



Regional School District #16

**Talented & Gifted
TAG
Committee Report**

January 27, 2016

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Executive Summary

Region 16 parents continue to ask the question, “You provide many intervention services for students, what are you doing for my child who has been identified as gifted?” In response to community and Superintendent interest, and availability of programs for gifted students in high-performance school districts, a committee, chaired by our Director of Curriculum, was formed to learn more about serving this population of students. The purpose of this report is to provide the board with a review of the TAG Committee findings regarding research, site visitations to districts with TAG programs, program expectations and implications for staffing. Furthermore, this report will provide a program recommendation to the board.

TAG Committee

A committee was formed that represents parents, teachers, and district administrators to:

- examine the CT Law for identification of gifted students *CGS Section 10-76d(a)(1)* and current district identification practices,
- research TAG programs in the literature and in CT districts,
- learn the difference among gifted, enrichment, and talented programs,
- research student impact, financial implications, and resources needed to implement the program for Grade 6-8 students for the 2016-17 school year.

The committee met five times from October through January.

Name	Position
Maria Avery	Social Studies Teacher, LRMS
Brandi Burkowsky	Beacon Falls Parent
Bethany Didato	School Counselor, LRMS
Amy Filippone	Interim Asst. Director of Special Education
Erin Hayes	School Counselor, LRMS
Kelly Messina	Beacon Falls Parent
Michelle Meyers	Interim Principal, LRMS
Barbara Peck	Director of Curriculum, Committee Chair
Trisha Pytko	Science Teacher, LRMS
Donna Ring	Retired Waterbury Teacher of the Gifted
Lina Tabury	Science Teacher, LRMS

Program Components

- 0.6 FTE Teacher of the Gifted assigned to the middle school
- Each eligible student will attend class during the PRIDE/WIN period
- Opportunities for student choice through math, science, technology, and humanities inquiries
- Independent Study
- Opportunities for students to meet with the school counselors to discuss time management strategies, etc.
- A program that meets the needs of gifted learners that is focused on conceptual and divergent thinking, high level processes, real-world interdisciplinary inquiry and problem solving
- Opportunities for students to participate in academic challenges/competitions
- Students will be provided feedback on their performance, however, they will not receive grades.

In addition, the Teacher of the Gifted will:

- serve as a resource to classroom teachers to meet the needs of the gifted students within their classroom,
- assist in the identification of students through the screening process,
- provide professional development for staff on working with gifted students,
- work with the Director of Curriculum to develop the program components,
- meet with eligible Grade 5 students in the spring,
- work with the building administrators to schedule special events and speakers,
- will work to develop additional after school enrichment programs,
- explore opportunities to partner with colleges, universities and agencies, and
- communicate with parents of identified students.

Budget Implications

The Committee is recommending that a 0.6 FTE teacher with coursework in gifted education be hired to service the eligible students as well as serve as a resource to classroom teachers to help them deliver differentiated instruction. A budget of \$1,500 is requested for Summer 2016 Curriculum Development and \$5,000 for teacher and student resources and fees to support program components.

Introduction

In Spring 2015, the Region #16 Superintendent expressed interest in forming a committee to explore the feasibility for developing and funding a program for talented and gifted students. Both he and the BOE have supported after school and summer enrichment opportunities for our students that have been very well received by parents and students.

A Talented and Gifted (TAG) Committee of parents, administrators and teachers, chaired by the Director of Curriculum, was charged to examine how we can best service our academically gifted and talented students at the middle school level. The committee examined the CT Law for identification of gifted students *CGS Section 10-76d(a)(1)*, current district identification practices, visited TAG programs in the state, the difference among gifted, enrichment, and talented programs. The committee also researched programs and determined financial implications and resources needed to implement the program for Grade 6-8 students for the 2016-17 school year. The committee met five times from October through January.

Four subcommittees were formed to move the work of the team forward, and goals and activities were established. The subcommittees included:

Identification- This team researched the CT Law and identification processes in our region and other districts within the state.

Investigation of Model Programs - This team researched state documents and other Internet resources to identify programs in the state and around the country.

Scheduling – This team explored a variety of scheduling options for the program.

Research – Each team member presented research related to gifted education.

This framework allowed each group to focus on elements of a comprehensive gifted program, while examining the fiscal impact of its implementation.

The Difference Between High Achievers & Gifted Students

The gifted student is a child who shows high performance capability in intellectual areas and needs differentiated instruction or services not ordinarily provided by the regular education program.

