

Talented and Gifted



Programming Marion Independent School District

2026-2031

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Introduction

Iowa Code 257.43 states that “Each school district shall incorporate talented and gifted programming into its comprehensive school improvement plan.” Components to be included are:

- Valid and systematic procedures, including multiple selection criteria for identifying talented and gifted students from the total student population;
- Goals and performance measures;
- A qualitatively differentiated program to meet the students’ cognitive and affective needs;
- Staffing provisions;
- An in-service design;
- A budget;
- Qualifications of personnel administering the program

Within this plan, you will find information regarding how Marion Independent School District adheres to Iowa Code to create a comprehensive and successful program for our talented and gifted students.

Our Vision

MISD uses an ongoing research-based identification process to recognize those students who have needs beyond what is provided by the regular school program in Math and reading. With an emphasis on academic and affective needs, we create supportive, engaging, and challenging advanced learning opportunities that inspire talent development and lifelong learning.

Goals

Our school's Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) is always striving to improve. To do so, we have set program goals. We will update our goals annually for continuous growth and improvement.

#	Goal	Performance Measure	Grades Affected
1	The TAG curriculum will align with the Iowa Core and the NAGC Gifted Standards to enrich and extend what students learn in their general education classroom.	100% of TAG curriculum units include documented alignment to both Iowa Core standards and NAGC Gifted Programming Standards Annual curriculum review confirms that TAG programming extends beyond grade-level standards in depth, complexity, and pace	K-12
2	Identification will ensure that all students who need services are included, regardless of age, gender, or ethnic background.	District gifted identification demographics reflect the overall district student population within a 5% variance across all demographic categories (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) 100% of students are screened using multiple criteria and pathways for identification Identification procedures include at least three different assessment measures to reduce bias	K-12
3	Teachers and administrators will increase their knowledge and skills in providing differentiated instruction for gifted students through professional development opportunities.	80% of teachers demonstrate implementation of at least three differentiation or UDL strategies learned through professional development as evidenced by	K-12

		classroom observations or lesson plan reviews	
Student-Driven Goals			
4	TAG students demonstrate academic growth commensurate with their abilities each school year.	TAG students maintain academic performance at the proficient or advanced level on state assessments, with growth measured through above-level testing or other advanced metrics	K-12
5	TAG students will demonstrate personal competence through self-awareness, self-advocacy, confidence, motivation, independence, resilience, and risk-taking.	Teacher observations and student reflections document evidence of academic risk-taking and resilience (such as pursuing challenging projects or learning from setbacks) Annual student interviews or surveys indicate increased comfort with self-advocacy and communicating their learning needs	K-12

Programming Service Delivery Model

At Marion Independent School District, we use a tiered approach to our programming service delivery model. These tiers differ depending on student need and grade level. The programming standards adhered to are those of the National Association for Gifted Children.

Identification

The identification of talented and gifted students is an extensive, comprehensive process that ensures all students' needs are met. There are similarities and differences among grade levels and their corresponding identification practices due to differences in the assessments offered and varying student needs by age.

Identification is an ongoing process and is constantly reviewed by talented and gifted teachers as new data/requests become available. Formal whole-grade reviews occur at the end of 2nd and 4th grade. Additionally, students beyond that time frame will be considered based on academic growth, need, or teacher referral.

Information used for identification includes:

- Achievement diagnostic tests (may include FAST, earlyMath, Renaissance STAR early Literacy, reading, and Math)
- ISASP test scores (3rd grade and beyond)
- Cognitive Ability test scores (administered in 2nd and 4th grade to all students)

Additional consideration may be given to:

- Teacher referral
- Student work samples
- Curriculum-based measures, such as end-of-term and end-of-year assessments

More in-depth information regarding formal, specific grade-level identification procedures can be found under each grade span on the following pages.

→ See Appendix 1 for criteria and data collection information

→ See Appendix 2 for alternate pathways

Programming Service Delivery Model

At Marion Independent School District, we use a tiered approach to our programming service delivery model. These tiers differ depending on student need and grade level. The programming standards adhered to are those of the National Association for Gifted Children. Specific information on service delivery models can be found under each specific grade span.

Grades K-2

K-2nd Grade Identification

See Appendix 1 for criteria and data collection information. See Appendix 2 for alternate pathways

The process for identifying K-2 students for the Talented and Gifted Program involves data analysis and teacher input.

