



# Talented and Gifted Handbook

Monroe Township School District

2021-2022

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## **Monroe Township School District**

### **State Regulations**

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

*Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

### **District Vision Statement**

The Monroe Township Board of Education commits itself to all children by preparing them to reach their full potential and to function in a global society through a preeminent education.

### **District Mission Statement**

The Monroe Public Schools in collaboration with the members of the community shall ensure that all children receive an exemplary education by well-trained committed staff in a safe and orderly environment.

### **Monroe Township Definition of Giftedness**

The Monroe Township Board of Education defines gifted and talented students as pupils who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the district and who require modification of their education program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities. Monroe Township recognizes gifted and talented students as those students, whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require a variety of special provisions to meet their educational needs. The school district also recognizes that students identified as gifted and talented come from all races, socioeconomic, groups, and geographic locales/environments. Our mission is to provide optimal development of the gifted student's intellectual, emotional, and social abilities, and to honor the diversity among all students through a differentiated and challenging curriculum.

## **IDENTIFICATION PHILOSOPHY**

Children enter school with wide variations in skills, abilities, interests, and experiential backgrounds that help foster readiness to learn. Children are not bound by age from possessing or displaying a variety of talents. At early ages, it is often very difficult to denote how much precocious behavior can be attributed to an enriched home environment versus actual intellectual ability.

Identification of academically gifted students is far more reliable beyond the early grades. The first three primary years are critical for gifted children—as they are for all children—because at this time children are developing educational patterns and attitudes that last a lifetime and may affect later school performance.

Giftedness is more than developing skills faster or going through the developmental milestones earlier. Young gifted children are intensely curious, produce a constant stream of questions, learn quickly and remember easily, and think about the world differently than their age-mates. Their intense curiosity may get them into trouble, particularly when they try to figure out how something works. They may have a super-high energy level and yet be highly sensitive and perfectionistic. Young gifted children are at risk for boredom, frustration, and depression. Recognizing giftedness is important because to persist, giftedness needs nurturing.

Students with strong intellectual aptitudes have strengths in the areas often associated with the ability to rapidly learn and apply academic knowledge. The advanced cognitive development of gifted children enables them to learn and understand more advanced and complex material than their non-gifted age mates. The goal of the identification process is to find students, whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special provisions in the form of an appropriately challenging curriculum program to meet their educational needs. Because the concentration is on identifying student needs (rather than students) the critical decision to be made is not if a student is gifted and talented but whether a student's ability warrants special educational provisions and to what degree and dimensions.

## **Common Characteristics of Gifted Individuals**

Because gifted children are so diverse, not all exhibit all characteristics all of the time. However, there are common characteristics that many gifted individuals share:

Unusual alertness, even in infancy  
Rapid learner; puts thoughts together quickly  
Excellent memory  
Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age  
Advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors and abstract ideas  
Enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles  
Often self-taught reading and writing skills as preschooler  
Deep, intense feelings and reactions  
Highly sensitive  
Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful  
Idealism and sense of justice at early age  
Concern with social and political issues and injustices  
Longer attention span and intense concentration  
Preoccupied with own thoughts—daydreamer  
Learn basic skills quickly and with little practice  
Asks probing questions  
Wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)  
Highly developed curiosity  
Interest in experimenting and doing things differently  
Puts idea or things together that are not typical  
Keen and/or unusual sense of humor  
Desire to organize people/things through games or complex schemas  
Vivid imaginations (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)

Reproduced by permission from: Webb, J., Gore, J., Amend, E., DeVries, A. (2007). *A parent's guide to gifted children*. Tucson, AZ: Great Potential Press, [www.greatpotentialpress.com](http://www.greatpotentialpress.com).

## What Services are Offered

Services Offered	Responsibility	Population Served
Differentiated Instruction	Classroom teachers	Grades K - 12
Higher order thinking challenges	Classroom teachers	Grades K-12
Cluster grouping for identified students	Cluster teachers	Grades 2-5
TAG – enrichment	TAG teachers	Grades 4-8
Accelerated Math	Teachers	Grades 5-8
STEM Academy	High school teachers	Grades 9-12
World Studies	High school teachers	Grade 9
American Studies	High school teachers	Grade 10
AP U.S. History	High school teachers	Grade 11
★ AP Capstone	High school teachers	Grade 12

### ★ Beginning 2021 School Year

#### **Grade K-1**

K-1 Gifted and Talented services aims to provide optimal development of the advanced students’ intellectual, emotional, and social abilities and honor the diversity among all students through a differentiated and challenging curriculum. Essential to this philosophy is identifying services that promote gifted behaviors rather than labeling children as having reached a state of “being gifted.” The curriculum for identified K-1 students will be differentiated in the areas of content, process, and product. Differentiated Instructional Strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Student centered classroom
- Cooperative environment
- Questioning techniques
- Critical, creative, evaluative, and interpersonal skills
- Learning Centers
- Flexible grouping

Although we do not formally affix the label of “gifted” to children in grades K-1, the district does evaluate students as potentially gifted based on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and teacher rating scales to address each child’s current instructional needs.

