

The Screening, Referral, Identification, and Eligibility Processes for the Gifted Program
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools

Screening

All students in WJCC are continuously screened for the potential need for gifted services each year of school. Gifted and Talent Development Resource Teachers (GTDRTs or GTD Resource Teachers) work with principals, classroom teachers, and other specialists in the building to screen regularly collected student testing data and look for test scores that might indicate a need for more academic challenge in the classroom. Some of the types of tests that all students may take are:

- VKRP (Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program, grade K),
- PALS (Phonological Assessment of Literacy Skills, grade K-2),
- Achievement test scores in Reading, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies (such as Measures of Academic Progress tests, grades 3-8, or Virginia Standards of Learning tests, grades 3-11),
- Math pre-tests and post-tests for each math unit in each grade level (grades K-8),
- A nationally normed ability test (typically in grade 2), and
- PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, grades 9 and 11).

GTD Resource Teachers collaborate with teachers of students who consistently meet high and/or above-grade-level benchmarks on one or more of these tests each year and are exceeding expectations in the classroom. They support the teacher with providing Tier II differentiation in the classroom, which is when the curriculum, instruction, and activities are adapted to be more rigorous than the Tier I core curriculum. Work products from Tier II assignments as well as behavioral characteristics displayed by students are also screened at least once each school year, typically at mid-year once all mid-year data is collected by K-12 teachers.

Based on the screening of all these data, a pool of potential candidates is created to either refer for gifted testing or monitor through further use of Tier II differentiated curriculum and instruction (Talent Pool).

Referral

The Commonwealth of Virginia allows teachers, school personnel, parents, guardians, community members, peers, and even the student himself or herself, to refer a child for consideration for a school division's gifted program at any time. Referrals made by school staff members are considered "Internal Referrals" and referrals made by other stakeholders are considered "External Referrals." The Referral Process and timeframes are advertised to families and community members through division and school websites, school newsletters, e-mails, and division social media accounts.

Internal Referrals

Teachers

When a student's test scores, classroom performance, and/or potentially gifted behavioral characteristics is far beyond that of grade level expectations, the teacher may consider the student to be someone who might be eligible for the gifted program. In this situation, the teacher may refer the student for the gifted program by completing a [Referral Form](#) and submitting it to the GTD Resource Teacher for the school. Parents are then contacted by the GTD Resource Teacher for permission to allow the student to undergo the gifted identification and eligibility process. This typically happens in the spring of each school year when the student has had a whole semester to demonstrate his or her academic abilities.

Other School Personnel

Internal K-12 universal screening procedures can prompt gifted personnel to make a referral for students for the gifted program. Any school staff member can make a referral based on observations from working with the student by completing a [Referral Form](#) and submitting it to the school's GTD Resource Teacher, as well.

External Referrals

Parents, Guardians, and Self-Referrals

When considering whether to refer their child for gifted services, parents or guardians may want to ask their child's classroom teacher the following questions (self-referring students can also ask their teacher these questions):

1. In what areas are my child showing strength beyond grade level expectations?
2. What types of potentially gifted behaviors are my child showing in your class (a few examples of these behaviors are intense curiosity, passion for learning in a strength area, outside-of-the-box thinking, and the potential for very high achievement in a strength area)?
3. What types of Tier II differentiation is my child receiving in his/her strength areas ("Tier II differentiation" means curriculum, instruction, and activities that are modified to provide enrichment or acceleration in the regular classroom)?
4. Are there any other things that can be done to challenge my child in the classroom in his or her strength area that you have not tried yet?

After parents decide to refer their child for the Gifted Program, they must complete a [Referral Form](#) and a [Parent Consent Form for Gifted Testing](#) (see "WJCC Resources" for Spanish forms).

These must be turned in to the GTD Resource Teacher at the child's school. The GTD Resource Teacher will also ask the parent/guardian to complete a Parent Questionnaire for background information about the child. Self-referring students must also complete a referral form, get parent consent for testing, and work with the referred student's parents on the questionnaire and "Scales for Identifying Gifted Students" form.

Community Members and Peers

Community Members or peers who would like to refer a student for the gifted program may complete a [Referral Form](#) and submit it to the GTD Resource Teacher at the student's school. It is suggested that the community member or peer talk over the idea of referral with the student's parent or guardian first to ensure that they would give permission for the gifted identification process to occur.

