

WACO

Community Schools



Talented and Gifted

Handbook

Revised 8/2021

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Mission Statement:

To provide identified students with the education opportunities to meet their maximum potential and become productive citizens and independent lifelong learners.

To support students' and their families as they seek to discover and develop their talents and abilities.

To support teachers and support staff as they strive to provide enhanced learning opportunities structured to help discover and develop students' talents and abilities.

Vision:

To create an educational environment that affords all students the opportunity to succeed.

Goals:

1. Challenge students by cultivating critical and creative thinking, developing advanced research skills, addressing students' affective needs and promoting creative productivity among gifted and talented students.
2. Differentiate instruction within, as well as outside of, the general education classroom.
3. Gifted and talented students will be identified in their specific area(s) using multiple criteria.
4. Provide additional enrichment opportunities for talented and gifted students.
5. To provide students with trained personnel who are willing to accept gifted students as individuals with different needs and abilities. TAG coordinators will also train and support certified staff. (will be measured with pre/post PD reflection assessment)

Program Overview:

The WACO K-12th grade Talented and Gifted Program serves students in the following areas or in combination:

General Intellectual Ability

- General intellectual ability refers to those who can learn at a faster pace, master high levels of content and handle abstracts at a superior level.

Specific Academic Ability

- Specific academic ability refers to those who excel in a specific curricular area.

Creative Thinking

- Creative thinking refers to those who are intellectually independent, exhibit original thoughts in all aspects, and come up with multiple solutions to a given problem.

Leadership Ability

- Leadership ability refers to those who assume responsibility, have high expectations for self and others, they step up to leadership opportunities and are organized.

Visual and Performing Arts Ability

- Visual and performing arts ability refers to those who show exceptional motor coordination, and have above average ability in expressing self, feelings and moods through dance, drama, music, or visual arts.

Identification Process:

The WACO Community School District established a process to identify talented and gifted students. We ensure equal access to screening and assessment for all students attending school in the district regardless of culture, socio-economic background, disability or native language. The program is focused on students who are gifted in one or more of the previously specified areas.

Identifying students in the WACO Community School District Talented and Gifted Program is an ongoing process involving school administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students. Placement/Participation in the program is not a reward, but rather an alternate way of educating students.

- A. The procedure for K-3 is for the talented and gifted coordinator to conduct lessons in collaboration with the classroom teacher in extended areas of their curriculum. For these grade levels, the talented and gifted coordinator will be a consultant for students that are performing at least one grade level or more above their peers to help differentiate instruction.
- B. Students in grades 4-12 will be identified using a valid and systemic process that includes one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Individual Intelligence and Achievement Tests
 - i. Students are considered for the WACO Talented and Gifted program based on their performance on the previous year's standardized testing. Testing data is analyzed using a z-score, which is the number of standard deviations from the mean of reading, mathematics, and science scores.
 - ii. A z-score of 1.50 - 2.00 usually indicates talented and gifted academic achievement. Any student in this range is automatically placed in the TAG program. If no students in a grade level reach this range, the top 3 scoring students will be accepted as long as their scores are above 1.00.
 - b. Recommendations (Parent, Teacher, Administrator)
 - i. Self recommendation forms are available for students in grades 7-12
 - ii. Located in the back of this handbook
 - iii. Recommendation forms are taken under consideration by the WACO TAG Committee
 - c. Portfolios & Performances (Grades 7-12)
 - i. Mostly to be used for identifying students who are gifted in the area of visual/performing arts, leadership, and/or creativity
 - d. Teacher Observations & Ratings
 - i. Mostly to be used for identifying students who are gifted in the area of visual/performing arts, leadership, and/or creativity
- C. A talented and gifted Personal Education Plan (PEP) will begin when a student is identified. A copy will be kept on file in the Talented and Gifted classroom.

- D. Procedure for placement of students from other districts who have previously been identified as talented and gifted will include a review of the student's file to determine if placement in the WACO Community Schools Talented and Gifted Program is warranted. Further testing may be recommended.