Reading students are identified using reading achievement assessment data. Students

who perform at or above the 93rd percentile on two of the last three achievement testing periods, the classroom teacher will be asked to complete the [Teacher Narrative Referral Form](#). Student work samples and curriculum-based measures may be reviewed as qualitative indicators of student performance and ability when accompanied by student achievement data.

Math students are identified using Math achievement assessment data. Students who perform at or above the 93rd percentile on two out of the last three achievement testing periods the classroom teacher will be asked to complete the [Teacher Narrative Referral Form](#).

Grades K-2 Talented and Gifted Programming

In-class differentiation: For students in grades K–2 allows advanced learners to remain in their general education classroom while receiving tailored instruction and resources to meet their higher-level learning needs.

The Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher collaborates directly with the classroom teacher to provide appropriate strategies and instructional resources. Key approaches include:

- Cluster Grouping: Placing a small group of students with similar advanced abilities together in the same classroom so the teacher can efficiently differentiate assignments and group instruction.
- Curriculum Compacting: Assessing students to determine what learning outcomes they have already mastered, allowing them to skip redundant practice and spend time on more challenging content.
- Contract Learning: Setting up structured learning agreements or contracts that allow students to work independently on advanced concepts or skills at their own pace.
- Independent Projects: Providing self-directed learning opportunities where students explore topics of special interest beyond the standard curriculum with teacher guidance.
- Tiered Learning & Extensions: Modifying classroom content, pacing, and learning products in reading and math to match students' advanced cognitive and affective

Pull-out small groups for math and literacy: Marion's pull-out program for grades K–2 is an early-elementary instructional service model where identified or high-potential young learners spend designated periods each week outside their regular classrooms to work directly with a Gifted Education Teacher.

Key Features of a Grades K–2 Pull-Out Program:

- *Instructional Focus:* Small-group instruction specifically targeted in literacy and/or mathematics. Activities focus on foundational talent development, critical

thinking, problem-solving, and creative exploration rather than routine grade-level repetition.

- *Age-Appropriate Structure:* Meets in brief, manageable blocks—typically 30 minutes per session—to align with young students' attention spans and avoid disrupting core foundational classroom routines.
- *Curriculum Extensions:* Uses hands-on exploration, logic puzzles, open-ended inquiry, and high-level vocabulary extensions designed to build academic confidence and foster a love for learning.
- *Early Peer Interaction:* Gives advanced early learners the chance to collaborate, communicate, and build social bonds with like-minded academic peers who share similar learning paces and interests.
- *Affective & Social-Emotional Support:* Focuses on early social-emotional needs, such as helping young children navigate perfectionism, build resilience when faced with unfamiliar challenges, and develop positive self-advocacy skills.

Subject acceleration: In grades K–2, subject acceleration is designed for early learners whose math or reading abilities far exceed standard classroom differentiation. To be considered for subject acceleration in a specific area like early math or reading, a student must demonstrate top performance in their grade-level classroom and score at or above the 95th percentile on above-grade-level assessments targeting that specific subject area.

Identification & Decision Process

1. *Data Collection:* The district gathers academic achievement data (such as FAST, earlyMath, or Renaissance STAR) alongside above-level diagnostic scores in reading or math.
2. *Framework Evaluation:* The student's academic performance and readiness are structured and reviewed using tools like the Integrated Acceleration System (IAS) or Iowa Acceleration Scale.
3. *Team Review:* A collaborative team meets to evaluate the evidence and determine if subject acceleration is appropriate. The team includes:
 - Current K–2 classroom teacher
 - Potential receiving teacher (e.g., a higher grade-level reading or math teacher)
 - PK–4 Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher
 - TAG coordinator/administrator
 - Building administrator(s)
 - Student's parents
4. *Implementation:* If approved, the young learner joins an older grade level for that specific subject instruction (e.g., attending 1st-grade reading while in Kindergarten) and returns to their home classroom for the remainder of the school day.

Whole grade acceleration: Whole grade acceleration involves skipping an entire grade level (e.g., skipping Kindergarten into 1st grade, or 1st grade into 2nd grade). Because early elementary years are foundational for social, emotional, and physical development, MSD uses a comprehensive, whole-child approach to evaluate whether early grade skipping is the best fit for the student.