**Differentiated Instruction: Grade K-12**

Differentiated Instruction is a way of teaching that allows teachers to customize their instruction, activities and/or assessments to meet the needs of individual learners. For example, a teacher may differentiate a reading lesson by assigning students different books to read *based on the student's reading ability*. A teacher may differentiate math homework by selecting different assignments and problems *based on individual students' needs and mastery levels*. A teacher may differentiate a culminating assignment *by allowing students to choose* whether they want to take a written test, create a project that demonstrates their mastery of the concept, or give an oral presentation on the subject matter. Research suggests that differentiated instruction is one of the best instructional practices.

**Cluster Grouping: Grade 2-5**

Cluster grouping is an educational strategy in which four to eight highly gifted students are assigned to an otherwise heterogeneous classroom within their grade. Formal cluster grouping takes place in grades 2- 5. Cluster grouping will look different in each teacher's classroom. Typically a clustered student is ready to move at a more rapid pace once they have the base knowledge of the concept(s) being taught. Teachers may use different instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students within their classroom. Clustering could be a small group of learners who already have mastered a concept accepting a more challenging problem to solve collectively, with a learning partner, or alone. Cluster grouping is not increasing the quantity of the work produced or changing the grade level of the curriculum being explored. It impacts the complexity of their grade level assignments and their curriculum. Cluster groupings yield deeper, richer experiences that challenge all students at their individual learning level.

**TAG: Grade 4 - 8**

The TAG program in grades 4 – 8 is an afterschool program (grades 4 and 5 art, before school) that provides subject area enrichment for gifted students. Students are required to complete short and long -term projects that reflect project-based learning. The following subjects are offered for each grade level:

Grade 4 - 6 Art

Grade 6 -8 STEM, Humanities

**Grade 9-12**

Monroe Township High School offers several courses to provide gifted and talented students' an array of opportunities to provide challenging academic course work.



Courses include but are not limited to :World Studies (grade 9), American Studies (grade 10), STEM academy (grades 9-12),and AP Capstone (Grades 11-12).

## Selection Criteria

### Language Arts/ Humanities TAG: Must meet all criteria

1. 127 or above on CogAT verbal
2. Teacher Recommendation
3. 90% average winter MAP score

### Mathematics/STEM TAG: Must meet all criteria

1. 127 or above on CogAT quantitative
2. Teacher Recommendation
3. 90% average winter MAP score

### Art TAG:

1. Teacher Recommendation
2. Report card grades 90% or above in all subjects

### Cluster: Must meet all criteria

1. 132 on CogAT composite
2. Scales for Rating Gifted Students Parent Form
3. Scales for Rating Gifted Students Teacher Form
4. 90% average winter MAP score

### High School:

1. **GPA 3.5 or above- grades 10-12 or report card grade 90% or above - grade 9**
2. **Most recent NJSLA score Exceeding expectations in ELA and mathematics**

## 2021 - 2022 Talented and Gifted Testing Information

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Student Population</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>All students</b>	<b>Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)</b>	<b>March 2022</b>
<b>2 - 5</b>	<b>New students only</b>	<b>Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)</b>	<b>March 2022</b>
<b>6-8</b>	<b>New students and students who previously scored a 120 or above on CogAT composite</b>	<b>Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)</b>	<b>September 2021</b> (please contact guidance in the first 2 weeks of September)



## Myths and Truths about Gifted Students

*Adapted from **College Planning for Gifted Students, 2nd edition**, by Sandra Berger  
ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education  
<http://ericec.org>.*

### **Common Myths about Gifted Students:**

- Gifted students are a homogeneous group - all high achievers.
- Gifted students do not need help. If they are really gifted, they can manage on their own.
- Gifted students have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and abilities somehow exempt them from the hassles of daily life.
- The future of a gifted student is assured: A world of opportunities lies before the student.
- Gifted students are self-directed; they know where they are heading.
- The social and emotional development of the gifted student is at the same level as his or her intellectual development.
- Gifted students are nerds and social isolates.
- The gifted student's family always prizes his or her abilities.
- Gifted students need to serve as examples to others, and they should always assume extra responsibility.
- Gifted students make everyone else smarter.
- Gifted students can accomplish anything they put their minds to. All they have to do is apply themselves.
- Gifted students are naturally creative and do not need encouragement.
- Gifted children are easy to raise and a welcome addition to any classroom.