Service Plan:

Grades K-3: Challenge

All students in Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third grade meet in large groups during the school year with the elementary Talented and Gifted Coordinator. Each session is a half an hour. During these sessions students focus on creative thinking, problem solving and higher level thinking skills. The Challenge program offers opportunities for all students to work with the Talented and Gifted Coordinator to identify their learning strengths.

Grades 4-6: Elementary Talented and Gifted

All students in 4th-6th grade are screened for talented and gifted services in the fall of each year. Students placed in the Talented and Gifted program in fourth, fifth and sixth grade meet twice a week during the school year with like-grade level groups. Each session is a half an hour. During these sessions students focus on extending the curriculum beyond the learning they receive in the classroom. Connections are made to novel units, math concepts and events already occurring in their classrooms. Students focus on higher level thinking, STEAM activities, self-directed learning, and advanced material. The Talented and Gifted Coordinator collaborates with the classroom teachers to plan units.

Grades 7-12: Secondary Talented and Gifted Students

Students at WACO High School (grades 7-12) are identified at the beginning of the school year for their placement in the talented and gifted (TAG) program. Identified TAG students meet with the TAG coordinator once a week for 30 minutes in similar grade level groups.

To serve identified students, the curriculum supports the WACO TAG standards which emphasize the process of understanding individual giftedness, developing appropriate social and communication skills, strengthening problem-solving skills and becoming autonomous learners. Instruction consists of content and teaching strategies that reflect the accelerated pace, intellectual processes, and creative abilities that characterize talented and gifted students.

WACO TAG service delivery options may include independent studies/research projects in areas of interest, academic classroom enrichment, collaborative projects, mentorship in area of strength, cluster/flexible grouping, differentiated curriculum including compacted or telescoped classroom content, special counseling services, options for college courses, and/or resource services (pull-out time from class).

Standards:

From the [National Association for Gifted Children](#)

Standard 1: Learning and Development

Description: Educators understand the variations in learning and development in cognitive, affective, and psychosocial areas between and among individuals with gifts and talents, creating learning environments that encourage awareness and understanding of interest, strengths, and needs; cognitive growth, social and emotional, and psychosocial skill development in school, home, and community settings.

- 1.1 Self-Understanding.** Students with gifts and talents recognize their interests, strengths, and needs in cognitive, creative, social, emotional, and psychological areas.
- 1.2 Self-Understanding.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of how they learn and recognize the influences of their identities, cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior.
- 1.3 Self-Understanding.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of and respect for similarities and differences between themselves and their cognitive and chronological peer groups and others in the general population.
- 1.4 Awareness of Needs.** Students identify and access supplemental, outside-of-school resources that support the development of their gifts and talents (e.g., families, mentors, experts, or programs).
- 1.5 Cognitive, Psychosocial, and Affective Growth.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate cognitive growth and psychosocial skills that support their talent development as a result of meaningful and challenging learning activities that address their unique characteristics and needs.
- 1.6 Cognitive Growth and Career Development.** Students with gifts and talents identify future career goals that match their interests and strengths. Students determine resources needed to meet those goals (e.g., supplemental educational opportunities, mentors, financial support).

Standard 2: Assessment

Description: Assessments provide information about identification and learning progress for students with gifts and talents.

- 2.1 Identification.** All students in Pre-K through grade 12 with gifts and talents have equal access to the identification process and proportionally represent each campus.
- 2.2 Identification.** Students with gifts and talents are identified for services that match their interests, strengths, and needs.
- 2.3 Identification.** Students with identified gifts and talents represent diverse backgrounds.
- 2.4 Learning Progress.** As a result of using multiple and ongoing assessments, students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with abilities in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial areas.
- 2.5 Learning Progress.** Students self-assess their learning progress.

Standard 3: Learning Environments

Description: Learning environments foster a love for learning, personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership to ensure specific student outcomes.