Evaluation Process & Considerations

1. *Systematic Framework (IAS / Iowa Acceleration Scale):* MSD uses the Integrated Acceleration System or Iowa Acceleration Scale to guide the decision objectively. The framework evaluates critical early-development domains:
 - Academic Readiness: Cognitive ability test results, early achievement diagnostic scores, and academic history.
 - Developmental & Personal Factors: Fine/gross motor progress, physical development, prior professional evaluation services, and interpersonal skills with peers.
 - Social-Emotional Readiness: The child's motivation, emotional resilience, adaptation to structured routines, and parental/family support.
2. *Team Decision-Making:* The multidisciplinary team meets to review the complete profile generated by the acceleration scale. The team includes:
 - Current classroom teacher
 - Potential receiving grade-level teacher
 - PK–4 TAG teacher
 - TAG coordinator/administrator
 - Building administrator(s)
 - Student's parents
3. *Transition & Monitoring:* Upon team consensus, a transition plan is implemented to help the student adapt smoothly to the new classroom environment, with ongoing support and monitoring from the TAG teacher and building staff.

Grades 3-4

Grades 3rd-4th Grade Identification

See Appendix 1 for criteria and data collection information. See Appendix 2 for alternate pathways

At the 3rd and 4th grade levels, ability and achievement data, as well as other measures outlined in the table on page 10, are used to determine service identification.

Third-grade students are identified in Literacy and/or Math. Based on an abilities assessment given in the spring of second grade, and achievement assessment scores from Renaissance STAR Literacy and FAST CBMR (Literacy) or Renaissance STAR Math (Math), students who perform at or above the 93rd percentile on at least two different assessments during two out of the last three achievement testing periods.

Fourth-grade students are identified in Literacy and/or Math. Based on an abilities assessment given in the spring of second grade, and achievement assessment scores from Renaissance STAR Literacy and FAST CBMR (Literacy) or Renaissance STAR Math (Math), and Iowa Assessments (Literacy and Math), students who perform at or above the 93rd percentile on at least two different assessments during two out of the last three achievement testing periods.

Grades 3-4 Talented and Gifted Programming

In-class Differentiation: Involves the Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher collaborating directly with classroom teachers to adjust instruction and provide advanced resources within the regular classroom. Key strategies and practices include:

- Cluster Grouping: Assigning five or six gifted students with similar advanced needs or abilities to the same classroom so the teacher can efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners.
- Curriculum Compacting: Assessing students to determine which learning outcomes they have already mastered and providing replacement instructional activities that offer a more challenging and productive use of their time.
- Contract Learning: Establishing structured agreements that allow students to work through advanced concepts or skills independently at an appropriate pace.
- Independent Projects: Offering self-directed learning opportunities where students explore topics of special interest beyond the regular curriculum with teacher guidance.
- Tiered Instruction & Extensions: Modifying content, pacing, or learning products in Literacy and Math to extend beyond grade-level standards in depth and complexity.

Pull-out small groups in literacy and math: Instructional service delivery model where qualified students are removed ("pulled out") from their general education classrooms for a dedicated period each week to work with a Gifted Education Specialist.

Key Features of a Grades 3–4 Pull-Out Program:

- *Instructional Focus:* Small-group instruction specifically targeted in Literacy and/or Math. Instruction centers on enrichment, depth, complexity, and critical/creative thinking.
- *Scheduling & Duration:* Students typically meet in small groups for 1 to 3 hours per week (often during non-core instructional blocks, flex time, or devoted enrichment periods) to avoid missing foundational classroom instruction. In some cases, students are pull-out of general classroom instruction and receive instruction in the gifted education setting while still ensuring mastery of grade level standards

- *Curriculum Extensions:* Activities go beyond general grade-level standards, using techniques like curriculum compacting, open-ended problem solving, logic puzzles, independent research projects, and advanced discussions.
- *Peer Interaction:* Provides advanced learners the opportunity to collaborate and engage with intellectual peers who share similar academic abilities and learning paces.
- *Social-Emotional Support:* Addresses affective needs unique to gifted learners, such as perfectionism, self-advocacy, risk-taking, and building resilience in challenging tasks.

Subject acceleration: In grades 3–4, subject acceleration is tailored for students whose academic capabilities in Literacy or Math exceed what can be supported through in-class differentiation or small-group pull-out instruction. To qualify for consideration, a student must consistently demonstrate top-tier performance in their current grade level and achieve a score at or above the 95th percentile on above-grade-level assessments in the target subject.