The High Achiever:

1. Knows the answer
2. Has good ideas
3. Is in the top group
4. Learns with ease
5. Understands ideas
6. Grasps the meaning
7. Enjoys school
8. Pleased with own learning
9. Good memorizer
10. Absorbs information
11. Completes assignments
12. Copies accurately
13. Works hard
14. Is interested
15. Is alert
16. Is a technician

The Gifted Learner:

1. Asks the questions
2. Has wild, silly ideas
3. Is beyond the group
4. Already knows
5. Constructs abstractions
6. Draws inferences
7. Enjoys learning
8. Is highly self-critical
9. Is a good guesser
10. Manipulates information
11. Initiates projects
12. Creates a new design
13. Plays around yet tests well
14. Is highly curious
15. Is keenly observant
16. Is an inventor

DRG E Gifted Programs

DISTRICT	ELEMENTARY PROGRAM	MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM
Ashford	YES	YES
Bozrah	YES	YES
Brooklyn	NO	NO
Kent	YES	YES
Canaan	NO	NO
Salisbury	YES	NO
Sharon	NO	NO
Chaplin	YES K-6	
REGION 4: Chester	NO	Only 6 th Grade
Region 7: Colebrook, Norfolk	NO	NO
Coventry	YES	YES
Deep River	YES	YES
East Haddam	NO	YES
Eastford	NO	YES
Franklin	NO	NO
Hampton	NO	NO
Hartland	NO	NO
Lebanon	NO	NO
Lisbon	NO	NO
Litchfield	NO	NO
N. Branford	YES	YES
N. Stonington	NO	NO
Portland	NO	NO
Preston	NO	NO
REGION 6	2016-17	2016-17
Scotland	Until 2015-16	NO
Thomaston	NO	NO
Union	NO	NO
Westbrook	NO	NO
Willington	YES	YES
Woodstock	Until 2015-16	Until 2015-16

Summary of Existing Research On Gifted Education

According to a report on high-achieving students, more than 7 in 10 teachers of these students surveyed noted that these students were not challenged or given a chance to “thrive” in their classrooms. [1] Additionally, gifted students need gifted programming in many cases because the “general education program is not yet ready to meet the needs of gifted students” due to lack of general educators’ training in gifted education and the pressure classroom teachers face to raise the performance of their struggling students. [2]

It is more than just giving students a challenge in classrooms: Gifted programming positively influences students’ futures. Several longitudinal studies have shown that gifted programs have a positive effect on students’ post-secondary plans. For example, studies found that 320 gifted students identified during adolescence who received services through the secondary level pursued doctoral degrees at more than 50X the base rate expectations. [3] In a follow-up report on the same study participants at age 38, 203 participants, or 63%, reported holding advanced terminal degrees (master’s and above). Of these, 142 (44%) held doctoral degrees and 8 of these 142 had more than one doctoral degree. As a benchmark for this accomplishment, the authors of this study compared these rates to the general U.S. population, noting that only approximately 2% of the general population held a doctoral degree according to the 2010 U.S. Census. [4]

Further benefits of gifted programs have been shown to include that students who had participated in gifted programs maintained their interests over time and stayed involved in creative productive work after they finished college and graduate school. [6]

A sample of 2,409 intellectually talented adolescents (top 1%) who were assessed on the SAT by age 13, and provided services through a talent search program, was tracked longitudinally for more than 25 years. Their creative accomplishments, with particular emphasis on literary achievement and scientific-technical innovation, were examined and results showed that distinct ability patterns identified by age 13 foreshadowed creative accomplishments in middle age. Among the sample, participants had earned 817 patents and published 93 books, one had been awarded the Fields Medal in mathematics, and another had won the John Bates Clark Medal for the most outstanding economist under 40. [7]

¹ Loveless, T., Farkas, S., & Duffett, A. (2008). *High-achieving students in the era of NCLB*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

² Hertberg-Davis, H. L., & Callahan, C. M. (2013). Introduction. In H. L. Hertberg-Davis & C. M. Callahan (Eds.), *Fundamentals of gifted education* (pp. 1–10). New York, NY: Routledge.

³ Lubinski, D., Webb, R. M., Morelock, M. J., & Benbow, C. P. (2001). Top 1 in 10,000: A 10 year follow-up of the profoundly gifted. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 4*, 718–729.

⁴ Kell, H. J., Lubinski, D., & Benbow, C. P. (2013). Who rises to the top? Early indicators. *Psychological Science, 24*, 648–659.

⁵ Campbell, J. R., & Walberg, H. J. (2011). Olympiad studies: Competitions provide alternatives to developing talents that serve national interests. *Roeper Review, 33*, 8–17.

⁶ Westberg, K. L. (1999, Summer). What happens to young, creative producers? NAGC: *Creativity and Curriculum Division Newsletter*, 3, 13–16.

⁷ Park, G., Lubinski, D., & Benbow, C. P. (2007) Contrasting intellectual patterns predict creativity in the arts and sciences: Tracking intellectually precocious youth over 25 years. *Psychological Science*, 18, 948–995.