- 3.1 Personal Competence.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk taking.
- 3.2 Responsibility and Leadership.** Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility.
- 3.3 Cultural Competence.** Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.

3.4 Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication and are competent consumers of media and technology.

Roles:

Here are the roles of school administrators, classroom teachers, and talented and gifted facilitators in providing appropriate programming to each talented and gifted student:

Administrators:

- Participate in program evaluation
- Serve on the TAG Committee
- Have an understanding of the unique characteristics of talented and gifted students.
- Provide continued support to ensure student success.
- Knowing and understanding the Iowa Code of talented and gifted programming.

Classroom Teachers:

- Assess students and provide appropriate instruction in collaboration with the Talented and Gifted Coordinator.
- Provide representation to the TAG Committee.
- Have an understanding of the unique characteristics of talented and gifted students.
- Support and help implement differentiated instruction.

Counselor:

- Support both academic and social emotional success of all talented and gifted students.
- Serve on the TAG Committee
- Have an understanding of the unique characteristics of talented and gifted students.

Parents:

- Have an understanding of the unique characteristics of talented and gifted students.
- Identify and nurture their child's strengths and weaknesses.
- Encourage and foster opportunities for further learning and growth.

Talented and Gifted Coordinator(s):

- Identify students who exhibit one or more areas of giftedness, using multiple criteria.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers to identify strategies, instructional practices and resources for talented and gifted students within the classroom.
- Participate in program evaluation.
- Provide staff professional development.
- Compile and maintain personalized education plan. (PEP)
- Coordinate talented and gifted programming.
- Communicate with parents as to the progress of their students.

Program Evaluation:

Teachers, parents, or students will be asked to fill out a survey periodically regarding the Talented and Gifted program at WACO. The Talented and Gifted Coordinators self-assess the program yearly. If needed, TAG Coordinators will assess the TAG program with Great Prairie AEA and/or administrators.

Exit Criteria:

No single criterion will be used to determine exit from the WACO Talented and Gifted Program. The decisions regarding exit will be made by the WACO TAG Committee based on current, relevant data. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) at the elementary will help determine exiting a student.

Talented and Gifted Budget:

The WACO Community School District follows the state funding formula for Talented and Gifted programming. The formula is based on the certified enrollment. An annual budget is prepared each year. The majority of this budget is spent on staffing needs.

The WACO Community School District requires the K-12 Talented and Gifted endorsement for all Talented and Gifted coordinators.

Appendix A

281 - IAC 12.5(12) Provision for Gifted and Talented Students

Goals:

1. Each school district shall incorporate gifted and talented programming into its comprehensive school improvement plan as required by Iowa Code section 257.43

Goals and Performance Measures:

- A school district must have separate program goals for its gifted and talented program (more than one goal.)
 - A school district may choose to have gifted and talented program goals on file locally or incorporate these goals into its comprehensive school improvement plan.
2. Each School district shall review and evaluate its gifted and talented programming.
 - The content and frequency of the district's evaluation of its gifted and talented program is locally determined.
 3. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall include the following gifted and talented provisions: valid and systematic procedures, including multiple selection criteria for identifying gifted and talented students from the total student population; goals and performance measures; a qualitatively differentiated program to meet the student's cognitive and affective needs; staffing provisions; an inservice design; a budget and qualification of personnel administering the program.
 - School districts are required to provide a gifted and talented program for all identified students regardless of grade level. Iowa Code section 257.44 defines a gifted and talented child without regard to grade level. If a child can be identified as talented and gifted, the programming must be made available to that child.
 - Provision for gifted and talented students must be offered during the regular school day.
 - How a district selects students for gifted and talented services is a local decision.
 - Procedures for identification shall not be arbitrary and capricious and must contain multiple measures.
 - The district must provide staff to administer the gifted and talented program K-12. How the district decides to staff the gifted and talented program is locally determined.
 - How a school district differentiates its program to the cognitive and affective needs of gifted and talented students is a local decision. The district must provide more than the regular curriculum for gifted and talented students (e.g., acceleration, compacting, and/or enrichment to and beyond the regular curriculum. This differentiation may occur in a variety of ways (e.g, pull out, within a regular classroom setting, or off-site)