Identification & Decision Process

1. *Data Collection:* The district collects standardized achievement scores (such as Renaissance STAR, FAST CBMR, or Iowa Assessments/ISASP) alongside diagnostic, above-level test data in reading or math.
2. *Framework Evaluation:* Information is organized and evaluated using objective decision-making tools like the Integrated Acceleration System (IAS) or the Iowa Acceleration Scale.
3. *Team Review:* A collaborative team reviews the student's complete academic profile to determine if subject-level acceleration is appropriate. The team consists of:
 - Current 3rd or 4th-grade classroom teacher
 - Potential receiving teacher from a higher grade level
 - PK–4 Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher
 - TAG coordinator/administrator
 - Building administrator(s)
 - Student's parents
4. *Implementation:* Upon team consensus, the student attends a higher grade level for instruction in that specific subject area (e.g., a 3rd grader moving to a 4th or 5th-grade classroom for math) while remaining with their age-level peers for all other subjects and social activities.

Whole grade acceleration: Whole grade acceleration involves skipping an entire grade level (such as moving from 3rd directly to 5th grade). Because upper-elementary students face increasing academic complexity alongside shifting social dynamics, MISD conducts a comprehensive, multi-dimensional assessment before proceeding with whole grade acceleration.

Evaluation Process & Considerations

1. **Systematic Framework (IAS / Iowa Acceleration Scale):** MISD applies the Integrated Acceleration System or Iowa Acceleration Scale to objectively assess readiness across several key developmental areas:
 - *Academic Readiness:* Results from CogAT cognitive abilities testing, standardized achievement percentile ranks, and historical academic performance.
 - *Developmental & Personal Factors:* School history, physical development, prior professional evaluation services, and interpersonal interactions with peers.
 - *Social-Emotional Readiness:* Student attitude toward skipping a grade, self-advocacy skills, emotional resilience, and family/parental support systems.
2. **Team Decision-Making:** The multidisciplinary team gathers to evaluate the comprehensive report produced by the acceleration framework. The team includes:
 - Current classroom teacher
 - Potential receiving classroom teacher
 - PK–4 TAG teacher
 - TAG coordinator/administrator
 - Building administrator(s)
 - Student's parents
3. **Transition & Monitoring:** If approved, a structured plan is created to facilitate a smooth academic and social transition into the new grade level, with continuous oversight and check-ins provided by the TAG teacher and building staff.

Grades 5-8

Grades 5th-8th Grade Identification

See Appendix 1 for criteria and data collection information. See Appendix 2 for alternate pathways

At the middle school level, ability and achievement data as well as teacher observations are used to determine participation. Identification is in the areas of Literacy and/or Math. Based on an abilities assessment given in the spring of fourth grade, and achievement assessment scores from Renaissance STAR Literacy and FAST CBMR (Literacy) or Renaissance STAR Math (Math), and ISASP (Literacy and Math), students who perform at or above the 93rd percentile on at least two different assessments during two out of the last three achievement testing periods will be brought to the attention of classroom teachers to gather teacher observations using the [Teacher Narrative Referral Form](#), which are confidential.

Grades 5-8 Talented and Gifted Programming

In-class Differentiation: In-class differentiation for middle school students in grades 5–8 combines the district’s service delivery model with recommended practices from the [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#). In this model, classroom teachers collaborate with the Talented and Gifted (TAG) specialist to adjust pacing, depth, and complexity.

- **Cluster Grouping:** Assigning five to six gifted or high-ability students to the same heterogeneous classroom so the teacher can efficiently differentiate for a cohort rather than isolated individuals.
- **Curriculum Compacting & "Most Difficult First":** Assessing pre-existing knowledge to eliminate redundant practice on already-mastered concepts. In math or subject areas, students might complete the "five hardest questions" first to demonstrate mastery and move directly to extension work.
- **Contract Learning & Independent Projects:** Establishing structured learning contracts where students independently explore real-world topics, disciplinary interest areas, or advanced research projects at an accelerated pace.
- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL) & Tiered Tasks:** Modifying core assignments into open-ended, complex scenarios that emphasize higher-order thinking, abstract generalizations, logic, and advanced reasoning skills.
- **Flexible Grouping & Advanced Discussions:** Utilizing Socratic seminars, debate groups, and flexible peer arrangements centered on shared readiness levels or academic interests.

Pull-out small groups for math and literacy: Instructional service delivery model where qualified students leave their regular general education classrooms for specified periods each week to participate in specialized small-group instruction with a Gifted Education Teacher.

Key Features of a Grades 5–8 Pull-Out Program:

- ***Instructional Focus:*** Small-group instruction specifically targeted in Literacy and/or Math. Instruction goes beyond standard grade-level curriculum by emphasizing depth, complexity, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and advanced application.
- ***Project-Based & Inquiry Learning:*** Middle school pull-out model features authentic learning experiences, such as independent research projects, STEM challenges, debate, and problem-based learning centered on real-world issues.
- ***Scheduling & Format:*** Students meet in small groups for dedicated blocks (e.g., during advisory, flex periods, or rotational class times) to ensure they do not fall behind on core classroom content. In some cases, students receive all content area instruction in the pull-out setting while still ensuring students obtain mastery in grade level standards.

