

Waterville Public Schools
Gifted and Talented Program Plan
2008-09

PHILOSOPHY:

Waterville Public Schools Gifted and Talented Program Philosophy:

We acknowledge diversity among students. Our goal is to match students' strengths and needs with appropriate programming. We are committed to providing a range of services in the arts and academics to meet the individual needs of our gifted and talented students. These services will vary based on the developmental level of the students being served. Ideally, at all levels, the classroom provides the best setting for students to develop their talents. To the extent that the students' needs cannot be provided for in the classroom setting, alternatives will be identified and implemented.

PROGRAM ABSTRACT

The Gifted and Talented program in Waterville Public Schools is designed to serve students in grades K-12 who excel, or have the potential to excel, beyond their age peers in the regular school program, to the extent that they need and can benefit from programs for the gifted and talented. These students may demonstrate this across all academic areas or in one or more academic areas or in the literary, performing or visual arts. The population identified in academic areas typically comprises about five percent of the population, with an additional five percent typically comprising the gifted and talented in the arts.

A continuum of options, in lieu of the regular curriculum, that are aligned with the Maine Learning Results will provide the basis of program planning for gifted and talented students in language arts, math, science, social studies and the arts.

Grades K-2 – Program services at the primary level will focus substantially on methods that support the classroom teacher in differentiating instruction for students who are developmentally or academically advanced. In addition, program staff will plan and implement lessons and activities that allow further observation of students who may be considered for future program services. In instances where student needs are so significant that typical differentiation opportunities are not sufficient, additional services may be considered.

Grades 3-5 – A variety of program options are available for consideration at this level, including, but not limited to, consultation with classroom teachers regarding differentiated instruction, regularly scheduled small group meetings for specialized instruction in a particular subject, independent study, and out-of-grade placement.

Grades 6-8 – A variety of program options are available for consideration at this level, including, but not limited to consultation with classroom teachers regarding differentiated instruction, regularly scheduled small group meetings for specialized instruction in a particular subject, independent study, mentorships, out-of-grade placement, and online courses.

Grades 9-12 -- Program options available for consideration at this level include, but are not limited to, regional programs, cross-registration for specific courses at area schools, online courses, AP courses, college courses, mentorships, college and career planning, and independent study.

In addition, the overall Gifted and Talented program will work to support a range of appropriate programming options to meet student needs, provide identified students with positive group experiences to promote social and emotional health, and provide information and services to parents and classroom teachers about the special needs of gifted learners.

Note: Programming options for identified students in the arts are still being developed.

IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

There are three major components in the gifted and talented identification and placement process. These include screening, identification and program services, and appeals process.

1. **Screening** – The screening process will be used to identify *potential* candidates for GT services. Three tools will be used to screen all students. At least one tool will be objective and one will be subjective. Criteria for objective measures will include Exceeds the Standard (or highest performance level status) or 95th percentile or above. Any student who meets the criteria of ANY ONE of these will be moved to the pool to be considered further.
 - Students in grade spans K-2 screening may include kindergarten screening assessments, results of Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA), writing assessments, local math assessments and teacher and parent referrals.
 - In grades 3-5, screening measures may include MEA results for reading, science and math, results from NWEA math and literacy assessments, student achievement information from the WPS Core Assessments in math, science, social studies and literacy, interest inventories and performance assessments in science and social studies, and teacher and parent referrals.
 - In Grades 6-8, screening may include results of NWEA in reading and math for grades, MEA in reading, math, as well as science for grade 8, student achievement information from WPS Core Assessments in all content areas, performance assessments and interest inventories for science and social studies, and teacher, parent and student (self) referrals.
 - In grades 9-12, screening may include results of NWEA in math and reading, grade 8 MEA, student achievement information from WPS Core Assessments in all content areas, performance assessments and interest inventories in science and social studies, teacher, parent and student (self) referrals.

- Screening will be conducted annually at grades 3, 5 and 8. Students entering WPS at other grades will be screened as they enter, and information available from their previous districts will be considered.

Note: Screening procedures to identify students in the arts are yet to be finalized.

2. **Identification** – Once a pool of students has been screened and identified as potential candidates for GT services, a GT Identification Committee, comprised of WPS GT staff, one classroom teacher from the grade span, and the building principal will meet to identify specific students for GT services.

The responsibilities of the Committee in relation to identification are:

- a) Review the information collected on children who have met the screening criteria;
- b) Collect additional information when appropriate;
- c) Select children for placement in the gifted and talented program based upon an in-depth assessment of the collected information;
- d) Oversee the annual review of the selection process;
- e) Assure that the selection process is equitable.
- f) Ensure that students will be allowed to bring in outside information, if available, to demonstrate that they would benefit from the gifted program.
- g) Place students who are referred outside the screening cycle on monitor status until the next identification/programming session.

3. **Program Services** – Once a student has been identified, the GT Identification Committee will develop a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for the identified student. The PLP will outline how programming options will be implemented in order to address the strengths and needs of the student.

The GT Identification Committee will also:

- Assure collaboration between the regular classroom teacher and gifted and talented program staff to develop the program that will be provided for selected children.
- Notify the superintendent of the children selected for the program.
- Provide the superintendent a description of the program(s) that will be provided.
- Notify parents of the eligibility of their child for participation in the program, provide them with a description of the program and obtain written parental permission to place the child in the program.
- Maintain records on each child's participation in the gifted and talented program.
- Conduct an annual review of each child's program to evaluate appropriateness of placement and instruction.

4. **Exit Procedure:** At the screening points outlined above, if screening information does not support the conclusion that a student excels or has the potential to excel

beyond their age peers in the regular school program, to the extent that they need and can benefit from programs for the gifted and talented, parents will be notified and the student will be exited from the program. Additionally, a student and/or his or her parent may request that the student be allowed to exit the program. A student may request to exit the program with parent permission. If parents do not give permission for the child to exit the program, a meeting of the identification team, the parent and the student will take place to determine the appropriate action. A parent may request that a child be exited from the program.

5. Appeals Process – An appeal may be requested by a student, parent, teacher, or school administrator by completing a GT Appeal Form and submitting it to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. The Assistant Superintendent will review the GT Appeal Form with the GT Identification Committee, and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools for his/her action. As per school system policy, any appeals made in respect to actions of the Superintendent may be directed to the School Board for further review and/or action.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Personnel employed in the WPS gifted and talented program will have specialized preparation in gifted education, expertise in appropriate differentiated content and instructional practices, and involvement in ongoing professional development.

Ongoing training and information will be provided to WPS classroom teachers regarding differentiated instruction and activities for GT students.

STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT

The GT program will be staffed with individuals who are certified as gifted and talented teachers or who have specific content knowledge and experiences in working with GT students.

The WPS Assistant Superintendent will be responsible for overseeing and supervising the GT program and staff. The GT program's policies and procedures will be reviewed yearly to ensure they are in compliance with state rules and regulations, and the identification process and procedures are fair and provide for the nomination and selection of students from all populations of students

ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The WPS GT program will be evaluated annually by the GT staff and WPS administration using a variety of information that may include teacher surveys, parent surveys, student surveys and/or reflections, GT staff reflections, student achievement information, review of the identification process, and review of progress towards program goals.