- The district must provide professional development with regard to gifted and talented students. Professional development frequency, content and recipients are local decisions.
- The district receives funding for gifted and talented students through general school aid. The district must have a separate budget for gifted and talented programming.
- Practitioners licensed and employed after August 1, 1995 and assigned as teacher or coordinators in programs for talented and gifted will be required to hold the endorsement for talented and gifted teacher - coordinator.

Appendix B

Talented and Gifted 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 rates faster or ages younger than the norm. This can occur through grade skipping or subject acceleration (e.g., a fifth-grade student taking sixth-grade math).

Achievement Tests

Tests designed to measure what students have already learned, mostly in specific content areas. An example of an achievement test is the Iowa Assessments

Affective Curriculum

Curriculum that focuses on person/social awareness and adjustment, and includes the study of values, attitudes, and self. Sometimes referred to as social-emotional curriculum.

Asynchrony

A term used to describe disparate rates of intellectual, emotional, and physical rates of growth or development often displayed by gifted children.

Authentic Assessment

Evaluating student learning through the use of student portfolios, performance, or observations in place of or in conjunction with more traditional measures of performance such as tests and written assignments. The process allows students to be evaluated using assessments that more closely resemble real-world tasks.

Autonomous Learner

A student who solves problems or develops new ideas with minimal external guidance.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the taxonomy is often used to develop curriculum for gifted children. There are six levels within the taxonomy that move from basic to high levels of thinking. The original levels included knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The taxonomy was later updated to reflect 21st-century skills, with

the levels changing to remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Cluster Grouping

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.

Concurrent or Dual Enrollment

Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit. Dual enrollment is viewed as providing high school students benefits such as greater access to a wider range of rigorous academic and technical courses, savings in time and money on a college degree, promoting efficiency of learning, and enhancing admission to and retention in college. The terms may also be used to refer to middle grade students taking high school courses and earning credit toward graduation.

Curriculum Compacting

An instructional technique that allows teachers to adjust curriculum for students by determining which students already have 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.

Distance Learning

When a student takes a course remotely (most commonly over the Internet) from a school or teacher different from his or her local/home district. These can come in the form of online high schools, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), courses for dual credit through universities, or courses offered by Talent Search programs.

Enrichment

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

Flexible Grouping

An instructional strategy where students are grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction. True flexible grouping permits students to move in and out of various grouping patterns, depending on the course content. Grouping can be determined by ability, size, and/or interest.

Independent Study

A self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as 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.

Learning Styles/Learning Preferences

Preferred way(s) in which individuals interact or process new information across the three domains of learning identified in the taxonomy of education objectives: cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (attitude). An individual's learning preference/learning style is how he or she learns best.

Mentor

A community member who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field of study aspirations.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

A curriculum and instruction model that asks students to solve real-world, complex, or open-ended problems by using research, decision-making, creative and critical thinking, and other 21st-century skills.

Pull-Out Program

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

Social-Emotional Needs

Gifted and talented students may have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, and 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.

STEAM

An acronym for the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. Providing STEAM curriculum is encouraged as a way to grow students' interests and potentials in these areas.

Telescope

To cover the same amount of materials or activities in less time, thereby allowing more time for enrichment activities and projects that better suit the interests, needs, and readiness levels of gifted students.

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 (GT/LD). This also applies to students who are gifted with ADHD or gifted with autism.

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. .

Appendix C:

The Bright Child	The Gifted Child
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Has good ideas	Has wild and silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail; elaborates
Top group	Beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

Janice Szabos, *Challenge*

WACO Recommendation Form For Talented & Gifted Services

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Student: Parent/Guardian Teacher Administrator Peer Other

Please review the chart below and record how often you observe the following behaviors or characteristics in the student you are recommending for WACO talented and gifted services.