- *Intellectual Peer Interaction:* Allows advanced learners to collaborate with like-minded peers who share similar academic capabilities, promoting deeper class discussions and higher-level conceptual reasoning.
- *Social-Emotional Support:* Focuses on middle school gifted affective needs, including perfectionism, self-advocacy, academic risk-taking, time management, and managing heightened self-awareness or expectations.

Subject acceleration: In middle school (grades 5–8 at Vernon Middle School), subject acceleration applies to students whose academic performance in Literacy or Math far exceeds what can be accommodated through in-class differentiation, cluster grouping, or pull-out enrichment. To qualify, a student must consistently perform at the top of their current class and score at or above the 80th percentile on above-grade-level assessments in the target subject area.

Transition to Marion High School (7th & 8th Grade) For advanced 7th and 8th graders whose needs extend beyond middle school course offerings (such as Algebra, Geometry, or high school-level ELA), subject acceleration may involve taking courses directly at Marion High School or enrolled for high school credit:

- *Data Collection & Above-Level Testing:* The district gathers standardized achievement scores (ISASP ELA/Math, Renaissance STAR, CogAT) along with above-level assessments (e.g., Iowa Assessments or Belin-Blank BESTS out-of-level testing).
- *Framework Evaluation:* Student readiness is organized using the Integrated Acceleration System (IAS) or the Iowa Acceleration Scale, evaluating academic mastery alongside practical transition factors like high school bell schedules, transportation between Vernon Middle School and Marion High School, and course prerequisites.
- *Team Decision-Making:* A collaborative team conducts a thorough data review. The team includes:
 - Current Vernon Middle School subject teacher
 - Potential receiving Marion High School teacher
 - 5–12 TAG Teacher
 - TAG Coordinator / Administrator
 - Building Administrators (Vernon Middle School & Marion High School)
 - Student's parents
- *Implementation & Scheduling:* Upon team consensus, a cross-building schedule is created allowing the student to attend high school classes while remaining integrated with middle school peers for age-appropriate non-accelerated subjects and extracurriculars.

Whole grade acceleration: Whole grade acceleration involves skipping an entire grade level (e.g., 6th to 8th grade, or an 8th-grade student skipping directly into 10th

grade at Marion High School). Because middle school and early high school involve significant academic, social, and emotional shifts, MISD uses a comprehensive, whole-child evaluation process before making a grade-skipping determination.

Special Considerations for Transitioning to Marion High School: When an 8th grader is considered for whole-grade acceleration directly to Marion High School (or a 7th grader accelerating to 9th grade), additional high school readiness factors are evaluated, such as high school credit accumulation, graduation requirement pathways, varsity sports eligibility, and early college planning.

1. **Systematic Framework (IAS / Iowa Acceleration Scale):** MISD applies the IAS or Iowa Acceleration Scale to evaluate critical domains objectively:
 - **Academic Readiness:** CogATsubtest scores (at or above 95th percentile), ISASP/STAR diagnostic results, above-level test performance, and academic history.
 - **Developmental & Personal Factors:** Physical maturity, prior professional evaluations, organizational/study skills required for high school coursework, and peer interactions.
 - **Social-Emotional Readiness:** Student motivation, resilience, capacity to interact with older high school peers, self-advocacy, and parental support systems.
2. **Team Decision-Making:** The multidisciplinary team gathers to evaluate the complete report generated by the acceleration framework. The team includes:
 - Middle school classroom teacher
 - High school receiving teacher
 - 5–12 TAG teacher
 - TAG Coordinator / Administrator
 - Building administrators from both Vernon Middle School and Marion High School
 - Student's parents
3. **Transition & Ongoing Support:** If approved, a structured plan is created to facilitate the transition into Marion High School, with continuous monitoring by the 5–12 TAG teacher and high school counseling staff to support both academic success and social-emotional well-being.

Grades 9-12

9th-12th Grade Identification

See Appendix 1 for criteria and data collection information. See Appendix 2 for alternate pathways

In addition to qualifying scores mirroring those used in grades 5-8, high school students are identified by past participation. Standardized achievement test scores and grades

are also considered when identifying students as needing services. For students entering Marion High School from other districts, data will be collected and reviewed, similar to 5-8 processes and procedures, and a team decision process will be used to determine if talented and gifted services are needed for a student.