Proposed Schedule

*	9:10-10:05	Grade 6 Teacher Availability
	10:06-10:45	Grade 8
*	10:45-11:10	Grade 7 Teacher Availability
	11:15-11:45	Lunch
	11:45-12:25	Grade 7
*	12:25-12:45	
	12:45-1:35	Grade 6
*	12:45-1:40	Grade 8 Teacher Availability

*Teacher Consultation, Program & Student Development Planning, Professional Development

TAG Committee Recommendations

The TAG Committee is recommending the implementation of a ***program for the academically gifted*** students in Grades 6-8 for 2016-17 school year.

This recommendation is based upon the following:

- The research suggests lifelong positive outcomes from student participation in gifted programs.
- Gifted students need to set ambitious learning goals and realize the full potential of their talents. They need a program that:
 - engages them in active learning experiences matched to their identified abilities,
 - inspires a love of learning and a desire for self-development,
 - provides opportunities for them to interact with intellectual peers who value scholarship, academic achievement, creativity and
 - promotes the development of autonomous, disciplined approaches to learning.
- Classroom teachers need guidance and support in planning for gifted students in their classrooms. The teacher of the gifted would also support teachers with planning for differentiated instruction for all students.

The committee is recommending that we ***expand enrichment opportunities*** for all students beginning in the 2017-18 school year. This is based upon the current K-8 opportunities with STEM courses for Grades 1-8 and *Brain Waves* for grades 6-8.

The committee is recommending that the district explore a ***talented program for elementary and middle school students*** with implementation in the 2018-19 school year.

APPENDIX A

Region 16 BOE Policy -- Gifted Children Program

Gifted students are those with outstanding learning abilities or outstanding talent in the creative arts.

The school district shall provide educational programs for the gifted and talented including a broad spectrum of learning experiences to:

1. Broaden and deepen knowledge and to develop skills necessary for the student to function successfully in society;
2. Encourage students to excel in areas of special competence and interest.

Though early identification of the gifted and talented is important, it is essential that the identification of these students be recognized as an initial step in a continuing educational process. Also, special abilities and skills appear at different times in children's lives.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-76a-\(e\)](#) Definitions.

[10-76d \(e\)](#) Duties and powers of Boards of Education to provide special education programs and services.

APPENDIX B



SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES GIFTED PROGRAM MATRIX FOR GRADE 5

School Year: _____

Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

	1	2	3	
IQ Verbal _____	125-129	130-134	135+	
IQ Non-verbal _____	125-129	130-134	135+	
Teacher Rating _____	31-40	41-50	51-60	
Report Card ELA _____	90-94% - 3's	95-99% - 3's		100% 3+
Report Card Math _____	90-94% - 3's	95-99% - 3's		100% 3+
SBAC ELA Grade 4 _____	_____	2513-2532	2533+	
SBAC Math Grade 4 _____	_____	2529-2548	2549+	
Avg of 12 Reading Unit Tests _____	80-84	85-94		95-100
Avg of 12 Math Unit Tests _____	80-84	85-94		95-100
Grade Level Decision:	Eligible	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Not Eligible	<input type="checkbox"/>		



SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

GIFTED PROGRAM MATRIX FOR GRADE 6

School Year: _____

Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

	1	2	3
IQ Verbal _____	125-129	130-134	135+
IQ Non-verbal _____	125—129	130-134	135+
Teacher Rating _____	31-40	41-50	51-60
Report Card ELA _____	B+	A-	A
Report Card Math _____	B+	A-	A
SBAC ELA Grade 5 _____	_____	2556-2581	2582+
SBAC Math Grade 5 _____	_____	2562-2578	2579+
Avg of 4 Reading Unit Tests _____	3	3.5	4
Avg of 4 Writing Unit Tests _____	3	3.5	4
Avg of 4 Math Unit Tests _____	80-84	85-94	95-100

Grade Level Decision: Eligible

Not Eligible



SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

GIFTED PROGRAM MATRIX FOR GRADE 7

School Year: _____

Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

	1	2	3
IQ Verbal _____	125-129	130-134	135+
IQ Non-verbal _____	125-129	130-134	135+
Teacher Rating _____	31-40	41-50	51-60
Report Card ELA _____	B+	A-	A
Report Card Math _____	B+	A-	A
SBAC ELA Grade 6 _____	_____	2589-2617	2618+
SBAC Math Grade 6 _____	_____	2592-2609	2610+
Avg of 4 Reading Unit Tests _____	3	3.5	4
Avg of 4 Writing Unit Tests _____	3	3.5	4
Avg of 8 Math Unit Tests _____	80-84	85-94	95-100

Grade Level Decision: **Eligible**

Not Eligible

APPENDIX C

RSD 16 Gifted Identification Process