### **Truths about Gifted Students:**

- Gifted students are often perfectionistic and idealistic. They may equate achievement and grades with self-esteem and self-worth, which sometimes leads to fear of failure and interferes with achievement.
- Gifted students may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, resulting in guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low.
- Gifted students are asynchronous. Their chronological age, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development may all be at different levels. For example, a 5-year-old may be able to read and comprehend a third-grade book but may not be able to write legibly.
- Some gifted children are "mappers" (sequential learners), while others are "leapers" (spatial learners). Leapers may not know how they got a "right answer." Mappers may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer.
- Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins! Their boredom can result in low achievement and grades.
- Gifted children are problem solvers. They benefit from working on open-ended, interdisciplinary problems; for example, how to solve a shortage of community resources. Gifted students often refuse to work for grades alone.
- Gifted students often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with concrete study- and test-taking skills. They may not be able to select one answer in a multiple choice question because they see how all the answers might be correct.
- Gifted students who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

### Bright Child vs. Gifted Learner

<b>BRIGHT CHILD</b>	<b>GIFTED LEARNER</b>
1. Knows the answers	1. Asks the questions
2. Is interested	2. Is highly curious
3. Is attentive	3. Is mentally and physically involved
4. Has good ideas	4. Has wild, silly ideas
5. Works hard	5. Plays around, yet tests well
6. Answers the questions	6. Discusses in detail, elaborates
7. Top group	7. Beyond the group
8. Listens with interest	8. Shows strong feelings and opinions
9. Learns with ease	9. Already knows
10. 6-8 repetitions for mastery	10. 1-2 repetitions for mastery
11. Understands ideas	11. Constructs abstractions
12. Enjoys peers	12. Prefers adults
13. Grasps the meaning	13. Draws inferences
14. Completes assignments	14. Initiates projects
15. Is receptive	15. Is intense
16. Copies accurately	16. Creates a new design
17. Enjoys school	17. Enjoys learning
18. Absorbs information	18. Manipulates information
19. Technician	19. Inventor
20. Good memorizer	20. Good guesser
21. Enjoys straight forward sequential presentation	21. Thrives on complexity
22. Is alert	22. Is keenly observant
23. Is pleased with own learning	23. Is highly self-critical

## **Out of District Programs**

### **Center for Talented Youth**

Johns Hopkins University, 3400 N. Charles St., Baltimore, 410-516-0337. Offers summer residential program and school year distance learning courses for students in grades 1-8.

### **Gifted Child Society**

190 Rock Rd., Glen Rock, 201-444-6530. Non-profit organization offers Sat. morning workshops, summer programs, parent seminars and educator training.

### **HEROES Academy**

317 George St., New Brunswick, 732-690-7991. Accelerated academic enrichment in science, engineering, computer science, math and language arts. Class placement based on demonstrated academic achievement which allows students to study advanced topics with mental peers, providing them with a unique opportunity to develop lifelong friendships with other children close to their age who share similar interests.

### **Montclair State University Academically Gifted/Talented Youth Programs**

Montclair State University, 1 Normal Ave., Montclair, NJ, 973-655-4104. Hours: Spring/fall weekends, summer, and online. The MSU G&T program offers onsite, offsite, and online K-12 Gifted & Talented courses and services. Online courses include summer AP courses, Wild Weather, and Python Programming.

### **National Society for the Gifted & Talented**

Non-profit organization created to help identify and encourage gifted and talented youth provides information about educational resources, gifted programs, scholarships and more.

### **New Jersey Association for Gifted Children**

PO Box 667, Mount Laurel, 856-273-7530. Volunteer organization hosts student, parent and educator workshops, an annual conference, supports advocacy and maintains website providing information and resources for gifted children in New Jersey.

### **Summer Institute for the Gifted**

866-303-4744. Day and residential programs for gifted students ages 5-17. New Jersey locations include Princeton, Lincroft and Hoboken.