Once permission for gifted testing is received, the division operates under a **90-school-day timeline** to complete the identification and eligibility processes. This means that the timeline for completing all the processes necessary for a gifted referral only uses days in which students are actively engaged in new instruction, whether online or in-person. Thus, school holidays, weekends, and teacher workdays do not count in the timeline.

Please see the Local Plan to learn more about transfer students and military transfer students who were identified gifted in prior schools.

Identification

Once gifted personnel receive gifted referrals, then the identification process begins. The division has a **90-school-day timeline** to complete the entire identification (testing) and eligibility processes. The GTD Resource Teacher at each school conducts the gifted testing activities. Data is collected for four areas:

Ability: The GTD Resource Teacher will administer a new ability test to the student if there is not a current ability test score on file from the 2nd grade ability screening done at all elementary schools each spring (ability test scores are valid for three years). The ability test will produce ability scores for the areas of Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal.

Achievement/Curriculum-Based Measures: The GTD Resource Teacher will collect achievement test scores in Reading, Math, Science, and/or Social Studies in grades 3-11 (as available), using tests with high ceilings that are nationally normed whenever possible. These types of tests are the most useful for gifted identification.

Gifted Behavioral Checklists: Classroom teachers and specialists who serve the referred student will be asked to complete a gifted behavioral checklist to provide insight into how the student performs in his or her general education class. Teachers should write down anecdotal notes and specific examples of students' higher level thinking ability and performance as well as note

student performance in any Tier II Differentiation activities provided by the teacher. Parents will also be asked to provide observational input based on examples of gifted behaviors the student might display at home and in the community.

Gifted Performance Tasks (Products): The GTD Resource Teacher will collect performance task data on the student. These tasks could be math problem solving activities, writing samples, literature analysis activities, creative or critical thinking activities, etc. Ideally, students who are referred for the gifted identification process should have experienced some Tier II Differentiation in their regular classroom, as well, and that performance data will be collected for the student, too.

GTD Resource Teachers will also gather input from any specialists who work with the referred student, such as case managers for special education students or English Learners. Data pertaining to those specialized programs will also be collected. In addition, GTD Resource Teachers will collect a Parent Questionnaire for background information about the student and any anecdotal notes from teachers or classroom observations.

Once collected, all the data must be scored, and the results placed on a *Student Identification Profile*.

Eligibility

After all gifted testing data is collected, scored, and placed on the *Student Identification Profile*, the Identification/Placement Committee meets to determine each students' eligibility for gifted services within 90 school days of receiving parents' consent for assessment. The committee is made up of an administrator, 1-2 Gifted Resource Teachers, and the WJCC Coordinator for Gifted Education and Talent Development, who facilitates the eligibility meeting. Other school personnel may attend if appropriate or if requested (such as teachers, specialists, or case managers).

The purpose of the gifted program is to meet the academic needs of students who are performing at such high levels of achievement or who show the potential for such high levels of achievement when compared to others of the same age, experience, environment, or cultural background. Their aptitudes and potential for achievement are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. To be eligible for gifted services for General Intellectual Aptitude, the student must score in the "Advanced" range on at least three of the four criteria areas discussed- Ability, Achievement/Curriculum-Based Measures, Gifted Behaviors, and Gifted Performance Tasks.

No one test, score, or criterion may include or exclude a student from eligibility. Students who score very close to the eligibility thresholds (by meeting two of the four criteria for eligibility) may be provisionally placed into the gifted program under certain conditions or may be identified as Emerging Scholars. Students who are not eligible for gifted services (by meeting only one or two of the four criteria for eligibility) may be recommended for monitoring by the

GTD Resource Teacher through the Talent Pool or through regular schoolwide systematic data monitoring. Please see the Local Plan for more information about Provisional Placement, the Emerging Scholars Program, and the Talent Pool.

After eligibilities are held, parents will receive a Determination Letter, and may meet with the GTD Resource Teacher at their child's school to discuss the profile sheet. After discussing the profile sheet with their GTD Resource Teacher, parents may appeal the determination through a time-sensitive Appeals Process described in the Determination Letter.

If you have any questions about the WJCC Gifted Education and Talent Development Program, please do not hesitate to contact the Gifted & Talent Development Resource Teacher at your child's school.