Grades 9-12 Talented and Gifted Programming

In-class Differentiation: Based on the district's service delivery plan and aligned strategies from the [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#), in-class differentiation for high school students (grades 9–12) focuses on adjusting depth, pace, and autonomy within general education courses, honors, AP, and concurrent enrollment options.

The Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher collaborates with high school subject-area teachers to implement the following approaches:

- *Curriculum Compacting & Pre-Assessment:* Allowing students who have already mastered essential standards or concepts to bypass redundant practice and engage in advanced enrichment or independent applications.
- *Cluster Grouping:* Assigning identified high-ability students together in specific class sections or small groups within heterogeneous classrooms to facilitate higher-level peer discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and advanced group assignments.
- *Contract Learning:* Establishing formal learning agreements where students contract to complete alternative, high-level coursework, deep research, or accelerated topics independently in lieu of standard daily assignments.
- *Independent Projects & Passion Studies:* Providing self-directed learning opportunities guided by subject-area instructors and the TAG teacher, allowing students to explore specialized fields, conduct interdisciplinary research, or create authentic products tied to their career interests.
- *Tiered & Open-Ended Assignments:* Modifying course tasks by increasing cognitive complexity—emphasizing synthesis, critique, original analysis, and real-world application rather than simple recall or routine skill practice.

Individual and Small Group Sessions: At the high school level, pull-out groups are offered to students focusing on a variety of topics, including but not limited to, social-emotional issues, study habits, course options, AP exam prep and ACT study sessions. These opportunities are offered on a monthly basis based on student request, and student interest surveys provided by the 9-12 talented and gifted teacher/coordinator.

9-12 Differentiated Opportunities

Marion High School provides multiple pathways for gifted students to access advanced

coursework. Freshmen may enroll in postsecondary courses, advanced English and Math classes, and select courses without prerequisites (e.g., Journalism). Through the Marion Talented and Gifted program, students can pursue independent study with instructor guidance.

Additional opportunities include Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, and concurrent enrollment options. Students meeting both the State of Iowa and Marion High School graduation requirements may graduate early.

Differentiated & Extended Program Options for students grades 9-12

Activity	Grade Levels Offered			
	9	10	11	12
PSAT/NMSQT AWARENESS	X	X	X	X
College Planning Time tables	X	X	X	X
Scholarship Awareness			X	X
Skillful Thinking (Arthur Costa)	X	X	X	X
Logic puzzles and reasoning	X	X	X	X
Instruction and counseling in: Affective (social/emotional) aspects of giftedness	X	X	X	X
Goal setting instruction: How to Hit a Moving Target	X	X	X	X
Lexile Levels- How to Challenge your reading skills	X	X	X	X
Exercises in stretching creativity	X	X	X	X
<u>Enrichment Opportunities</u>				
Profiles of Nobel Laureates	X	X	X	X
<u>Courses</u>	9	10	11	12
Advance English	X	X		
AP Courses in English			X	X
AP Courses in Social Studies		X	X	X
AP Courses in Math		X	X	X
AP online Courses	X	X	X	X
Kirkwood Courses	X	X	X	X
<u>Concepts Covered</u>				
Academic Advancement	X	X	X	X
Advanced Learning Skills	X	X	X	X

Advanced Thinking Skills	X	X	X	X
Career Training Options	X	X	X	X
Enrichment	X	X	X	X
Exploration of Interests	X	X	X	X
Giftedness	X	X	X	X
Self Awareness	X	X	X	X

Professional Learning Design for Teachers of Gifted and Talented

Talented and gifted teachers attend team meetings at the beginning of the school year to discuss characteristics of gifted students. In addition, teachers receive lists of identified students, along with their strengths and areas of concern. This time is for the program to be reviewed and explained to teachers and for them to ask any questions they may have.

Focus of collaboration time changes between:

- Planning
- Student concerns
- Student successes
- Student achievement/data
- Ways to support the student both in and out of the classroom

Throughout the year, teachers who work with talented and gifted students can attend conferences outside the school on gifted education. These are sometimes offered through the local AEA or through the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association.

Budgetary Resources

Iowa Code 257.46 ensures gifted funding for programs in Iowa. The district receives a per-pupil expenditure to fund talented and gifted staff and resources. Updated allocations for talented and gifted funding can be found on [the Iowa Department of Education website](#).

Any extra funds from previous years must be carried over to the following year.