Circle the number that best indicates your response using the following scale:

1=seldom or never, 2=occasionally, 3=considerably, 4=almost always

Behavior or Characteristic					
1. Has self-stimulated curiosity; shows independence in trying to learn more about something	N/A	1	2	3	4
2. Reasons things out, thinks clearly, and comprehends meaning	N/A	1	2	3	4
3. Is often selected by peers for positions of academic leadership	N/A	1	2	3	4
4. Adapts readily to new situations; flexible in thought and action; not disturbed if the normal routine is changed	N/A	1	2	3	4
5. Uses unique and unusual ways to solve problems	N/A	1	2	3	4
6. Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics beyond usual interests of their age	N/A	1	2	3	4
7. Fluently produces and elaborates on ideas	N/A	1	2	3	4
8. Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships	N/A	1	2	3	4
9. Quickly notices inconsistencies and discontinuities	N/A	1	2	3	4
10. Expresses interest in understanding self and others	N/A	1	2	3	4
11. Is alert and keenly observant and responds quickly	N/A	1	2	3	4
12. Strives toward perfection, is self-critical, is not easily satisfied with own speed or products	N/A	1	2	3	4

13. Makes generalizations and draws conclusions that summarize complex information	N/A	1	2	3	4
14. Asks provocative and inquisitive questions	N/A	1	2	3	4
15. Can perform more difficult mental tasks than peers	N/A	1	2	3	4
16. Tends to direct others in activities	N/A	1	2	3	4
17. Challenges authority when sense of justice is offended, very concerned with right and wrong, good and bad	N/A	1	2	3	4
18. Superior sense of judgement when evaluating things	N/A	1	2	3	4
19. Displays a great deal of intellectual playfulness, fantasizes, imagines (I wonder what would happen if...)	N/A	1	2	3	4
20. Persistent with tasks	N/A	1	2	3	4
21. Independent, self-motivated	N/A	1	2	3	4
22. Usually “sees more” or “gets more” out of a story, film, etc. than others	N/A	1	2	3	4
23. Reads a great deal on his or her own	N/A	1	2	3	4
24. Is easily bored with routine tasks	N/A	1	2	3	4
25. Prefers to work independently	N/A	1	2	3	4
26. Is interested in many “adult” problems such as religion, politics, race, war - more than usual for age level	N/A	1	2	3	4
27. Is sometimes radical and spirited in disagreement	N/A	1	2	3	4
28. Sees humor in situations that may not be humorous to others, is playful with words	N/A	1	2	3	4
29. Is reflective and tends to take time to think before jumping in	N/A	1	2	3	4
30. Thinks independently, follows own ideas/values, rather than others’	N/A	1	2	3	4

Please feel free to cite any examples of talented or gifted behavior on a separate sheet of paper.

WACO Talented and Gifted
7-12 Student Self-Referral for TAG Identification

Your Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Please answer the following questions about yourself to help us understand you as an individual and as a learner. This information will be used by the WACO TAG Screening Committee to help determine eligibility for talented and gifted services.

Which area of Talented and Gifted do you feel you would be placed in (circle one or more):

General Intellect

Specific Academic Ability

Creative Thinking

Leadership Ability

Visual/Performing Arts

What hobbies or special interests do you have?

What accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?

For what reasons do you read? Describe some books or other materials you enjoy reading.

What are your strengths as a student?

What are your weaknesses as a student?

Do you feel you are different from other students in your class? If so, how?

What are your expectations for your future (after high school)?

What would help you gain more from your school experience?

How would being identified as a TAG student benefit you?

What else would you like us to know about you?

I wish to be considered for the Talented and Gifted Program. I understand that the TAG screening committee's decision will be made based on a variety of information sources, including this self-evaluation, test scores, grades, and teacher/parent recommendations. I also understand that even if I am not found eligible for TAG this year, new information might cause the committee to reconsider me later.

Signed _____ Date _____