifted and talented children develop asynchronously. In fact, for one group of psychologists, educators, and parents (Columbus Group), asynchronous development is central to their definition of giftedness. They believe that giftedness is based on the inner experiences of the individual combined with advanced cognitive development.

Asynchrony can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. For example:

- A 6-year-old child with a 9-year-old mind wants to draw and write like a 9-year-old, but his motor coordination is age appropriate.
- A 5-year-old girl may be reading at an 8th grade level, but she is at grade level in math.
- A young gifted child may cognitively understand difficult concepts such as death and social justice, but may not have the life experience to handle these concepts.
- Asynchrony implies greater complexity. And, these qualitatively different experiences may occur in all cultures, ethnic groups, and segments of society.

- SOURCE: www.nagc.org

Terms to Be Familiar With

Increased Asynchrony. As levels of giftedness increase, asynchrony may be more pronounced and social relationships may become more problematic.

Progressive Development. The discrepancy between mental age and chronological age is progressive. A 6-year-old with a 9-year-old mind will become a 12-year-old with an 18-year-old mind.

Anxiety. When a child realizes he is out of sync from his age mates, he may experience fear, anxiety, or depression.

Peers. It's essential that gifted children spend time with like-minded age peers as well as like-minded "idea peers." Varied groups of friends are essential to meet children's needs at different levels of growth.

Perfectionism. Children may experience intense frustration when their hands and feet cannot keep up with the visions of their more advanced minds.

Acceleration. Research supports that acceleration is one way to challenge bright students. Age, size, and perceived maturity should not be a barrier to screen for possible acceleration; immature behaviors used as a coping strategy to "fit in" often disappear when the child is placed in the right environment with cognitive peers.

Twice-Exceptionalities. The most asynchronous gifted learners are often those with learning disabilities, commonly referred to as twice- exceptional or 2E learners. This combination requires additional support at home and at school.

Age-Appropriate Expectations. Adults must continually remind themselves that gifted children are still children. It's important to have age-appropriate expectations.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS STRATEGIES

Help your child and others understand the meaning of being gifted, know the challenges that accompany asynchronous development, and set realistic expectations. Focus on strengths.

Explore and teach strategies to address the misunderstandings and stress that come from being out of sync with others, such as mindfulness, self-advocacy, and mind-body tools

Find multiple peer groups for your child. One group may include those close in cognitive ability and another may include those with similar interests. A mental age match is sometimes more essential than a chronological age match.

Bibliotherapy: Have your child read books with main characters who also have unique abilities and uneven development.

Connect with other parents who are experiencing similar challenges for camaraderie and support. Join a parent support group or start your own.

Tips for Parenting a Gifted Child

SET a good example

FOSTER independence

BE enthusiastic and optimistic

PARTICIPATE actively in learning

ASSIST in setting long term goals

RESIST comparing children's abilities

INSPIRE novel ideas and creative thought

RECOGNIZE achievement, but honor effort

ENCOURAGE trial and error and risk taking

SUPPORT participation in outside activities

INVITE questions and provide honest answers

MAKE use of resource people in the community

PRESENT a united front; agreement on basic values

PROVIDE reference materials and feed your child's passions

PROMOTE appropriate behavior, courtesy and polite questions

BASE enrichment activities on the child's interests and hobbies

ENJOY your gifted child and remember that he or she is first a child

EMPHASIZE reading, poetry, music, art and other forms of expression

HELP your child recognize strengths as well as areas that need attention

Where to Find Out More

BOOKS (Available for checkout through Gifted Services)

- Adelson, J., and Wilson, H. (2009). Letting go of perfect: Overcoming perfectionism in kids. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Cross, T. (2005). The social and emotional lives of gifted kids: Understanding and guiding their development. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Delisle, J. (2006). Parenting gifted kids: Tips for raising happy and successful children. Waco, TX: Prufrock, Press.
- Delisle, J., & Galbraith, J. (2002). When gifted kids don't have all the answers: How to meet their social and emotional needs. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Fertig, C. (2009). Raising a gifted child: A parenting success handbook. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Greenspon, T. (2002). Freeing our families from perfectionism. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Jolly, J., Treffinger, D., Ford-Inman, T., and Smutny, J. (2011). Parenting gifted children: The authoritative guide from the National Association for Gifted Children. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Rimm, S. (2003). Keys to parenting the gifted child. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Shires-Golon, A. (2004). Raising topsy-turvy kids: Successful parenting your visual-spatial child. Denver, CO: DeLeon Publishing.
- Strip, C. (2000). Helping gifted children soar: A practical guide for parents and teachers. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Sunde-Peterson, J. (2008). The essential guide for talking with gifted teens: Ready-to-use discussions about identity, stress, relationships, and more. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Vail, P. (1989). Smart kids with school problems: Things to know and ways to help. New York: A-Plume Books.
- Webb, J., Gore, J., Amend, E., & DeVries, A. (2007). A parent's guide to gifted children. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Yahnke-Walker, S. (2002). The survival guide for parents of gifted kids: How to understand, live with, stick up for your gifted child. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

WEBSITES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Arizona Association of Gifted and Talented: www.arizonagifted.org

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

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted: www.sengifted.org

Hoagies Gifted Education Database: www.hoagiesgifted.org