Talented and Gifted Program Evaluation

A successful talented and gifted program constantly reassesses and evaluates itself to ensure it uses best practices and monitors students' needs. Things that will be evaluated are:

- Yearly Iowa Assessment scores among identified gifted students
- The quality of the programming service model and its ability to best meet students' needs
- Collaboration between teachers, staff, and parents
- The opportunity for professional growth and development among talented and gifted teachers, as well as general education teachers
- Goal attainment

The following measures will be followed to ensure that the points above are evaluated:

- Have yearly rosters continuously up-to-date that include the grade level and area of identification
- Calculate the percentage of identified students after the formal identification process has been completed
- Annually collect, record, and compare ISASP scores among gifted students
- Collect data from teachers and parents to determine the effectiveness of collaboration and communication
- Data collection on program goals.

This list will be updated as the program continues to evolve and new or different aspects need to be evaluated. Changes will be promptly documented.

Appendix 1- Identification Data Review

Data Review Process for Identification:

Identification decisions are made with input from a committee composed of the talented and gifted staff, a grade level teacher, and a building instructional coach who discuss the data and merits of services for individual students.

Talented and Gifted Identification Criteria Grades K-12

Identification Category	Data Point / Assessment	Required Criteria for Qualification
Kindergarten ONLY	Reading - FastBridge, STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading Math - FastBridge Early Math STAR Math	Reading - Any student scoring on or above the 93rd percentile in FastBridge or STAR Early Literacy moves on to take the STAR Reading assessment - qualifying score of 93rd percentile or higher Math - Any student scoring at the 93rd percentile or above in FastBridge Math then moves on in the process to take STAR Math: Qualifying score for services is 93rd percentile
Cognitive Ability	Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) - given in grades	95th Percentile - (<i>using National Percentile Rank by age</i>) or higher in either or both the Verbal or Quantitative Battery.

Academic Achievement	STAR Assessment	93rd Percentile or higher (approximately 1.5 Standard Deviations above the mean) in at least two of the three most recent assessment windows.
Academic Achievement	Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)	93rd Percentile or higher (approximately 1.5 Standard Deviations above the mean)
Above-Level Testing / Talent Search <i>(Recommended for students maxing out grade-level tests)</i>	Belin-Blank Center BESTS (e.g., ACT for grades 7-9, Above-Level Iowa Assessments 3-11 - through Riverside Insights) Paid for by parents	Scores demonstrating high aptitude compared to older peers on an out-of-level assessment, indicating a need for subject-matter acceleration, grade-skipping, or highly advanced curriculum.
Qualitative Measures	Teacher Observation / Inventory	Evidence of gifted characteristics (e.g., advanced problem solving, high-level vocabulary, or divergent thinking) via district-approved observation scales.
Advocacy	Parent/Teacher/Self-Referral Teacher Narrative Form Parent Narrative Form - completed on-site with Gifted	Supporting evidence or advocacy documentation that highlights a need for extended or enriched programming.

	Education Teacher	
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Appendix 2 Differentiated Pathways to Identification

Pathways to Identification

Pathway Title	Criteria for Pathway Eligibility	Subtests Used
Traditional Pathway	All students	CogAT subtests include: • Verbal • Quantitative • Non Verbal ISASP subtests include: • ELA Total • Math Total Renaissance Star Diagnostics: • STAR Literacy • STAR Math
Equal Access Pathway	Identified in one or more of the following underrepresented groups of students. English Language Learner Minority Status Free/Reduced Lunch Status *** Entry into the program can be considered on a trial basis.***	CogAT subtests include: • Verbal • Quantitative • Non Verbal ISASP subtests include: • ELA Total • Math Total Renaissance Star Diagnostics: • STAR Literacy • STAR Math ELL - Identifying and Supporting Gifted English Language Learners by Mary Catharine Campbell Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)
Twice Exceptional Pathway	Multiple pieces of data will be used for this unique circumstance. For students with a documented	CogAT subtests include: • Verbal • Quantitative • Non Verbal ISASP subtests include:

	disability or eligible for IEP or 504 services. *** Entry into the program can be considered on a trial basis. ***	• ELA Total • Math Total Teacher observations Professional Diagnosis Student Work Samples Interviews with: • Student • Parent • Past/current teachers
Marion Home School Assistance Program (MHSAP) Student Pathway	Students who participate in the Marion Home School Assistance Program have the option to participate in talented and gifted programming through dual enrollment. Students must follow the same entitlement process as those who attend Marion ISD on campus full-time. Additional data may be requested from parents or MHSAP Enrichment Teachers to support entitlement and ensure success in Talented and Gifted courses and programming on-site at MISD.	<u>Required data collection:</u> CoGAT: Grades 3 & 4 - Spring ISASP: Grades 3-11 - Spring STAR Reading & Math - Fall, Winter, Spring Student portfolio of work - if requested Curriculum Based Measures- if requested

Appendix 3 - Staffing

Staffing Provisions

Marion Independent School District employs two talented and gifted teachers. Staff members are assigned between 5 buildings, ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade. Time allotment is as follows:

Staff Allocations

Grades	K-2	3-4	5-8	9-12
FTE (2.0)	.4	.6	.7	.3
Building/ s	PES/LES	FMI	VMS	MHS
TAG Teacher	Freese	Freese	Morley	Morley

As of July 1, 2012, state law requires that all teachers of talented and gifted students hold an endorsement demonstrating their competency to teach these students. Talented and gifted staff members meet this requirement.

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Appendix 4 - Glossary

Glossary of Terms

Ability Grouping - When students of a similar ability or achievement level are placed in a class or group based on observed behavior or performance.

Acceleration - A strategy of progressing through education at a faster rate or ages younger than the norm. This can occur through grade acceleration or subject acceleration.

Achievement Test- Tests designed to measure what students have already learned, mostly in specific content areas. An example of an achievement test is the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP).

Aptitude Test - A test predicting a student's future performance in a particular domain.

Cluster Grouping - A grouping assignment for gifted students in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, five or six gifted students with similar needs, abilities, or interests are “clustered” in the same classroom, which allows the teacher to more efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners rather than just one or two students.

Curriculum Compacting - An instructional technique that allows teachers to adjust curriculum for students by determining which students have already mastered most or all of the learning outcomes and providing replacement instruction or activities that enable a more challenging and productive use of the student's time.

Differentiation - Modifying curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom.

Enrichment - Activities that add to or go beyond the existing curriculum. They may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting such as a pull-out program.

Talented and Gifted Students - The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines talented and gifted students as “Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.” Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 [Title VIII, Section 8101(21)].

Identification - The process of determining which students are qualified for gifted or advanced programming most commonly involves the use of intelligence or other testing. Many researchers emphasize using multiple pathways for identification, adding teacher,

parent, or peer nominations, or authentic assessments such as portfolios of student work, to the process.

Independent Study - A self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as a guide or facilitator, and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning, often on a topic of special interest to the student.

Pull-Out Program - A program that takes a student out of the regular classroom during the school day for special programming.

Social-Emotional Needs - Talented and gifted students may have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, as well as a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism. Counselors working in this area may address issues such as perfectionism, depression, low self-concept, bullying, or underachievement.

Twice-Exceptional - A term used to describe a student who is both gifted and disabled. These students may also be referred to as having dual exceptionalities or as being gifted with learning disabilities.

Underachieving/Underachievement -A term used to describe the discrepancy between a student's performance and his or her potential or ability to perform at a much higher level.

Glossary of Terms: National Association for Gifted Children. (n.d.). Retrieved May 24, 2026, from <https://www.nagc.org/definitions-terms-and-faqs>

Appendix 5 -Acceleration Explained

Subject Acceleration

Students who are not being fully challenged through classroom differentiation are considered for subject acceleration. A student is considered for acceleration if they are at the top of their class or in the top 80th percentile or higher of the grade to be accelerated to. This is determined by above-grade-level tests in the area of acceleration. The process includes data and information on the student collected through the Integrated Acceleration System or Iowa Acceleration Scale. A team composed of the student's current teacher, potential receiving teacher, talented and gifted teacher, talented and gifted coordinator/administrator, building administrator(s), and the student's parents will review the data collectively to determine whether subject acceleration should proceed.

Whole Grade Acceleration

Marion Independent School District uses the Integrated Acceleration System or Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine whether whole-grade acceleration is an appropriate intervention for a student.

The Integrated Acceleration Scale or Iowa Acceleration Scale takes into consideration the following factors in determining the success and appropriateness of an acceleration:

- School history
- Ability tests
- Achievement tests
- Prior professional evaluation services
- School and academic factors
- Developmental factors
- Interpersonal skills
- Attitude and support

A team composed of the student's current teacher, potential receiving teacher, talented and gifted teacher, talented and gifted coordinator/administrator, building administrator(s), and the student's parents will review the data collectively to determine whether subject acceleration should proceed.

For more information regarding the Integrated Acceleration System, visit:

<https://accelerationsystem.org/>

Appendix 6 -Contact Information

Contact Information

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